

Work Plan: ODF State Forests

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DIVISION OVERVIEW

Purpose & Objective

The Oregon Department of Forestry, State Forests Division, manages approximately 730,000 acres of forestlands across Oregon. These state forestlands are actively managed to provide economic, environmental, and social benefits to Oregonians. Timber sales on these forests create jobs and generate revenue that fund counties, local districts, and schools throughout the state. These forests also offer recreation and educational opportunities, and provide essential wildlife habitat and clean water. Management costs associated with managing these public forests are funded primarily through the sale of timber off of these lands.

The Division's core businesses include financial accounting and log tracking, timber sale contracting and administration, fish and wildlife surveys and implementation of conservation measures. We collect, manage, and analyze data and report outcomes. Field and Salem staff conduct and coordinate reforestation activities, road construction and maintenance, collaborate with local communities and other organizations on habitat improvement projects, maintain recreation facilities and opportunities, and provide educational programs to schools and the public.

Current Issues and Focus

It has become increasingly difficult to support all priority work and core business. Unanticipated legal actions have further impacted workloads, are costly, and often displace other priority work. We are addressing these issues on multiple fronts. We modernized our organizational structure to better meet the current social and political climate and deliver greatest permanent value to Oregonians now and into the future. We continue to make significant improvements in our business processes. We are revisiting policies and are seeking to diversify funding streams so we can sustainably manage state forests to provide the range of social, economic, and environmental benefits. This includes potential changes to Forest Management Plans and the development of a Habitat Conservation Plan, both of which are intended to achieve financial viability and improve conservation outcomes within the context of the Greatest Permanent Value mandate.

DIVISION TOPICS FOR THE BOARD OF FORESTRY 2020-2021

The Division has been pursuing forest management policy work in parallel processes- Developing a Draft Western Oregon Forest Management Plan (FMP) and a Draft Western Oregon Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). With an important decision point for the BOF in October of 2020, the two efforts will come together. Should the BOF decide to continue pursuing an HCP, the Draft FMP will be adapted to couple with the HCP. Should the BOF decide to terminate efforts to gain an HCP, the Division will re-focus on revising the FMP assuming a take-avoidance approach to compliance with the ESA.

1. *Habitat Conservation Plan for Western Oregon State Forests*
2. *Revised Forest Management Plan for Western Oregon State Forests*

ISSUE: Habitat Conservation Plan for Western Oregon State Forestlands

Overview

The Board of Forestry has directed staff to continue exploring options for achieving financial viability while increasing conservation outcomes, including the pursuit of a programmatic Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance tool, such as a Habitat Conservation Plan.

Purpose

The purpose of this work is to develop a Western Oregon Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) to achieve programmatic Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance. The State Forests Division is taking the following 3-phased approach to evaluate the possibility of an HCP to cover state forestland west of the Cascade Mountains:

- ✓ Phase 1: HCP Initiation/Scoping: *Completed*
- ✓ Phase 2: HCP Draft Development (*In Progress*): Development of an administrative draft HCP that includes conservation measures and mechanisms to provide operational certainty into the future.
- ✓ Phase 3: National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process and Companion FMP development (*Pending*).
 - Submit the draft HCP into the Federal National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process.
 - An HCP must be coupled with a companion FMP. Concurrently draft a companion FMP drawing on the Draft Revised Western Oregon FMP (see Issue below).

Board Deliverables with Timelines

- ✓ April and July 2020: Information Items
 - Division provides updates to the BOF on accomplishments and progress towards the development of an Administrative Draft HCP.
- ✓ October 2020: Decision Item

- Administrative Draft HCP for decision to go into NEPA process. If BOF decides to continue working on the HCP:
 - Submit HCP into the NEPA process which will take approximately 18 months.
 - Begin adapting the Draft Revised Western Oregon FMP into the Companion FMP.
- ✓ November 2021: Decision Item
 - Present the Draft Companion FMP for decision to go into formal rulemaking process. FMP rulemaking: approximately 6 months.
- ✓ June 2022: Final Approval of Western Oregon Habitat Conservation Plan and Forest Management Plan

Outreach and Public Involvement

All standing stakeholder committees (State Forests Advisory Committee, Oregon Forest Conservation Coalition, Conservation Ad Hoc, Industry Ad Hoc, Forest Trust Land Advisory Committee, and Oregon Forest & Industries Council) have been invited to participate in the HCP scoping process. Some members of the Forest Trust Lands Advisory Committee (FTLAC) have expressed concerns and the Oregon Forest & Industries Council does not support an HCP on state forestlands. Despite these reservations, no committee or stakeholders have actively declined participation.

The Department recognizes the importance and value of reaching out to all Oregon's federally-recognized Tribes on issues related to managing Oregon's state forests. We will pursue opportunities to meet with Tribal Chair Council and Tribal staff directors to listen and learn from the Tribes, seek opportunities for input and collaboration, and build relationships.

This work is being conducted collaboratively with our state and federal sister agencies including- National Marine Fisheries Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of State Lands, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Environmental Quality.

ISSUE: Draft Revised Western Oregon Forest Management Plan

Overview

The dominant management plan for State Forests is the NW Forest Management Plan (Northwest FMP) which includes 650,000 acres, about 75% of the total state forest land base, and generates over 90% of the revenue from Board of Forestry lands. The Board of Forestry approved the original Northwest FMP in January 2001 as the first integrated resource management plan for the state and approved a plan revision in 2010 to improve financial outcomes. The foundation of the plan is an approach called "structure based management" under which the forest is managed to produce a range of forest conditions across the landscape. The plan was intended to be coupled with an HCP. However, the state was not able to acquire an HCP. The lack of an HCP combined

with costs associated with take avoidance and some challenges with implementing structure based management are impacting State Forests Division financial viability.

Purpose

The purpose of this work is to Draft a Revised Western Oregon Forest Management Plan (Draft Revised FMP) to guide management of all State Forests west of the Cascades. The goal of the Draft Revised FMP is to improve financial viability and conservation outcomes. The BOF has also directed the Division to pursue an HCP. The two efforts will merge in 2020.

The Draft Revised FMP serves two purposes. First, should the BOF decide not to seek an HCP, the Draft Revised FMP will be the basis for continued exploration of a plan revision to improve financial viability and conservation outcomes. Alternatively, should the BOF decide to move into the NEPA process, elements of the Draft Revised FMP will be used to develop the companion FMP.

Board Deliverables with Timelines

- ✓ April 2020: Information Item
 - Present the Draft Revised Western Oregon FMP and summary of input from FTLAC and public engagement as informational item.
 - Pause work on the Draft Revised Western Oregon FMP until October of 2020 when the BOF will decide if we will continue to pursue an HCP.
- ✓ October 2020: Decision Item
 - As long as there is positive progress on the HCP- begin adapting the Draft Revised FMP to serve as a companion FMP to be coupled with the HCP.
 - Should the BOF terminate efforts to pursue an HCP, shift focus back to the FMP revision without an associated HCP.

Outreach and Public Involvement

The eventual success of the Draft Western Oregon FMP project will largely depend on developing sufficient understanding, acceptance, and support from stakeholder groups. Providing accurate and timely information to stakeholders will be of critical importance, and the Division is committed to an open, equitable, and transparent stakeholder engagement process. Additionally, counties within which we manage Board of Forestry lands have a statutorily established relationship with the Board through the FTLAC.

The Division will provide accurate and timely information to ensure FTLAC has the information they need to advise the Board of Forestry and the State Forester. The Division will seek public engagement and convene informational meetings for all interested stakeholders with the purpose of providing the information in a clear and transparent manner and allowing sufficient time for the stakeholders to prepare their input for the Board of Forestry meeting.

The Department recognizes the importance and value of reaching out to all Oregon's federally-recognized Tribes on issues related to managing Oregon's state forests. We will pursue opportunities to meet with Tribal Chair Council and Tribal staff directors to listen and learn from the Tribes, seek opportunities for input and collaboration, and build relationships.

State Forests Division Work Plan	2020						2021						2022	
	Apr	Jun	Jul	Sep	Oct	Nov	Apr	Jun	Jul	Sep	Oct	Nov	Jan	Mar
Issue: Western Oregon Habitat Conservation Plan														
<i>Milestones</i>														
❖ BOF progress updates	I		I					I						
❖ Administrative Draft HCP with Decision to continue into NEPA process					d			I						
○ If continuing to pursue an HCP - Begin Companion Western Oregon FMP					*			I				d		
Issue: Draft Revised Western Oregon Forest Management Plan														
<i>Milestones</i>														
❖ Draft Revised Plan & Summary of Input from FTLAC and Public Engagement	I													
○ If terminate HCP efforts – refocus on Draft Revised FMP without HCP					*									

Matrix Key:

- * - Corollary preceding decision item
- I – Informational item
- d – Preceding Decision item
- D – Final Decision item