

# **FISH AND WILDLIFE STEWARD AWARD -- FOREST LANDS LANDOWNER RECOGNITION PROGRAM**

## **OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AND OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY**

**PURPOSE:** This document establishes the guidelines and procedures for implementing the “*Fish and Wildlife Steward Award -- Forest Lands*” landowner recognition program. This program is to be cooperatively administered by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF). An inter-agency Memorandum of Agreement between the two agencies will enact this program.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- A. To publicly recognize private forest landowners who promote the stewardship of fish and wildlife resources as part of their forest stewardship activities, and/or provide public recreational opportunities related to fish and wildlife on their lands.
- B. To provide an incentive for landowners to voluntarily contribute to the enhancement of Oregon’s fish and wildlife resources and public recreational opportunities.
- C. To improve public understanding of fish and wildlife management activities occurring on private forest lands.

### **AUTHORITY:**

**ORS 496.012.** It is “...the policy of the State of Oregon that wildlife shall be managed to provide the optimum recreational and aesthetic benefits for present and future generations of the citizens of this state. In furtherance of this policy, the goals of wildlife management are ... (2) To develop and manage the lands and waters of this state in a manner that will enhance the production...of wildlife... (5) To regulate wildlife populations and the public enjoyment of wildlife in a manner that is compatible with primary uses of the lands and waters of the state and provides optimum public recreational benefits.” The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is granted authority to implement this policy.

**ORS 527.630.** It is the “...policy of the State of Oregon to encourage economically efficient forest practices that assure the continuous growing and harvesting of forest tree species and the maintenance of forestland for such purposes as the leading use on privately owned land, consistent with sound management of...fish and wildlife resources...that assures the continuous benefits of those resources for future generations of Oregonians.” The authority to implement this policy is granted to the Oregon Department of Forestry.

**SCOPE:** These guidelines and procedures are to be applied statewide.

### **STANDARDS:**

## A. Applicability

All private forest landowners, or managers of private forestlands, within Oregon are eligible to receive these stewardship awards. Other forest ownerships are also applicable for this recognition, except for those within state or federal ownership. In addition, to better recognize the economic abilities of landowners to contribute to fish and wildlife resources, this recognition program will be stratified according to landowner categories:

### 1. Industrial Forest Landowners.

Those private forest landowners and managers with more than 5,000 acres of forest land, or who derive a majority of their income from the primary processing of wood products.

### 2. Non-Industrial Forest Landowners.

Those private forest landowners and managers with less than 5,000 acres of forest land, and who do not derive a majority of their income from ownership in a primary wood processing facility.

### 3. Other Forest Landowners.

The purpose of this category is to recognize other entities that own and manage forestlands such as cities or counties, academic institutions, municipal watersheds, and others. This award category is not intended for federal or state forest management agencies.

## B. Regional Distribution of Awards

Awards will be presented to recipients within each of the three ODF forest practices regions: Northwest Oregon, Southwest Oregon and Eastern Oregon. The boundaries of these regions are defined by the Oregon Department of Forestry (OAR 629-24-112).

## C. Frequency of Awards

Awards will be issued annually to Industrial and Non-Industrial Forest Landowners, and as necessary (but not more frequently than annually) for Other Forest Landowners.

## D. Levels of Recognition -- Types of Awards

The following levels of awards will be presented to forest landowners or managers within each forest practices region:

1. *Fish and Wildlife Steward Award -- Forest Lands.* The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Oregon Board of Forestry will jointly present one of these awards for each landowner category within each of the three forest practices regions. Selected recipients will be those respective landowners/managers exhibiting the best examples of forest stewardship of fish and wildlife resources within their region. These awards will be in the form of plaques that include the logos of both ODFW and ODF.

2. *Commendation for Fish and Wildlife Stewardship on Forest Lands.* The Oregon Departments of Fish and Wildlife and Forestry will provide commendations to

landowners/managers who were nominated and exhibit exceptional forest stewardship of fish and wildlife resources, but who were not selected as recipients of the “*Fish and Wildlife Steward Award*.” The commendations will be framed certificates that are signed by the ODFW Director and the ODF State Forester. The certificates will include the logos of both agencies.

#### E. Number of Awards

1. *Fish and Wildlife Steward Award -- Forest Lands*. A maximum of one award for each landowner type within each of the three forest practices regions. A total of 6 to 9 awards could be issued statewide annually\* (see note).

2. *Commendation for Fish and Wildlife Stewardship on Forest Lands*. There are no limits on the number of commendations that can be presented. However, to maintain the importance of these awards, the number of commendation certificates issued annually should remain limited.

\* Note: Within each specific landowner category it is possible that the annual “*Fish and Wildlife Steward Award -- Forest Lands*” recognition could be presented to more than one recipient where multiple landowners worked cooperatively on a coordinated project or management plan. For example, if three industrial forest landowners worked cooperatively to develop a watershed management plan in NW Oregon, and this action was selected for recognition, each landowner would receive a “*Fish and Wildlife Steward Award -- Forest Lands*” plaque for the NW Oregon-Industrial Forest Landowner category.

#### F. Types of Activities or Management to be Recognized

The purpose of this program is to recognize exceptional examples of forest stewardship that maintains or improves fish and wildlife and their habitats, or that provides recreational opportunities related to these resources. The intent is that a wide variety of activities or management decisions could be nominated for these awards. Applicable activities can include either active (operational) efforts or “non-active” (passive) management decisions that contribute to the improvement of fish and wildlife resources (see examples in Appendix A). Actions or management efforts can also be either within specific locations (i.e. related to an operation site) or encompass overall management across a forest landscape. The intent is that the nomination and selection process will be open enough to potentially recognize any actions or decisions consistent with good forest stewardship that benefit fish and wildlife resources.

#### G. Nomination Process

Employees of the Oregon departments of Fish and Wildlife and Forestry will submit nominations annually. Nominations may also be accepted from individuals or organizations outside of these two agencies, but it is expected that these will compose a minor portion of the total number of nominations submitted annually. All nominations will be submitted on a “Fish and Wildlife Steward Award - Forest Lands, Landowner Nomination Form” (Appendix B), or reasonable facsimile (such as the ODFW “Landowner of the Year” nomination form).

Nomination forms must be fully completed, and signed by the nominating party. Representatives of both agencies should jointly sign nominations submitted by ODFW or ODF employees. The joint signature is intended to signify that both agencies agree with the stewardship principles and practices exhibited by the nominated party. This action will also minimize duplication of effort, or multiple nominations being submitted for the same forest owner/manager. Nominations should be accompanied by supporting materials (photographs, maps, written materials, etc.) that could aid the award selection committees in making their decisions. Additional details on the nomination and selection process are described in the “Procedures and Responsibilities” section of this document.

#### H. Regional Award Selection Committees

A Regional Awards Selection Committee will choose award recipients annually. An awards selection committee will be appointed each year for each of the three regions. Each selection committee will, at minimum, have two ODFW representatives (one fisheries biologist, and one wildlife or habitat biologist), and two ODF representatives (two Forest Practice Foresters, or, if possible, one FPF and one Service Forester). An ODFW representative will chair each regional committee.

#### I. Award Selection Process and Criteria

Nominations submitted for consideration will be screened and evaluated by the Regional Awards Selection Committees. These committees will be responsible for selecting the annual recipients of the “*Fish and Wildlife Steward Award -- Forest Lands*” and recipients of the “*Commendation for Fish and Wildlife Stewardship on Forest Lands.*” The committees will consider the following criteria when selecting award recipients (see “Nomination Rating Form” in Appendix C):

- 1). Overall Benefit to Fish and Wildlife -- Results. The landowners/managers forest stewardship activities and philosophies significantly benefit fish and wildlife resources, habitats and/or recreational opportunities. Actions completed by the landowner/manager result in exceptional examples of stewardship of these resources. Higher scores will be applied for actions that benefit multiple species or that affect larger areas of the forest landscape. The professional judgment of selection committee members may be required in making an assessment of fish and wildlife benefits, since the results of many actions may not be immediately apparent.
- 2). Degree of Difficulty. The landowner/manager implements stewardship actions to benefit fish and wildlife resources or recreational opportunities even though this involves a high degree of difficulty or extremely complex situations.
- 3). Consistency and/or Frequency of Fish and Wildlife Improvement. The landowner or manager consistently promotes stewardship actions that benefit fish and wildlife resources, habitats or recreational opportunities. Exceptional projects may receive a lower score if the action is an isolated or single example of fish and wildlife stewardship. Landowners/managers that commonly promote fish and wildlife resources through their forest management actions or decisions will receive a higher score.

4) Promotes a fish and wildlife stewardship ethic to other landowners. The landowner or manager provides leadership, by example and through assistance, to other landowners to promote the wise stewardship of forest and fish and wildlife resources. The landowner/manager regularly cooperates with ODFW and ODF on fish and wildlife habitat projects. The landowner or manager participates in local or statewide forums to promote actions for fish and wildlife stewardship (e.g. watershed councils). Low involvement or rare participation in promoting these stewardship principles will receive a lower score. Landowners/managers that are actively involved with other landowners and agencies to promote fish and wildlife resources through forest stewardship will receive a higher score.

5) Financial Investment. The landowner/manager assumed financial risk or contributed a significant financial investment to benefit fish and wildlife resources or to provide recreational opportunities. In addition to management or operation-specific costs, this should include recognition of investments in research, inventory, or monitoring that will improve the knowledge of fish and wildlife/forestry interactions and result in long-term benefits to fish and wildlife resources. Scoring for this factor will include recognition of the relative economic ability of different landowners to contribute to fish and wildlife resources.

## **PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The procedures for this award will generally follow a similar schedule and process as the ODF Operator Recognition Program to minimize duplication, and to use a schedule that is already familiar to forest landowners. It is anticipated that some forest management activities nominated for the Operator Recognition Program may be forwarded to this program as a more appropriate forum to recognize actions beneficial to fish and wildlife resources.

A. In mid to late spring, the ODFW Wildlife Division and the ODF Forest Practices Section will send reminder notices to all ODFW and ODF regions/areas and districts to begin the process of nominating landowners for these awards. District employees will be requested to schedule a meeting of the local representatives of the two agencies to jointly select potential nominees. The reminder notices will include forms and instructions for submitting nominations.

B. By early summer, ODFW district biologists and ODF foresters will meet to select landowners to nominate for these awards. These meetings should result in a decision of which landowners should be nominated, and an agreement on who will complete the respective nomination forms. These meetings are necessary to facilitate agreement on potential nominees, and to avoid duplication of efforts.

C. From June through early October, landowner nominations should be completed and submitted. Nominations will be submitted on a standard nomination form (Appendix B), and should include supporting materials such as photographs, maps, and written documentation of the activities. Nominations will be submitted to the ODFW Forest Practices Program Coordinator.

D. By August 15, the ODFW Wildlife Division and the ODF Forest Practices Section will send letters to the ODFW Regions and ODF Areas to solicit agency volunteers to serve on Regional Award Selection Committees.

E. By September 15, the ODFW Regions and ODF Areas will provide a list of potential members to serve on the Regional Award Selection Committees.

F. By September 25, the ODFW Forest Practices Program Coordinator, in cooperation with the ODF Forest Practices Section, will choose the Regional Award Selection Committee members from the list of volunteers provided. A Chairperson for these committees will also be selected from the ODFW representatives.

G. Nominations will cease on October 5. However, the nomination period may be extended to accommodate a severe fire season.

H. By October 10, copies of the landowner nomination forms and supporting materials received by the ODFW Forest Practices Program Coordinator will be mailed to the Chairperson of each respective Regional Award Selection Committee.

I. In October, the Regional Award Selection Committees will be convened to screen nominations in the office and in the field. The initial meeting of these groups should occur in early October. The ODFW Committee Chair will be responsible for organizing and convening the selection committee meetings. The initial screening process will identify nominations that warrant further consideration and review for possible selection for the *“Fish and Wildlife Steward Award -- Forest Lands”* recognition, and may recommend *“Commendations for Fish and Wildlife Stewardship on Forest Lands”* for those other nominations that deserve recognition but do not appear applicable for the highest award. The ODFW and ODF representatives on these committees will cooperatively prepare short narratives that describe the management actions and stewardship principles exhibited by the selected recipients of the commendation certificates. These narratives may be used in presentation ceremonies for the *commendation* certificate recipients.

J. By November 1, field tours of the remaining nominations for potential *“Fish and Wildlife Steward Award -- Forest Lands”* recognition should be completed by the regional selection committees. The decision of the need for field tours will be at the discretion of the selection committees. Where applicable, photographs of the sites should be taken for possible future publicity needs.

K. By November 15, the regional selection committees shall score the remaining nominations and complete their selection of recipients for the *“Fish and Wildlife Steward Award -- Forest Lands”* recognition for each landowner category. The committees may use the sample rating form (Appendix C) to help rank the nominees. The ODFW and ODF representatives on these committees will cooperatively write short narratives summarizing the management activities and stewardship principles exhibited by the nominees that lead to their selections for *“Fish and Wildlife Steward Award -- Forest Lands”* recognition. The ODFW Committee Chair should report the final award selections, and send the written narratives to the ODFW Forest Practices Program Coordinator. Other nominations that were not selected for this award may receive *“Commendations for Fish and Wildlife Stewardship*

on *Forest Lands*”; narratives for all *commendations* will be prepared as described in Procedure I.

L. By December 1, the ODFW Forest Practices Program Coordinator, in cooperation with the ODF Forest Practices Section, will prepare and mail letters to inform the “*Fish and Wildlife Steward Award -- Forest Lands*” recipients of their selection.

M. By December 5, the ODFW Wildlife Division, or the ODF Forest Practices Section, will send letters to the ODF State Forester, ODFW Director, and the representative of either the Board of Forestry or the Fish and Wildlife Commission inviting these individuals to the awards presentation ceremony. The agency hosting the awards ceremony will be responsible for these actions.

N. By December 10, the “*Fish and Wildlife Steward Award -- Forest Lands*” plaques should be ordered by the ODFW Wildlife Division. The award plaques will include the logos of both ODFW and ODF to clearly note that recognition is being provided by both agencies.

O. By mid-December, the ODFW Wildlife Division and ODF Forest Practices Section will provide information on award winners to the public affairs/information staffs of each respective agency. ODFW Information and Education, and ODF Public Affairs staffs should cooperatively develop a publicity plan to be used annually to promote public recognition of the award recipients. The public affairs/information staffs will coordinate to prepare statewide news releases concerning these awards.

P. In January, the Board of Forestry and the Fish and Wildlife Commission will jointly present the “*Fish and Wildlife Steward Award -- Forest Lands*” plaques to each recipient at a meeting of either the Fish and Wildlife Commission or the Board of Forestry, or at another appropriate public forum. The date for the award presentations may be modified if the alternate public forum is not convened in January. The initial presentation of these awards will occur at a meeting of the Fish and Wildlife Commission, then the forum for these awards may alternate annually.

Q. By January 15-30, the “*Commendation for Fish and Wildlife Stewardship on Forest Lands*” certificates will be prepared by the ODFW Wildlife Division. The *commendation* certificates will be signed by the ODFW Director and the ODF State Forester, and will be framed. By late-January or early-February, these certificates will be sent to the ODFW Region where the award recipient resides for joint ODFW/ODF presentation at an appropriate forum (see Procedure R).

R. In February or March, the “*Commendation for Fish and Wildlife Stewardship on Forest Lands*” certificates should be jointly presented by the ODFW Regions/Districts and ODF Areas/Districts at an appropriate event. When possible and appropriate, these presentations should occur simultaneous with the “Operator Recognition - Letter of Commendation” presentations.

**Appendix A. A partial list of examples of forest stewardship activities that could be nominated and selected for recognition by the ODFW/ODF “Fish and Wildlife Steward Award -- Forest Lands” program.**

<b><u>Active or Operational</u></b>	<b><u>Passive or Non-operational</u></b>
Habitat improvement projects completed as part of operations; e.g. stream improvement	Retaining important habitat areas in an un-harvested condition; e.g. clumping reserve tree retention for multiple operation areas in a large area where multiple sensitive wildlife habitats are present
Snag creation from live trees	Developing innovative land management plans designed to provide long-term wildlife habitat
Exceptional live tree/snag retention	Contributing to, or participating in important monitoring or research related to forest management and fish and wildlife resources
Maintaining public access for hunting, fishing or wildlife viewing	Providing leadership on watershed councils, local initiatives, or other forums where fish and wildlife habitat protection or restoration is promoted
Voluntary restoration of fish passage at impassable road crossing structures	
Exceptional management of riparian areas, including non-fish bearing streams	
Innovative protection of sensitive resource sites such as raptor nests, heron colonies, etc.	
Voluntary actions that reduce the risk for potential adverse effects to fish and wildlife resources; e.g. removal or reconstruction of legacy roads to reduce the risk of mass failure or sediment transport to streams	



**Appendix B. ODFW/ODF “Fish and Wildlife Steward -- Forest Lands” landowner or manager nomination form.**

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**FISH AND WILDLIFE STEWARD AWARD  
FOREST LANDS  
LANDOWNER NOMINATION FORM  
AGENCY VERSION**

Nominations for:                      Fish and Wildlife Steward Award    ☐  
   Letter of Commendation                      ☐

Landowner Category:                      Industrial                      ☐  
   Non-Industrial                      ☐  
   Other                      ☐

Forest Practices Region:

Landowner/Manager Name:

Company Name:

Address:

Type of Activities:

Location of Activities:

Narrative description of the landowner or managers actions that were beneficial to fish and wildlife resources (attach extra sheets if necessary)

1. Describe the actions that benefited fish and wildlife resources and/or related recreational opportunities:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What fish and wildlife resources or recreational opportunities were involved in these stewardship activities:

3. Describe the difficulties faced by the landowner/manager in providing these beneficial actions:
4. Describe the consistency of the landowner/manager in managing for fish and wildlife resources:
5. Describe how the landowner/manager promotes a stewardship ethic and provides leadership in fish and wildlife stewardship to other landowners:
6. Describe the financial investment or risk by the landowner to complete these actions:
7. Other comments:

When possible and applicable, attach a map or aerial photograph indicating the location of the activities or ownership area being nominated for recognition, and attach on-the-ground photos of the activities. Be sure to note on the maps and photos significant points that the awards selection committee should consider.

Nominated by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(ODFW signature) (ODF signature)

**Appendix C. Rating form for evaluating nominations for the ODFW/ODF “Fish and Wildlife Steward Award -- Forest Lands” landowner recognition program. The criteria for rating these individual factors are described in Procedure H.**

Factors are rated on a scale (score) from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest possible score for a single factor. Some factors are weighted to represent differences in the relative importance of these factors to fish and wildlife resources. **This scoring system is suggested only as a guide -- the ultimate recipient of an award does not necessarily have to be the person who received the highest overall score.**

- 1) Overall benefit to fish and wildlife.
- 2) Degree of difficulty.
- 3) Consistency and/or frequency of fish and wildlife improvement.
- 4) Promotes a fish and wildlife stewardship ethic to other landowners.
- 5) Financial investment or risk

**NOMINATION RATING FORM**

CRITERIA	SCORE	WEIGHT FACTOR	TOTAL SCORE
Fish and wildlife benefits / results		<b>5X</b>	
Degree of difficulty			
Consistency/frequency of actions		<b>3X</b>	
Promotes stewardship to others		<b>5X</b>	
Financial investment		<b>2X</b>	