

# Northern Spotted Owl Safe Harbor Agreement

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# Northern Spotted Owl Safe Harbor Agreement

SB 5390 requests the Legislature to authorize DNR to enter into a programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to enhance the conservation of northern spotted owl habitat.

The Board approved pursuit of the proposed SHA as part of their effort to provide landowners with voluntary conservation incentives and assurances regarding the recovery of T&E species.

- The Board's NSOIT recommended the SHA based on their finding that strategic additions of spotted owl habitat can make meaningful contributions to the conservation of the species.



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DNR would administer the SHA, with WDFW providing technical expertise in evaluating spotted owl habitat.

The agreement would be applicable to all non-federal forestlands within the spotted owl territory in the state.

The agreement would give forest landowners the choice to voluntarily grow habitat on their lands in exchange for regulatory assurances that the landowner may harvest the habitat when the agreement ends.



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Participants who volunteer to enroll in the Safe Harbor Agreement would do so under rules that the Forest Practices Board would adopt.

Landowners who opt in to the SHA can manage their lands for longer rotations, increasing the amount of suitable habitat during the agreed-to term with the landowner.

If the landowner chooses to opt out of the agreement, they can return to managing their lands under the state and federal laws and rules in place at that time without fear of “take” of the threatened northern spotted owl under the Endangered Species Act.



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Legislature provided proviso funding in FY 2022 for DNR to contract the preparation of draft NSO SHA, EA and enrollment rule language

SB 5390 status:

- February 2<sup>nd</sup> passed out of Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Parks Committee
- February 3<sup>rd</sup> referred to Senate Ways and Means Committee

