DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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MEMORANDUM

October 23, 2024

TO: Forest Practices Board (Board)

FROM: Lori Clark, Adaptive Management Program Administrator (AMPA)
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SUBJECT: Adaptive Management Program Update

This memo transmits an update to the Board on progress and status of three Adaptive Management Program (AMP) efforts:

- The Extensive Riparian Status and Trends Monitoring Program, Riparian Vegetation and Stream Temperature Program (Extensive Monitoring);
- Westside Type F Exploratory Study Update; and
- Alternate Harvest Prescriptions TFW Policy Dispute Resolution, Phase 1.

1. Extensive Monitoring Update

The purpose of this Extensive Monitoring effort is to provide data needed to evaluate landscape-scale effects and changes over time of implementing Forest Practice riparian prescriptions. The objective is to build and maintain a status and trends monitoring program that will evaluate how aquatic condition, riparian forest structure and functions, and the desired habitat conditions that support change on the landscape scale. This information will inform State and Federal regulatory agencies if the WA Forest Practices Rules meet resource objectives for key aquatic conditions and processes affected by forest practices and Clean Water Act requirements. Extensive Monitoring will also help the Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research committee (CMER) prioritize, plan, conduct, interpret, and assess scope of inference of other CMER studies and monitoring projects.

At the February 2024 Board meeting, the Board expressed support for identifying a Principal Investigator (PI) for Extensive Monitoring to ensure the project is advancing efficiently. The Board also requested the AMP and CMER co-chairs provide updates on the progress of Extensive Monitoring every 6 months. A full update will be provided at the Board's February meeting. This memo outlines progress to date on Extensive Monitoring. The AMPA worked with the Project Manager, Alexander Prescott, and the Extensive Monitoring Project Team to assign an interim PI to advance the writing of the Scoping Document and ensure the moving the project continues to meet deliverable timelines. The Scoping Document development is currently underway which contains many detailed elements that require meticulous research and collaborative thinking such as critical questions, proposed alternatives/budgets, methodological descriptions, and the Best Available Science (BAS) Report.

The Project Team has been working under the guidance of the Riparian Scientific Advisory Group (RSAG), sharing working drafts of documents for feedback including critical questions, BAS Report, and – in November - the draft

Scoping Document. The Extensive Monitoring Project Team expects to deliver a final draft of the Scoping Document to CMER in February 2025, which will begin the AMP review and approval processes. Extensive Monitoring advancement is contingent upon AMP participants collective good faith effort to honor review timelines and participate in inter-caucus collaboration. Following TFW Policy's approval of the Scoping Document, including selection of the preferred alternative approach, the Project Team will begin the development of the Study Design (estimated to be completed ~18-months).

2. Westside Type F Exploratory Study Update

The Westside Type F Riparian Prescription Effectiveness Project was developed to evaluate the effectiveness of the current forest practices riparian management zone (RMZ) rules in achieving the conservation goals of the Forest Practices (FP) Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) in fish-bearing streams in Western Washington to provide science-based recommendations for adaptive management to the Board. Because the FPHCP RMZ rules for fish-bearing waters in Western Washington include 25 possible prescription variations, two preliminary investigations were recommended (Phase 1 and Phase 2) to narrow the array of RMZ configurations to investigate in the Effectiveness Project (Phase 3). The objectives of the Westside Type F Exploratory Study (Phase 2) were to provide a coarse level assessment of post-harvest riparian forest stand conditions and riparian functions at sites with and without inner zone harvest across[1] FP rule prescription variants to understand and quantify variability and sensitivities to commonly-implemented harvest prescriptions and evaluate the extent to which these stands are on trajectory to achieve Desired Future Condition[2] (DFC) target.

Westside Type F Exploratory Study report delivery and TFW Policy recommendations to the Board has been delayed for 2 years. TFW Policy received the Findings Report of the Westside Type F Riparian Prescription Monitoring Project- Riparian Management Zone Exploratory Study (Westside Type F Exploratory Study) on August 29, 2024. On September 24, 2024, TFW Policy approved a full-consensus motion to take action on the report. TFW Policy expects to deliver recommendations to the Board at the February 2025 meeting.

3. Alternate Harvest Prescriptions TFW Policy Dispute Resolution, Phase 1

The Small Forest Landowner Caucus (SFL) has invoked the Dispute Resolution process at the September 5, 2024, TFW Policy meeting regarding a failed motion to complete the development of an experimental small forest landowner conifer thinning alternate harvest prescription and associated AMP monitoring study for western Washington. The motion was, "I move to accept the alternate harvest prescription in response to the Board request to develop experimental alternate harvest prescriptions and Policy requests CMER develop a monitoring plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the prescription. Additionally, to request the board to allow a minimum number of 75' harvest prescriptions cross all site classes through a pilot rule making." The Conservation Caucus voted not to move forward with the September 5th motion due to concerns about the lack of a strong scientific foundation. An informal meeting was held on September 18th to support the disputing parties to accurately characterize the dispute and begin the formal process. The AMPA and Policy Co-chair facilitated the meeting and established the dispute resolution timeline. Caucus representatives have submitted their positions in writing and will discuss the dispute and potential solutions to resolve the dispute at the November 7th TFW Policy meeting. TFW Policy has until November 27, 2024, to resolve the dispute or enter into Stage 2 of Dispute Resolution process.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

[1] **Inner Zone Harvest** - Forest practices in the inner zone must be conducted in such a way as to meet or exceed stand requirements to achieve the goal in WAC 222-30-010(2). The width of the inner zone is determined by site class, bankfull width, and management option. Timber harvest in this zone must be consistent with the stand requirements in order to reach the desired future condition targets.

[2] **Desired Future Condition** (DFC) is a reference point on a pathway and not an endpoint for stands. DFC means the stand conditions of a mature riparian forest at 140 years of age, the midpoint between 80 and 200 years. Where basal area is the only stand attribute used to describe 140-year old stands, these are referred to as the "Target Basal Area."

Washington State Department of Natural Resources - Adaptive Management Program

Quarterly Update to the Forest Practices Board

November 2024

Summary

Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Committee (CMER) held regular monthly meetings this quarter. The Committee approved or advanced to TFW Policy the following Adaptive Management Program (AMP) project deliverables:

- The Westside Type F Riparian Prescription Effectiveness- Exploratory Field Study Final 6 Questions,
- Schedule L-1 Subject Matter Expert group formation process memo and guidance document, and
- The Water Temperature and Amphibian Use in Type Np Waters with Discontinuous Surface Flow scoping document.

The Timber, Fish, and Wildlife (TFW) Policy Committee held regular monthly, in-person meetings this quarter. The committee approved the following Adaptive Management Program (AMP) project deliverables:

- Schedule L-1 Subject Matter Expert group formation process memo and guidance document , and
- Received the Westside Type F Riparian Prescription Effectiveness-Exploratory Field Study findings package and moved to take action, discussions about the specific alternatives for action is ongoing.

AMP participants continue to make progress on advancing State Auditor's Office (SAO) Recommendations to improve the Adaptive Management Program. Key advancements this quarter include: Progress with the Schedule L-1 Performance Target revision process, receiving approval from CMER and TFW Policy to proceed with Subject Matter Group formation, TFW Policy attending a half-day targeted, in-person Structured Decision Making workshop, and TFW Policy receiving the findings report for the Westside Type F Riparian Prescription Effectiveness Exploratory Field Study and beginning discussions of alternatives for future study.

TABLE OF CONTEXTS

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PROJECT UPDATES

ROADS PRESCRIPTION SCALE EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING PROJECT

The **Roads Prescription-Scale Effectiveness Monitoring Project** examines high-traffic, near-stream forest logging roads as sources of sediment and seeks to better understand and evaluate mitigating best management practices. To date, the project has collected 5 water years of precipitation, discharge, sediment, and traffic data associated with each of our 75+ study plots. The 6th and final water year of data collection started October 1st, 2024. In the last quarter, the project team made significant progress in their effort to analyze and interpret the backlog of traffic data. The Project Team completed the second of two interim reports and delivered it to CMER in August. This report summarizes the implementation and preliminary results of the major experiment and 6 parametrization experiments which augment the major experiment field results and enhance the modeling component of the project. In the field, the Project Team coordinated annual grading at all project site road segments with the assistance of the DNR South Puget Sound Region. The Project Team also continued to analyze data, developed implementation plans, and calibrated flumes at high-flow sites. In the next quarter, the Project Team expects to continue to develop implementation plans and a scope of work for the GRAIP WARSEM Survey and Analysis experiment as well as re-focusing our efforts on data analysis from previous water years. The project team and contractors will restart their monthly site maintenance and data collection routines during this rainy season.

EXTENSIVE RIPARIAN STATUS AND TRENDS MONITORING PROGRAM – RIPARIAN VEGETATION AND STREAM TEMPERATURE

The **Extensive Riparian Status and Trends Monitoring Program – Riparian Vegetation and Stream Temperature Project** 's purpose is to provide data needed to evaluate landscape-scale effects and changes over time of implementing forest practices riparian prescriptions. The objective is to build and maintain a status and trends monitoring program that will evaluate how aquatic conditions, riparian forest structure and functions, and the desired habitat conditions they support, change on a landscape scale. This project is in an early stage of development in which the Project Team is considering design and methodology alternatives. This reporting period, the Project Team continued to develop the scoping document and the best available science (BAS) document. A working draft of the BAS document was shared with the Riparian Scientific Advisory Group (RSAG) for their preliminary feedback. In the next quarter, the project team will share a working draft of the Scoping Document with RSAG for their preliminary feedback and develop final drafts of the Scoping and BAS documents for RSAG review in early 2025.

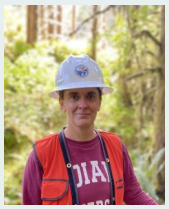
WESTSIDE TYPE F RIPARIAN PRESCRIPTION EFFECTIVENESS-EXPLORATORY FIELD STUDY

The **Westside Type F Riparian Prescription Effectiveness- Exploratory Field Study** evaluates the effectiveness of westside riparian prescriptions for F and S streams in achieving resource objectives and performance targets. This exploratory study is intended to reduce uncertainties associated with the relative sensitivity of post-harvest riparian stand conditions and riparian functions to harvest prescriptions and to potential harvest-associated disturbances as well as to be used to focus and refine the development of a future Study Design for a more rigorous test of the effectiveness of the Type F rule buffers. During this reporting period, the final exploratory report was delivered to CMER and TFW Policy with the findings package, including the Final Six Questions document and a cover letter from the AMPA. TFW Policy voted to take action on the report in their October meeting, with alternatives and consensus decision to follow in the coming months.

EASTSIDE FOREST HEALTH STRATEGY

The **Eastside Forest Health Strategy** workgroup developed a report that was reviewed by CMER in April 2022. The Eastside Forest Health Strategy workgroup recommended the development of a research and monitoring strategy investigating active RMZ management approaches that build on current RMZ prescriptions and are designed to balance disturbance resiliency and resource protection objectives outlined in the FP HCP (Schedule L-1 functional objectives and performance targets, Appendix N). SAGE is currently working to develop the full Eastside Forest Health Strategy after approval of the strategy guidance document in Spring 2023. CMER Scientist Rachel Rubin has begun collecting Geospatial datasets and additional literature to develop a desktop analysis to aide in developing a more robust Eastside Forest Health Strategy document which would outline a series of studies or projects that will provide insight to the critical questions. In November 2024 SAGE will reconvene their strategy work group to begin lining out further details.

AMP PROJECT MANAGERS



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EASTSIDE TIMBER HABITAT EVALUATION PROJECT (ETHEP)

The **Eastside Timber Habitat Evaluation Project (ETHEP)** is designed to develop framework(s) for applying riparian harvest rules along Type S and Type F streams in eastern Washington based on the Forest Practices Habitat Conservation Plan (FPHCP) functional objectives and performance targets. The ISPR-approved Study Design has been approved by CMER and was delivered to TFW Policy in December 2023. The Project Team has been diligently working on desktop modeling and is working to complete site field data collection across Eastern Washington. Ben Spei (Principal Investigator) gave a presentation to CMER at the September 2024 meeting. This project is slated for completion in June 2025.

EASTSIDE TYPE N RIPARIAN EFFECTIVENESS PROJECT (ENREP)

The **Eastside Type N Riparian Effectiveness Project (ENREP)** will help inform if, and to what extent, the prescriptions found in the Type N Riparian Prescriptions Rule Group are effective in protecting water quality and some riparian functions, particularly as they apply to sediment and stream temperature in eastern Washington. The project is currently in full implementation. At each of the five sites, data are collected for at least two years pre-harvest and two years post-harvest, with a transitional year of data collected in between. Each study site has a treatment basin and an unharvested, reference basin. Data collection includes: biophysical variables, including streamflow, wetted channel extent, suspended sediment concentrations, stream shade, riparian forest mensuration, large wood, temperature, and stream cross sections, aquatic life (benthic macroinvertebrates), and habitat. Springdale and Tripps basins were harvested in 2021. Blue Grouse basin harvest was completed in 2022. Coxit basin harvest was completed in fall 2023. Fish Creek basin harvest was completed in 2024. The project team and SAGE recommended extending the ENREP study for an additional 5-year period at all sites with a reduced suite of variables. The extension request was discussed thoroughly at both CMER and TFW Policy. TFW Policy approved extending monitoring through FY25 and will continue discussion of further extension during budget conversations for the next biennium.

WATER TYPING STRATEGY

The purpose of the **Water Typing Strategy** is to inform a permanent water typing system that meets FFR objectives. One goal of the DNR water typing system is to accurately identify the upstream extent of fish habitat.

In November of 2019 the Washington Forest Practices Board (Board) passed a motion recommending "the Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Committee (CMER) to [sic] develop study designs for the PHB validation, physical characteristics, and map-based Lidar model studies" **(WA FPB 2019a, WA FPB 2019b)** . The following April, CMER approved a strategy for the In-stream Science Advisory Group (ISAG) to complete study designs for the three projects identified by the Board: i) **Potential Habitat Breaks (PHB)**, ii) **Default Physical Criteria (DPC)**, iii) **LiDAR Model Map**. The Water Typing Strategy was approved by the Board in May 2020 **(WA FPB 2020)**. ISAG is currently developing and implementing the first two studies. The implementation of a LiDAR model study will use findings from the PHB and DPC studies to define metrics and criteria to model. The LiDAR mapping also requires a statewide LiDAR-based hydrography, which is currently scheduled for a 2029 completion (per Department of Ecology).

The PHB/DPC project team is working on desktop site screening, with field implementation expected to begin in spring 2025. A Request for Qualifications and Quotations (RFQQ) for implementation of the PHB and DPC studies was issued in September. An apparent successful bidder is scheduled to be announced in November, with work scheduled to begin in January 2025. The DPC Study Design was delivered to CMER in September to initiate concurrent CMER/ISAG review.

ANADROMOUS FISH FLOOR

A Proposal Initiation (PI) was received in May 2023 from Washington Department of Natural Resources for the **Anadromous Fish Floor (AFF)** Validation Study. The PI requests the development of a study design to determine the physical stream features of an anadromous stream floor and compare that to the criteria used in the Board accepted AFF alternatives. The Project Team conducted an after-action review of previous AFF work to identify lessons learned and data gaps and is currently drafting a Project Charter.

RIPARIAN FUNCTION LITERATURE SYNTHESIS

The **Riparian Function Literature Synthesis** is a stand-alone literature synthesis that will address questions regarding the effects of timber harvest on riparian functions. CMER reviewers provided comments in July. The authors have addressed those comments and returned the document to CMER in October.

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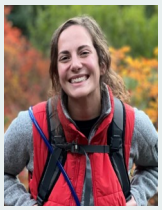

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RIPARIAN CHARACTERISTICS AND SHADE (RCS)

The **Riparian Characteristics and Shade (RCS)** project is a field research project intended to evaluate the combined effect of stream-adjacent no-harvest zone width and adjacent-stand harvest intensity (i.e., thinning density) on stream shade. The Principal Investigator (PI) is analyzing data collected from the 2024 field season. The PI is also identifying sites in the West Cascades ecoregion for implementation in 2025.

WETLAND MANAGEMENT ZONE EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING PROJECT (WMZ)

The **Wetland Management Zone Effectiveness Monitoring Project (WMZ)** will evaluate wetland functions to determine if the target of no-net-loss of hydrologic function, water quality targets, and hydrologic continuity are being achieved. Following the May 2023 TWF Policy approval of the project charter, the project team has begun the scoping process. The development of scoping documents such as the Best Available Science Document and Prospective Six Questions Document is ongoing but is currently on hold while CMER discusses, reviews, and potentially revises Schedule L-1 Wetland Performance Targets. Schedule L-1 Performance Target revisions may have implications on how WMZ is scoped. Funding for the WMZ begins in FY26, with implementation slated to begin in FY28.

FORESTED WETLANDS EFFECTIVENESS PROJECT (FWEP)

The **Forested Wetlands Effectiveness Project (FWEP)** will evaluate the effectiveness of forest practices prescriptions to protect, maintain, and restore aquatic resources, namely water quality and wetland hydrologic and ecological functions. It will determine if they achieve the FPHCP goal of no-net-loss of wetland functions by half of a timber rotation cycle while meeting water quality standards (FPHCP). FWEP is comprised of a series of studies, with the Chronosequence Study currently in implementation. The Chronosequence Study uses an observational space-for-time substitution to examine forested wetland dynamics at 2, 10, 20, and 40+ years post-harvest in Western Washington. Tanner Williamson, CMER Wetland Scientist, along with the project team completed instrumentation of 24 project sites in summer 2023. They have since been monitoring hydrology, water quality, canopy structure, vegetative community, and timber stand characteristics. The Chonosequence Study will continue until October 2025, capturing 2 full water years. Results from this study will be used to inform the design of future FWEP studies.

WATER TEMPURATURE AND AMPHIBIAN USE IN TYPE NP WATERS WITH DISCONTINUOUS SURFACE FLOW (CWA PROJECT)

The **Water Temperature and Amphibian Use in Type Np Waters with Discontinuous Surface Flow** will inform the Overall Performance Goals to meet water quality standards and support the long-term viability of covered species by evaluating the influence of intermittent stream reaches on water temperature and FP-designated amphibian use. MER approved the recently developed Scoping document and is currently in review by TFW Policy.

TYPE N EXPERIMENTAL BUFFER TREATMENT PROJECT IN HARD ROCK LITHOLOGIES AMPHIBIAN MONITORING PHASE III

The **Type N Experimental Buffer Treatment Project in Hard Rock Lithologies – Amphibian Monitoring Phase III** project is data collection for stream-associated amphibian demographics and relevant covariates (e.g., stream temperature) for post-harvest years 14 and 15 was completed July-September 2022 and 2023. This will allow for the evaluation of continued trends in amphibian densities at long-term study sites. The team has completed data analysis, and the draft final report has been delivered to CMER. Final report expected the end of the current biennium (June 2025).

UNSTABLE SLOPES CRITERIA PROJECT

The **Unstable Slopes Criteria project** will evaluate the degree to which the landforms described in the unstable slopes rules identify potentially unstable areas with a high probability of impacting public resources and public safety. This quarter, the project team made some progress on Project 2, Object-Based Landform Mapping with High-Resolution Topography Study report. A draft of the final report is pending, but there are significant delays in the project and with finalizing the report.

The combined projects of Empirical Evaluation of Shallow Landslide Susceptibility and Frequency by Landform (Project 3) and the Empirical Evaluation of Shallow Landslide Runout (Project 4) are in the early stages of implementation.

DEEP-SEATED LANDSLIDE RESEARCH STRATEGY

The **Deep-Seated Landslide Research Strategy** utilizes the results of the literature reviews for forest harvest effects on glacial and bedrock deep-seated landslides to address key knowledge gaps identified during the literature reviews and to address questions from the Forest Practices Board and Policy regarding the potential effects of forest practices on deep-seated landslides. The RFQQ for the Mapping and Classification Study Design implementation is complete and BGC Engineering, Inc. was chosen as the successful bidder. Currently, we are working on developing and finalizing a contract in order to begin the implementation phase of the project.

RIPARIAN CHARACTERISTICS AND SHADE STUDY POST-HARVEST SITE VISIT
OCTOBER 2024

The Riparian Characteristics and Shade Study Principal Investigator, project team members, and AMP program staff visited one of the RCS field sites that was harvested in June 2024. The project's purpose is to evaluate the effects of different riparian buffer sizes and thinning intensities on riparian shade. This field visit provided an opportunity to discuss the harvest layout, lessons learned, and improvements to standardize data collection across the 3-day harvest sequence. The AMP team is grateful for our partnership with Weyerhaeuser Company, who helped facilitate the experiment and ensured that the project was a success 2024. This photo shows the Smith Creek site following the RMZ harvest, with leave trees marked in blue.

WETSAG FIELD TRIP
OCTOBER 2024

WetSAG hosted a fieldtrip in October 2024 to wetlands located in the Central Cascades. This area was chosen because wetland hydrology, vegetation, and timber characteristics differ markedly from the FWEP – Chronosequence Study sites located in Western Washington. The focus of this field trip was to develop a better understanding of how wetlands vary across the hydrological gradients found in Washington. Sites visited include: a forested wetland and a lake-fringe peat bog on the west side of Fish Lake, an oxbow wetland complex on the Chiwawa River, and a scrub-shrub system on Big Meadow Creek. Attendees included representatives from DNR, CMER science staff, Ecology, and the Westside tribes.

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 25, 2024

TO: Forest Practices Board

FROM: Maggie Franquemont, Forest Regulation Policy Program Manager MF

SUBJECT: Board Manual Updates Staff Report

This memo will outline the current and upcoming Board Manual updates.

Current Updates

Board Manual Section 23: Guidelines for Field Protocol to Locate Mapped Divisions Between Stream Types & Perennial Stream Identification – Staff and stakeholders have been working on Part 1 – *Identify and Locate the Division Between Type F and N Waters* as directed by the Board at the August 28, 2024 meeting. There is a more in-depth update on this manual section in the Water Typing System Rule update.

Board Manual Section 17: Guidelines for the Small Forest Landowner Forestry Riparian Easement Program – This section has been through extensive stakeholder process, including working with the Small Forest Landowner Advisory Committee and a stakeholder workgroup. We are presenting this section with more detail on its development at the November 2024 Board meeting.

Future Updates

Board Manual Section 7: Guidelines for Riparian Management Zones – This Board Manual section needs to be updated to comply with the Western Washington Type Np Stream Buffer Rule making that is currently in progress. Staff and stakeholders will work on this section once Board Manual Section 23 Part 1 is completed and concurrently with Board Manual Section 23 Part 2 – *Identify and Locate the Divisions Between Type Np and Ns Waters*.

Other Board Manual sections – Staff have created a priority list for reviewing and updating Board Manual sections. We will be convening a stakeholder workgroup to finalize our priorities in late 2024 or early 2025.

If you have any questions feel free to contact me at maggie.franquemont@dnr.wa.gov.

MF/

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October 18, 2024

TO: Forest Practices Board

FROM: Tami Miketa, Manager, Small Forest Landowner Office

SUBJECT: Small Forest Landowner Office and Advisory Committee

Small Forest Landowner Advisory Committee
The Small Forest Landowner Advisory Committee meet one time during this reporting period, on July 23, 2024. Donelle Mahan gave the Advisory Committee an update on the status of fpOnline, we discussed the process the Committee will follow to periodically review the Forestry Riparian Easement Program, which has been directed by statute. We also discussed the stakeholder review process for the creation of Board Manual Section 17 the Forestry Riparian Easement Program, and we also discussed the Carbon Work Group Report.

SFLO Program Updates
This reporting period saw two staff members leave the SFLO. Brent Haverkamp, our Fish & Wildlife Biologist is leaving the SFLO the end of October and is moving with his partner and young daughter to Lewiston Montana to be closer to family. Martin Pillow, who was a Forestry Riparian Easement Forester was promoted within the Forest Regulation Division to the Compliance Monitoring Field Coordinator. We wish Brent the very best in his future career and celebrate the new career path Martin is taking.

I am excited to say that because of the increase in funding for the Forestry Riparian Easement Program this biennium, and because of our high performing staff, the time to process easements through to the compensation point has been shortened dramatically. When funds were limited, the FREP was limited in the number of easements that could be purchased each biennium, and funding has certainly not matched demand over time. Thus, landowners on the FREP list were waiting to be compensated up to five or seven years later. Today, the Program is compensating landowners who have only been on the list for two years. Processing easements takes time. The Qualifying Timber (QT) needs to be identified, the QT needs to be cruised and valued, and then the easement moves through the escrow process. If all goes completely smooth, an easement compensation process will take roughly 8 to 12 months, so, we're getting closer!

Long-Term Applications (LTA)

In this Forest Practices Board report, the SFLO regularly shows the status of Long-Term Applications. There are currently 322 approved long-term applications that have passed Phase 2 of the process. This is an increase of three approved LTAs since the end of the last reporting period (July 11, 2024).

LTA Applications	LTA Phase 1	LTA Phase 2	TOTAL
Under Review	4	1	**5**
Approved	1	322	**322**

Upcoming Events

Check out the WSU Extension Forestry – Southwest Youtube channel to watch videos, recorded webinars, and other clips on forestry topics.

The Forest Overstory Podcast - A podcast for small forest landowners. The Forest Overstory is a podcast series dedicated to unraveling forest management topics that impact small forest landowners by interviewing forest land managers, researchers, and fellow private forest owners around Washington. Visit The Forest Overstory Podcast | Extension Forestry | Washington State University (wsu.edu).

Please contact me at (360) 902-1415 or tamara.miketa@dnr.wa.gov if you have questions.
TM/

TIMBER FISH
& WILDLIFE

Timber, Fish and Wildlife Policy Committee
Forest Practices Board

PO BOX 47012, Olympia, WA 98504-4712

Policy Co-Chairs:
Cody Thomas, Upper Columbia United Tribes
Rico Vinh, Washington Conservation Action

October 30, 2024

TO: Forest Practices Board
FROM: Cody Thomas and Rico Vinh
SUBJECT: TFW Policy Committee Report

The Timber, Fish, & Wildlife Policy Committee (Policy) workload is driven by internal process deadlines and priorities directed by the Forest Practices Board (Board). To accommodate the heavy workload, Policy relies on additional meetings, email communications between meetings, and policy workgroups to address specific issues and meet deadlines to accomplish their work.

TFW POLICY COMMITTEE BUSINESS UPDATE for August 2024 – October 2024

SAO Recommendation #5
Policy formed a State Auditor's Office (SAO) working group that meets monthly to refine and implement the Board-approved action plan. Several recommendations are being worked on including structured decision making, decision criteria, review of Schedule L-1, and how to handle non-CMER science.

Structured Decision Making
Policy has continued to work with Compass Resource Management to explore and develop opportunities to use Structured Decision Making (SDM). Policy agreed to use the Eastside Type N Riparian Effectiveness Project (ENREP) for the purposes of working through the SDM process to prepare for eventual decision making, as well as to inform a recommendation to the Board about whether to incorporate SDM moving forward.

Master Project Schedule
The Policy budget workgroup continues to meet to discuss projects and funding. The workgroup and the AMPA developed contingency plans for future funding scenarios. Policy approved the FY 25-27 MPS.

Small Forest Landowner Experimental Harvest Prescription
Policy reviewed the workgroup recommendation. It was not approved at Policy and the dispute resolution process began. Policy worked to define the dispute, gather caucus positions, and continues to meet, following the dispute resolution process.

Westside Type F Exploratory Report Findings Package
Policy received the Findings Package, Final Report, and Six Questions document. Policy agreed by consensus to accept the report and to take action. Discussions are ongoing on what actions to take.

MAJOR TFW POLICY COMMITTEE TOPICS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2024

- **Adaptive Management Program (AMP)** budget and the **Master Project Schedule (MPS):** Policy will continue to review and refine the MPS and prepare recommendations to the Board.
- **SAO**: Policy is developing the implementation criteria for SAO recommendation #5 (Net Gains Options) and 6 (adopt decision criteria) for inclusion in the rule or guidance in calendar year 2024. Policy will continue to work with Compass Resource Management to work through the Structured Decision Making process for ENREP. The SAO workgroup will continue to meet monthly to discuss using non-CMER science and provide guidance for updating the Schedule L-1.
- **Unstable Slope Criteria Project – Object Based Landform Mapping with High Resolution Topography Report:** CMER is expected to deliver the report to Policy in October 2024
- **Extensive Riparian Monitoring:** Policy received a recommended extensive riparian monitoring charter for riparian vegetation and stream temperature in December 2023. The scoping document will follow in spring 2024.
- **Riparian Literature Synthesis Report:** CMER will deliver to the report to Policy in September 2024
- **Eastside Timber Habitat Evaluation Project (ETHEP):** Prospective 6 questions will be delivered from CMER to Policy in March 2025.

<u>New Projects</u>:
The Policy Committee workload is heavy yet must also remain sensitive to the changes in various timelines and to new issues as they come up. The capacity for Policy to accept any new work as assigned by the Forest Practices Board or taken on for other reasons could require delaying existing priorities and/or scheduling additional meetings.

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M E M O R A N D U M

October 25, 2024

To: Forest Practices Board
From: Darrin Masters, WDFW Senior Forest Habitat Biologist, Forest Habitats Section
Subject: Upland Wildlife Update

The following provides a brief status update for ongoing or pending actions pertaining to priority wildlife species in forested habitats:

Mount Rainier White-tailed Ptarmigan
2024: Federally listed as Threatened

On August 2, 2024, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) determined that the Mount Rainier White-tailed Ptarmigan (*Lagopus leucura rainierensis* - MRWP) meets the definition of a threatened species because habitat loss and degradation resulting from climate change will affect the MRWP's viability within the foreseeable future. The MRWP is listed as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). In general, they prefer alpine habitats during the breeding and post-breeding seasons. Alpine habitat extends from treeline to permanent snowpack or rock where there is well-developed low-growing vegetation (both herbaceous and shrub) and rock outcrops. Little is known about habitat use and distribution during the winter in Washington. Preliminary data from radio-tracked individuals in the Okanagan/Wenatchee and Mt. Baker/Snoqualmie National Forests (Schroeder et al. 2024) suggests that Ptarmigan continue to inhabit alpine habitats for the most part during the winter. However, some males were observed descending to areas of bog birch surrounded by subalpine forest at about 6,500 ft. and into a clearcut on land owned by DNR at about 4,000 ft. Currently, it is unknown whether this is a common occurrence. WDFW is currently engaged in research to answer this question.

The vast majority of Ptarmigan habitat in the state occurs on federal lands. The USFWS (2023) estimates that about two percent occurs on state lands and one percent on private lands. WDFW is uncertain about the extent of state and private Forest Practices that occur above 4,000 ft. in the winter and spring months but we suspect that the frequency is low. Currently, there are no Forest Practices Rules for Ptarmigan because the species is not listed as state threatened or endangered. Also, Ptarmigan and its habitat are not listed as WDFW Priority Habitat and Species (PHS).

In August of 2024, the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) initiated a consultation with WDFW regarding the development of state Critical Habitat. On August 30, WDFW made the following recommendation in a memorandum to the Board (WDFW 2024a):

> "*Given the relatively small overlap of Ptarmigan habitats on state and private lands and the potential benefits of forestry activities to the species, WDFW recommends that state Critical Habitat not be developed at this time. However, if a species is listed as endangered or threatened under the federal ESA, WDFW will recommend to the Wildlife Commission that it be listed as state endangered or threatened. If it is listed on the state level, the subject of Critical Habitat will need to be revisited.*"

Marbled Murrelet

1992: Federally listed as Threatened
1993: State listed as Threatened,
1996: Federal critical habitat designated
1997: FPB enacted State Forest Practices Rules
2017: State up-listed to Endangered
2023: Proposed expedited rule making for recommended changes to WAC 222
2024: New Murrelet rules take effect

Under the Northwest Forest Plan, the western coast of the U.S. is divided into five conservation zones for the Marbled Murrelet with Zone 1 starting in Puget Sound and Zone 5 ending just north of San Francisco. WDFW continues to monitor Marbled Murrelet populations at-sea in the Puget Sound and Straits, and along the Washington coast. The Strait of Juan de Fuca, the Strait of Georgia, and Puget Sound (Zone 1) are monitored on even years, most recently in 2022. The Washington coast from Cape Flattery to Columbia River mouth (Zone 2) is monitored on odd years, most recently in 2023. Monitoring continues to indicate that the species' status has not improved since state listing in 1993. It has continued to decline annually at a rate of 4.6% in Zone 1 (Pearson et al. 2022) and by 3.5% along the Washington coast (Zone 2 – Pearson et al. 2023). These are the only data available to assess Murrelet abundance and trends. The Northwest Forest Plan Effectiveness Monitoring team's 25-year report has been published (McIver et al. 2021) as well as a report on trends in habitat conditions (Lorenz et al 2021). The 2022 and 2023 at-sea survey reports from WDFW are now available (Pearson et al. 2022, Pearson et al. 2023). Further, McIver 2024 summarizes abundance and population trends across all conservation zones within the Northwest Forest Plan area. WDFW is in the process of developing a new Periodic Status Review for Murrelet, which should be published during the winter of 2024/25. WDFW is also working with Oregon State University on a new spatial model based on Murrelet ecology that can be used to inform forest management decisions. The model framework is currently in a conceptual phase.

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Canada Lynx

1993: State listed as Threatened
1994: FPB enacted voluntary management approach
2000: Federally listed as Threatened
2017: State up-listed to Endangered
2023: Federal Species Status Assessment and Draft Federal Recovery Plan published

WDFW continues to explore lynx conservation opportunities in collaboration with landowners, Canadian federal and provincial entities, US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), US Forest Service (USFS), conservation organizations, tribes, and academic partners. The goal is to refine recovery actions that can be implemented in the near- and long-term to benefit lynx conservation in Washington.

Evaluation of Forest Practices Applications (FPAs) on private lands continues in order to identify potential impacts to lynx habitat. Given wildfire impacts in northcentral Washington, WDFW has pursued ongoing coordination with partners to bring awareness of the importance of balancing habitat protection with the need to address fire risk, including on federal lands.

Under DNR's Lynx Habitat Management Plan (2006), DNR and Washington State University (WSU) developed a project to investigate the effects of different pre-commercial thinning designs on snowshoe hare use of habitat, vulnerability to predation, and sources of mortality. The information gathered may then be used to better inform forest management treatments favorable for snowshoe hares while also providing increased foraging opportunities for lynx. DNR and partners have completed the first year of post-treatment snowshoe hare radio telemetry and began the second year of trapping and radio telemetry in October 2024.

Additionally, Colville Confederated Tribes is leading a lynx reintroduction project on the reservation. They released 19 lynx from 2021 to 2022 into the Washington Kettle Range. They actively trapped in October, November, and December of 2023 resulting in the translocation of seven more lynx. The Tribe began another year of trapping in October 2024 with a goal of releasing 12 more lynx in Washington.

To further lynx conservation, WDFW participates in ongoing multi-agency surveys for lynx in the North Cascades, WDFW maintains a current database of verifiable lynx detections, and WDFW is currently updating the periodic status review for the lynx (last done in 2017), and this updated version is expected to be available for public review by Spring 2024.

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Northern Spotted Owl

Final Barred Owl Management Strategy- The Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) population has continued to decline primarily due to ongoing competitive interactions with Barred Owls. In August 2024, the Service announced their Record of Decision and final Barred Owl Management Strategy to address the threat of the non-native and invasive barred owl to native northern and California spotted owls. WDFW supports the Strategy as an essential component of NSO recovery; however, decisions have not been made about how to support implementation, or what department resources to devote to the effort. For more information, please see the website: Barred Owl Management | U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, including the FAQs page: Barred Owl Management Strategy Record of Decision FAQs.

Augmentation feasibility assessment- The NSO population augmentation feasibility assessment began in January 2024 and will continue through June 2025. The project has developed augmentation scenarios including wild-wild translocations, head starting, and captive rearing. The primary goal of this project is to draft a science and planning document that assesses the feasibility of NSO augmentation in select WA populations. This document will clearly define the augmentation objectives, identify and assess risks, and detail the measures of performance. This document will be used by WDFW to guide decisions about using augmentation as part of NSO population recovery efforts in WA and related management actions.
NSO captive breeding working group- WDFW staff have discussed the possibility of NSO captive breeding with its partners at the Woodland Park Zoo and the Oregon Zoo. WDFW is facilitating an NSO captive breeding working group with other state and federal agency partners in WA, OR and CA.
NSO monitoring- WDFW initiated NSO passive acoustic monitoring (PAM) surveys in May 2024 on state land in the Teanaway Community Forest. Fourteen Autonomous Recording Units (ARU) were deployed in three drainages during the NSO breeding season. WDFW staff registered to attend an audio recording analysis (PNW Cnet) workshop in November 2024 hosted by the Bioacoustics Lab in Corvallis, OR. This training will build capacity for WDFW to use ARUs as a monitoring tool. WDFW purchased ARU equipment and continued to develop plans with federal partners to expand monitoring next year in the Mt. Barker-Snoqualmie FS.

Barred owl diet study on JBLM- Barred owls have the potential to undermine other sensitive species' conservation efforts and cause local extinctions; however, most barred owl diet studies on the West Coast have been in and around spotted owl habitat. Therefore, WDFW is developing a barred owl diet study on Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) to evaluate the potential threat of barred owls to other species like Western Gray Squirrels.

DNR/USFWS Collaboration on NSO CBA-The DNR submitted a draft NSO Conservation Benefit Agreement to the USFWS in December 2023 and is currently working with the USFWS to get final approvals.

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Fisher

1998: State listed as Endangered
2016: Federal status: Final decision for west coast DPS - not warranted for listing (April 2016)
2018: Ruling on 2017 withdrawal of proposed ESA listing, USFWS ordered to revisit that decision
2019: Federal revised proposed rule to list fishers, excluded fisher in Washington

Fisher reintroductions into Washington have been completed by WDFW and cooperating partners, with a total of 260 fishers, including 90 in Olympic National Park (2008-2010), and 170 in other federal lands within the Cascade Range. Non-federal landowners can continue to voluntarily enroll in the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) and receive federal regulatory assurances if the fisher were to become listed under the ESA in the future. By enrolling in the CCAA, landowners agree to follow basic conservation measures that protect fishers that may use their lands. To date, 68 entities who own or manage 3,486,855 acres of non-federal forest lands are enrolled in the CCAA.

WDFW and project partners conducted a distribution and occupancy survey (using camera stations) of much of the federal lands in the South Cascades Ecosystem from October 2022 – July 2023. Data analysis of this survey is ongoing, but our preliminary results included the detection of fishers at >=28 of 102 functioning survey stations. This survey effort was also implemented in the North Cascades Ecosystem with deployment of 155 camera stations from 15 September to 15 November 2023. Station revisits to obtain data were completed in August 2024.

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Western Gray Squirrel

1993: State listed as Threatened
2002: Petitioned for Federal listing
2003: Federal listing denied
2013: FPB enacted voluntary management approach
2016: State retention of Threatened status
2023: State listed as Endangered

On December 28, 2023, the western gray squirrel (WGS) was officially added to the list of wildlife classified as endangered species in WAC 220-610-010. After uplisting, WDFW sent a memorandum (WDFW 2024b) to DNR that stated their recommendations for next steps to the Board, which included the formation of a WGS wildlife working group. The Board accepted the recommendation and requested the formation of the Wildlife Working Group at the February 14 meeting. WDFW sent its first call for interested parties to TFW partners and other stakeholders on May 22, 2024. Since then, we've continued to reach out and have discussions with stakeholders about group participation. To date we've received interest from large landowners, conservation organizations, private individuals, and land trusts. Small forest landowners are currently underrepresented. We are focusing our outreach efforts on small landowners to ensure that they have a voice in the process. WDFW expects to have the working group formed and begin meeting by this fall.

As part of our outreach efforts, biologists from WDFW's Wildlife and Habitat Programs traveled to Klickitat County to meet with agency staff and local landowners on two different occasions. The first occurred in late April, where we toured WGS habitat on the Klickitat Wildlife Area and private lands. We compared WGS habitat management actions conducted on the Wildlife Area to that being implemented by a large forest landowner and discussed WGS habitat management recommendations. A second trip occurred in the third week of July where we met with large forest landowners and conservation organizations to discuss their harvest operations and efforts to protect squirrel habitat. Both field trips proved to be valuable for our understanding of what landowners are doing to protect habitat. Further, the opportunity to talk to people in person was an important first step at building positive relationships with landowners.

WGS Research- In July 2024, WDFW's Wildlife Diversity Grant Program awarded the University of Washington $100,724 to develop a spatial prioritization model that can identify priority land parcels for targeted conservation efforts to aid the recovery of the Klickitat County's WGS population. The vast majority of Klickitat County's WGS habitat is on privately held forest lands and the model will also aid in developing incentives for landowners adopting WGS habitat restoration recommendations. The project team will run several model scenarios and create a report detailing the data, model, and model results by June 30, 2025. In October 2024, WDFW staff organized a field trip with the modeling team in Klickitat county, to meet with land managers to see examples of WGS habitat and timber treatments that incorporated the WGS voluntary measures.

WDFW is developing a barred owl diet study on Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) to evaluate the potential threat of barred owls to species of concern, like western gray squirrels. Barred owls have the potential to undermine other sensitive species' conservation efforts and cause local extinctions; however, most barred owl diet studies on the West Coast have been in and around spotted owl habitat. Western gray squirrels are one of multiple SCGNs on JBLM that could benefit from barred owl research and/or removal. Habitat loss and degradation are the primary factors affecting WGS; however, we have learned from spotted owls that barred owls can make suitable habitat inaccessible. Western gray squirrels have low juvenile survival and over half of squirrel deaths at JBLM were attributed to predation. Only 3 isolated WGS populations exist in WA and the population at JBLM is especially vulnerable because of its small size, limited geographic range, and isolation from other populations. Past translocations improved genetic diversity; however, genetic fitness is still a concern. For these reasons, WGS fit the criteria for a species that would be significantly impacted by a novel predator.

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Future Updates to the Board

The Forest Practices Rules require that when a species is listed by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission and/or the U.S. Secretary of the Interior or Commerce, WDNR will consult with WDFW and makes a recommendation to the Forest Practices Board as to whether protection is needed under the Critical Habitat (State) rule (WAC 222-16-080). WDFW and WDNR coordinate to anticipate federal actions and to respond to changes in the status of species addressed by the rules.

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