January 18, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Forest Practices Board

FROM: Mary McDonald, FP Division SFLO Manager

SUBJECT: Small Forest Landowner Office and Advisory Committee

Small Forest Landowner Advisory Committee:
The committee consists of seven members, including a representative from the Department of Ecology, the Department of Fish & Wildlife, a tribal representative and four members from the SFLO community appointed by the commissioner of public lands from a list of candidates submitted by the Washington Farm Forestry Association. The advisory committee functions as a sub-group of the larger Forest and Fish Policy group. The committee has focused on ways to implement the small forest landowners' alternate plan and alternate harvest restrictions provisions on smaller harvest units with low impact on aquatic resources.

Long Term Application (LTA) Program Progress Beginning 10/1/2007 – 12/31/2010
A small forest landowner has the option of submitting a long-term application that is valid for up to 15 years. A long-term forest practices application is submitted and reviewed in two steps. There are a total of 49 approved long term applications; this is an increase of 5 approved applications from 10/11/2010.

Small Forest Landowner Outreach
The office in partnership with WSU extension will be producing an electronic quarterly newsletter. The printed form of "*Stewardship notes*" ended in 2005 due to the lack of funding. At that time the newsletter had 18,000 readers. By implementing an electronic version only, the newsletter can be brought back for a fraction of the cost and hopefully have a larger small landowner readership. Grant funds will provide for WSU extension to mail promotional post-cards to over 90,000 landowners inviting them to subscribe to the electronic version

Staff investments in implementing ideas from the constituent online survey in late 2009 have increased web traffic by 70% and nearly doubled the readership of the SFLO electronic newsletter in 2010. There will continue to be new updates to the website in 2011.

Forestry Riparian Easement Program (FREP):
FREP is a conservation easement program designed to compensate participating small landowners for unharvestable timber on forested lands primarily along rivers or streams. The legislature's 2011 budget proviso provided approximately $1 million of supplemental capital appropriation for the 2011 fiscal year. This proviso requires DNR to prioritize funding of forest riparian easements for this fiscal year as well as develop recommendations for future changes to the program in the form of legislation. As a result of the recommendations and extensive stakeholder input about how to strengthen program eligibility criteria, as well as program efficiencies DNR is proposing updated legislation. Revisions will ensure riparian forest conservation easement funds are used more efficiently and directed at appropriate landowners

The Small Forest Landowner Office (SFLO) is completing prioritization on existing FREP applications. Currently easement applications are in various stages towards completing acquisitions funded under the FY 2011 FREP appropriation. DNR is continuing to receive new applications for FREP.

Forest Stewardship Program

The Forest Stewardship Program provides on- site forest management technical assistance and in cooperation with WSU extension teaches forestry classes, and hosts family forest owner field days for small forest landowners. A Forest Stewardship Program Wildlife Biologist supports educational programs and provides landowner advisory visits statewide. One Olympia-based stewardship forester serves western WA and seven landowner assistance foresters in Northeast WA.

- DNR acquired a U.S. Forest Service grant funds and is contracting to WSU Extension to conduct a statewide series of *Ties to the Land* workshops over the next 3 years. The workshops help families plan for intergenerational transfer of forest land.
- Family Forest Owners Expo will be held on February 12 at Spokane Community College.
- Forest Stewardship Coached Planning Short courses are planned in Northwest, North Central, Northeast and Southwest WA, and King County in 2011.
- Forest Owners Field Days are planned for Klickitat County in late June/early July and in Jefferson County in late August.
- Federal cost-share funds are available for practices to reduce wildfire and bark beetle hazard throughout eastern WA.

Family Forest Fish Passage Program (FFFPP):

The Family Forest Fish Passage Program is a cost-share program that helps small forest landowners correct fish passage barriers by providing 75-100 percent of the cost of the correction. The 2011 FFFPP implementation report has been included in the board packets. The report is completed every two years to inform the board and the Legislature the success of the program. To date, 232 barriers have been corrected, reconnecting 500 miles of habitat statewide. FFFPP FY2010 construction cost saving were included on the 2011 plan to included three additional sites. The plan is for 39 barrier corrections reconnecting 61 miles of habitat at a cost of $3.2 million. The total estimate of reconnected habitat is 61 miles.

The office continues to be successful at obtaining grants to help offset state capital fund allocation for FFFPP. $648,000 has been received for projects and barrier inventory work, with an additional $611,000 pending notification in February of 2011. The standard practice of ghost writing for local conservation districts or regional fish enhancement groups has worked well for sponsors and staff.

Riparian Open Space Program (ROSP)

This conservation easement program is available to both small and large landowners. For the 2009-2011 biennium, applications for forest land in channel migration zones were only accepted. ROSP rule and Board Manual development is currently ongoing to allow acquisition of critical habitat for threatened or endangered species. There is $350,000 available to acquire conservation easements in the 2009-2011 biennium. DNR received 11 applications, of those applications, two were withdrawn and two did not meet the eligibility requirements. The eligible applications were prioritized by a Riparian Open Space Technical Selection Committee consisting of members from DNR, Ecology, Fish and Wildlife, Office of Recreation and Conservation Office, and a river scientist specializing in channel migration zones. The following steps for the easement acquisitions are being completed: verification of the channel migration zones delineation, selection of the cruise contractors, and seeking approval to award personal service cruise contracts. Currently easement applications are in various stages towards completing acquisitions funded under the ROSP appropriation.

Please contact me at 360-902-1415 or mary.mcdonald@dnr.wa.gov for any questions.

MM/

Bridge at Seitz Creek, Grays Harbor County, replaces culvert allowing fish to pass freely.

Family Forest Fish Passage Program

2010 Implementation Report

A Cost-Share Program for Small Forest Landowners to Improve Fish Passage

Washington Department of FISH and WILDLIFE

WASHINGTON STATE Recreation and Conservation Office

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF **Natural Resources**

Peter Goldmark - Commissioner of Public Lands

WISHKAH PROJECT
Grays Harbor Conservation District and local contractors completed the Wishkah barrier correction (landowners at left). The new bridge will help reduce erosion and allow for fish passage.

"I am absolutely tickled with the quality of the project and to have fish returning to our creek this fall. When the road was put in 50 years ago we had no idea the impact it would have on generations of salmon. We are very thankful for the Family Forest Fish Passage Program and to have fish returning and a new bridge to access our tree farm."

HERB AND DELORES WELCH
SMALL FOREST LANDOWNERS
[WISHKAH PROJECT]

It is estimated that for every $100,000 invested in fish passage projects, 1.57 local jobs are created during the construction season. This estimate does not include the additional indirect jobs like culvert and bridge manufacturing.

Investment in Removal of Fish Barriers Pays Many Dividends

With the passage of the 1999 Forest and Fish rules, new regulations were established that required all forest landowners to replace fish barriers on streams associated with their forest road crossings. To a small landowner this cost ($50,000 to $150,000) can be substantial and raise the risk that they might sell their lands to developers. Recognizing these potential impacts, the 2003 Washington State Legislature created the Family Forest Fish Passage Program to help reduce the regulatory and monetary burdens on small family forest landowners and reconnect critical fish habitat.

A legislative investment of $17 million during the last seven years has paid dividends: 500 miles of fish habitat are reconnected and 232 fish barriers corrected.

The job is not done however. Currently, there is a backlog of more than 400 landowners who have applied to the program to have barriers corrected and fish habitat reconnected.

The average cost to correct a fish barrier in 2008-2009 was $88,000. Current funding allows for about 30 projects a year, which creates about 50 jobs during the construction season.

The Wishkah project featured in this report was completed in 2010 for Herb and Dolores Welch. The United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) shared funding via a restoration grant.

The Welch family has managed its tree farm since the late 1930s. Herb remembers scores of salmon returning to the creek each fall until the culvert became a barrier.

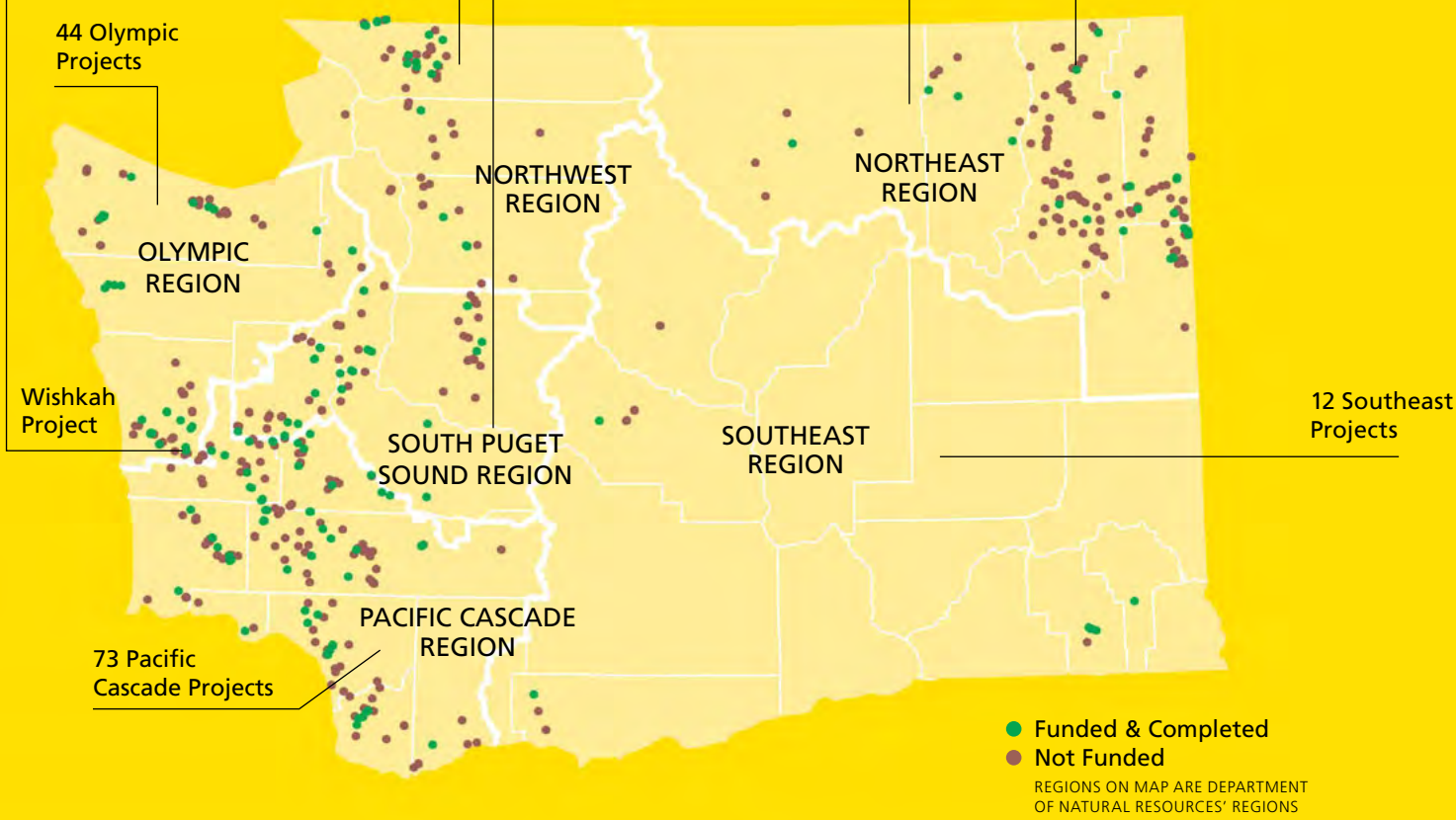
"They were so thick you could pitch-fork them from the bank," he said.

Now, with the help of the sponsor (Grays Harbor Conservation District) and the Family Forest Fish Passage Program, those teams of fish are expected to return to the stream any day.

PHOTOS BY LAURA TILL AND DAVID BERGVALL

Final installation of the new fish friendly bridge on the Wishkah project.

This project on Onion Creek in Stevens County opened 2.8 miles of habitat.



Funded and Unfunded Family Forest Fish Passage Projects

Fish Program Aids Small Forest Landowners

3.2 million acres* of forestland in Washington are owned by small forest landowners. **Ten thousand miles** of fish-bearing streams flow through these mid- and low-elevation forest lands and provide high value, prime fish habitat. Small family forest landowners have long periods of time between harvests and significant financial burdens to implement fish barrier corrections and road maintenance projects. The state Family Forest Fish Passage Program provides financial assistance to small family forest landowners and is one of the critical links in a comprehensive approach to forest road management.

* ROGERS, LUKE W., A. COOKE. (2010). THE WASHINGTON STATE FORESTLAND DATABASE (2007 VERSION, RELEASE 2). DIGITAL DATA, MARCH, 2010. SEATTLE, WA, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON.

> **"The Family Forest Fish Passage Program is a well-managed government program which uses public tax dollars prudently for the benefit of the public resource and small forest land owners."**
>
> **SAM COMSTOCK**
> WASHINGTON FARM FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

Road to Recovery

The Family Forest Fish Passage Program is implemented by three state agencies: Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, and the Recreation and Conservation Office. Each agency brings its expertise to oversee the program's operations, outreach and project selection processes. An oversight steering committee approves annual projects and keeps procedures current. The Washington Farm Forestry Association joins the steering committee as a landowner organization.

The Family Forest Fish Passage program recognizes the critical role small family forest landowners' play in salmon populations and is committed to assisting with their economic viability. The Family Forest Fish Passage Program benefits are seen through:

- Creating jobs and economic opportunities in rural communities.
- Honoring and implementing Indian treaty fishing rights.
- Sustaining our forest industry and encourage renewable green products.
- Improving water quality in forested watershed by reducing sediment delivery to streams and spawning areas.
- Minimizing flooding and the downstream harm to habitat and property.
- Helping the recovery of Puget Sound.

Local Groups are the Cornerstone to the Program

Local groups (sponsors) experienced in fish passage corrections complete most of the projects. Sponsors manage the project design, construction oversight, permitting, billing, and grant management. A sponsor may be a Conservation District, Regional fisheries enhancement group, Local fish-related non-profit organization, Tribe, or other interested organization.

Project Sponsors

REGIONAL FISHERIES ENHANCEMENT GROUPS

Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force
Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group
Mid-Sound Salmon Enhancement Group
Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association
Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group
South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group
Stilly-Snohomish Task Force
Tri-State Steelheaders
Willapa Bay Fisheries Enhancement Group

PRIVATE SPONSORS

Fisheries Consultants
Frame, LLC
LWC Consulting
PB Lumber
Pacific Coast Salmon Coalition
Pacific Forest Management Stewardship Partners
Wild Fish Conservancy

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Cascadia Conservation District
Clallam Conservation District
Clark Conservation District
Cowlitz Conservation District
Ferry Conservation District
Grays Harbor Conservation District
Jefferson County Conservation District
Kitsap Conservation District
Kittitas County Conservation District
Lewis County Conservation District
Mason Conservation District
Okanogan Conservation District
Pacific Conservation District
Pend Oreille Conservation District
Spokane County Conservation District
Stevens County Conservation District
Thurston Conservation District
Underwood Conservation District
Wahkiakum Conservation District

TRIBES

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
Kalispel Tribe of Indians
Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe
Nooksack Indian Tribe
Spokane Tribe of Indians
Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians
Tulalip Tribes

How Do I Get More Information?

Visit our website:
www.dnr.wa.gov/sflo

Program Partners

PROGRAM OUTREACH

Department of Natural Resources
Small Forest Landowner Office

Natural Resources Building
1111 Washington Street
MS 47012
Olympia, WA 98504-7012
(360) 902-1400
TTY: (360) 902-1125 TRS: 411
www.dnr.wa.gov

PROJECT EVALUATION AND RANKING

Department of Fish and Wildlife
Habitat Management Program

600 Capitol Way
Olympia, WA 98501-1091
(360) 902-2352
TTY: (360) 902-2207
www.wdfw.wa.gov

PROGRAM FUNDING

Recreation Conservation Office
Natural Resources Building
MS 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917
(360) 902-3000
TDD: (360) 902-1996
www.rco.wa.gov

LANDOWNER ORGANIZATION

Washington Farm Forestry Association
PO Box 1010
Chehalis, WA 98532
Contact: Sam Comstock (360) 736-5750
http://www.wafarmforestry.com/

The above agencies are responsible for implementing the program. The Washington Farm Forestry Association joins the agencies on a steering committee.

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