

Private Forest Accord Rulemaking: Adaptive Management



SUMMARY

The Private Forest Accord outlined an adaptive management program to coordinate future changes to Oregon’s Forest Practices Act. Using stakeholder input, the program will use a science-driven process to analyze the need for any changes to rules, policies, or training. This program is an important part in creating an approved Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), which is an end goal of the Private Forest Accord.

The program’s purpose is to apply the best available science to Oregon Board of Forestry’s (Board) decision-making, which includes measuring the effectiveness of the rules to meet the “Biological Goals and Objectives” (BGOs) to benefit several fish and amphibian species. The program ensures effective change to meet the BGOs, seeks to limit operational costs when possible, and creates a process to increase the awareness of regulatory changes; so, landowners, regulators, and interested members of the public can understand and are aware of the change. The biological goals broadly describe the desired future conditions of an HCP in brief statements and directs work toward reaching the vision and purpose of these goals. Each goal has one or more objectives that define how to reach these conditions.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

The public may take part in Board decisions via public comment. Two committees will advise the Board: the Adaptive Management Program Committee (AMPC) and the Independent Research and Science Team (IRST). Both the AMPC and IRST must maintain self-developed guides; may receive participation grants; and will use super-majority votes for important decisions.

The IRST will apply science to answer the policy questions put forth by the AMPC, and there is a process to report that information back to the board. This team must include one member each from a public institution, the timber industry, and a conservation group. Members must be subject matter experts with graduate degrees in natural resources disciplines such as forestry, fisheries, and ecology.

For transparency and accountability, ODF will provide status reports to the Board annually, and contract for performance audits every six years.

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