

Agenda Item No.:	C
Work Plan:	State Forests Work Plan
Topic:	State Forest Management
Presentation Title:	State Forests' intent to enroll in a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) for Pacific fisher
Date of Presentation:	April 27, 2016
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Introduction

The purpose of this agenda item is to inform the Board of the ongoing project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) for fisher.

Context

The west coast population of the Pacific fisher was granted federal candidate status in April 2004. In 2013, a status review was initiated to review new information and assess whether listing of the west coast distinct population segment of fisher was still warranted. In October 2014, the USFWS published a proposed rule to list the west coast population of fisher as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The USFWS is currently reviewing and responding to comments and new information submitted under the proposed rule. A final decision on the proposed rule is due in early April 2016. Currently the state of Oregon lists the fisher as a sensitive species in the critical category. It is also listed as a protected non-game species. In Oregon, the west coast distinct population includes the Oregon Cascades west to the coast. Fishers, a cat-sized member of the weasel family, are associated with forests having moderate to dense forest canopy and complex structure (for example, large amounts of coarse down wood, moderate shrub cover, dead trees and trees with decay elements, and a component of hardwood trees). The distribution of the fisher is likely limited by elevation and snow depth. Currently, there are no known fisher den sites on State Forest lands.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife has been working with non-federal landowners and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to develop a CCAA. The intent is to formalize a program of work (studies and assessment of existing populations and eventual re-introduction into suitable areas that were occupied historically), associated conservation measures and assurances for non-federal landowners, such that listing of the Pacific fisher as threatened in Oregon is not warranted. The forest industry is playing a leadership role in these discussions with the Service and ODFW. A CCAA is a voluntary agreement whereby landowners agree to manage their land to remove or reduce threats to a species that may become listed under the ESA. In return for beneficial management practices, enrolled landowners receive assurances

that regulatory measures will not be required if the covered species is listed, as long as the CCAA remains in place and is being fully implemented. The State Forests Division has reviewed the draft CCAA and believes it is in the best interests of the state to participate. To that end, we have submitted a letter to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, expressing our intent to enroll Board of Forestry lands within the historic range of the fisher in the CCAA. The letter of intent is not binding, and we will have an opportunity to review the final CCAA and determine our enrollment status. The final CCAA was published in the Federal Register on March 24, 2016.

NEXT STEPS

The Service will make a listing decision on the fisher early April. If the fisher is not listed, the CCAA is likely to proceed, given it is a long-term agreement (30 years). If the fisher is listed, the Service will have a limited time (expected 30 days) to enroll landowners in the CCAA. If landowners have not enrolled in that timeframe, they may not be eligible to enroll in the CCAA. At this point, ODF expects to enroll BOF lands in the CCAA.

RECOMMENDATION

Information only.

ATTACHMENT

1. March 7, 2016 letter from Liz Dent, State Forests Division Chief to Paul Henson, State Supervisor U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
2. March 11, 2016 letter from Ron Anglin, Wildlife Division Administrator, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to Paul Henson, State Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.