

Washington State Department of Natural Resources

Adaptive Management

Program



Quarterly Updates to the Forest Practices Board

Summary

August 2024

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:

- Approved the DSL Study Design Prospective 6 Questions document.
- Approved the Roads Project sediment trap efficiency experiment detailed implementation plan.
- Approved the ENREP update Prospective 6 Questions document to incorporate the proposed monitoring extension.
- Approved the Westside Type F Final Report.

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

- Anadromous Fish Floor (AFF) Technical Memo.
- FY 25-27 Master Project Schedule (MPS).

TFW Policy continues to make progress on establishing a Structure Decision Making (SDM) framework to improve AMP decision-making. TFW Policy is working with a consultant to develop an approach to applying a SDM framework to an upcoming decision as a pilot. TFW Policy will make recommendations to the Forest Practices Board on elements of the SDM framework that may be incorporated into the AMP decision making process and included in Board Manual, Section 22.

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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. The project team has now completed the fourth year of main experiment data collection, with one additional year of data collection planned. In this last quarter, the project team completed phase 1 of our annual maintenance cycle (measuring and clearing out sediment tubs, rocking roads, and ditching ditches) with phase 2 (grading) projected to occur in October. The project team also completed 1 parameterization experiment in the last quarter, the Sediment Trap Efficiency Experiment (STE). The STE Experiment evaluates the efficiency and efficacy of sediment traps as sinks of suspended sediment in high traffic, near stream, forest logging roads. In addition to this field work, the project team is working on developing the second of two interim reports, which they expect to complete and deliver to CMER in August 2024. In the next quarter, beyond the completion of the second interim report, the project team will continue additional repairs on field equipment, process a backlog of data from the 2024 water year, and start scoping the GRAIP/WARSEM parameterization experiment scheduled for implementation in 2025.

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 scoping and design alternatives. This last quarter, the project team continued to develop the scoping document package, including the scoping document itself and the best available science (BAS) document. An interim principal investigator (PI) has been assigned to the project, to further support the scoping effort. In the next quarter, the project team expects to complete both the scoping document and the best available science document and start the approvals process.

WESTSIDE TYPE F RIPARIAN PRESCRIPTION EFFECTIVENESS- EXPLORATORY FIELD STUDY FINAL REPORT

The [Westside Type F Riparian Prescription Effectiveness- Exploratory Field Study Final Report](#) 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. The Final exploratory report has followed the below timeline:

- November 2022, Approved by CMER and sent to ISPR for review.
- January 2023, ISPR response received.
- April 2024, Revised version sent to and approved by ISPR.
- May 2024, CMER approval of report (with allowances for minor corrections)
- July 2024, Preliminary RSAG review of Final 6 Questions

In the next quarter the project team expects to complete the review process of the final six questions in August as well as provide the findings report, which includes the Final 6 Questions, the Final Report, and a cover letter from the AMPA, to TFW Policy in September.

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. The harvest at Fish Creek basin was delayed by one year and is now scheduled for completion in 2024. A one-year monitoring extension at Fish Creek to accommodate the delay was approved. 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.

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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. Ben Spei (Principal Investigator) gave a presentation to TFW Policy updating them on the study overview at their December Meeting. Sage delivered the CMER approved Prospective 6 Questions document to TFW Policy at the April TFW Policy Meeting. The project team has been diligently working on desktop modeling and has started on site field data collection across Eastern Washington. This project is slated for completion in June 2025.

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 project team is working on desktop site selection, with field implementation expected to begin in spring 2025. The project team has also made outreach to gauge the interest and availability of potential candidates to serve as Principal Investigator. The DPC project team continues work on the DPC Study Design, which is expected to be delivered to CMER to initiate a concurrent CMER/ISAG review in fall 2024.

ANADROMOUS FISH FLOOR (AFF)

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 has initiated an after-action review of previous AFF work to identify lessons learned and data gaps.

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) coordinated and completed implementation at the two sites within the Northwest Coast ecoregion that were selected for implementation this summer. This included taking daily hemispherical photos during implementation week and coordinating and overseeing contractors to complete LiDAR flights, sequential timber cutting, and post-harvest tree inventory. In the upcoming quarter, the PI will work on identifying sites for implementation in 2025.

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. The literature synthesis is currently in CMER review. CMER comments were received by July 1. The document with comments has been returned to the authors, who will address comments and return the document to CMER.

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, CWA assurance targets, and hydrologic connectivity are being achieved. Following the April 2022 CMER 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.

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FORESTED WETLANDS EFFECTIVENESS PROJECT (FWEP)

The **Forested Wetlands Effectiveness Project (FWEP)** projects will look at the effectiveness of forest practices prescriptions to protect, maintain, and restore aquatic resources, namely water quality and wetland hydrologic and ecological functions. It will be evaluated to determine if they achieve the FPHCP goal of no-net-loss of functions of those wetlands by half of a timber rotation cycle while meeting water quality standards (FPHCP). FWEP has an approved Study Design. Tanner Williamson, CMER Wetland Scientist, along with the project team completed the instrumentation of all 24 project sites over the 2023 field season. Water Quality data collection began in October and will continue through 2025. Data collection includes water quality analysis for: Suspended Sediment Concentration, soluble Reactive Phosphorus, Dissolved Organic Carbon and Nitrogen. The project team has completed its' first round of hemispherical photography and has been collecting monthly field data. The team is currently conducting forest and vegetation surveys and has completed half the of the surveys as of mid July. Surveys are scheduled to be completed by the end of September.

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.

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 will be ready for CMER Review in August. This project is still delayed but has been making significant progress.

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 are ongoing.

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.

This quarter the Prospective 6 Questions document for the Mapping and Classification Study Design was developed and received final approval at CMER. The document was presented to TFW Policy Committee along with a presentation about the Study Design. The project team developed and UPSAG reviewed a RFQQ solicitation to recruit an entity to implement the approved Study Design and the RFQQ was posted for solicitation in July. Proposals are due at the end of August and an apparent winner will be chosen in September. The goal is to have a contract finalized and the apparent winner begin work by the beginning of November.

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 in implementation. 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 to allow for the evaluation of continued trends in amphibian densities at long-term study sites. The team has completed data analysis and report development in underway. Final report expected the end of the current biennium (June 2025).

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. The project team has delivered the scoping documents to CMER and it is currently being reviewed. The project team will address comments with plans to delivery to TFW Policy for review in the fall.



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MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 31, 2024
TO: Forest Practices Board
FROM: Maggie Franquemont, Forest Regulation Policy Program Manager
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 – We have restarted work on this section that will provide guidance for the new Water Typing System Rule. Staff are currently reviewing the work that was done on this section previously and are making updates to match the current draft rule language. We will begin working with stakeholders in August/September. We expect to have this section ready for Board approval when the Board approves the final Water Typing System Rule.

Board Manual Section 17: Guidelines for the Small Forest Landowner Forestry Riparian Easement Program – We began development of this section after the passage of SSB 5667 in the 2024 Legislature. Staff have completed drafting this brand-new section. We are beginning the stakeholder process by going to the Small Forest Landowner Advisory Committee first and then we will begin working with our wider stakeholder group in September. We anticipate that this section will be ready for Board review and approval at the November 2024 meeting.

Future Updates

Board Manual Section 7: Guidelines for Riparian Management Zones – We know that this Board Manual will need some updates to comply with the Western Washington Type Np Buffer Rule that is currently in the rulemaking process. Staff are planning on beginning work on this section with stakeholders once Board Manual Section 23 is updated.

Other Board Manual sections – Staff have begun to create 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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July 11, 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 did not meet during this reporting period. The next meeting is scheduled for July 23, 2024 on TEAMS and at the Natural Resources Building Room 382.

SFLO Program Updates

This past legislative session a bill was passed into law that changed a number of aspects of the Forestry Riparian Easement Program. Those changes are:

- The percentage of compensation for timber within the easement is changed to 90 percent for all applications – up from a minimum of 50 percent and a maximum of 90 percent.
- The duration of the easement contract is changed from 50 years to 40 years.
- The date used for valuing the easement is changed from the date the FREP application is received, to the date that the harvest was completed.
- The maximum compensation for potentially unstable slopes is increased from \$50,000 to \$150,000 per biennium.

DNR staff are currently working on changing the rules and statutes and have reached out to current landowners on the FREP application list to inform them about these changes. We also expect to receive an increase in FREP applications.

The Forestry Riparian Easement Program also hired an additional Conservation Easement Forester, whose name is Mike Gilgunn. Michael started school in 2018 to study forestry, realizing he had a passion for the field after working in a variety of other careers for 15 years. He got an Associate's degree in Forest Management Technology from Haywood Community College in 2020, a Bachelor of Science in Forestry from the University of Idaho in 2022, and recently completed a Masters in Natural Resources from the University of Idaho in May 2024. Michael worked as a Research Assistant conducting seedling growth experiments and field trials since 2022. For two years before this, he worked for Pitkin Forest Nursery conducting forest surveys, vegetation assessments, field experiments on seedling growth, and nursery work preparing forest seedlings. We all welcome Mike to the SFLO family.

WSU Extension Forestry and DNR entered into an agreement to significantly increase the number of outreach and educational activities to be conducted in 2024. WSU Extension Forestry will be conducting 10 Coached Forest Stewardship Planning Short Courses. These are multisession training seminars that increase landowner understanding of management planning and prepare participants to execute practices that improve forest health and resilience while simultaneously accomplishing owner needs and reducing risk. Forest owners and managers learn to write a Forest Management Plan according to the Washington State Integrated Forest Management Plan Guidelines.

This year WSU and DNR will be hosting 12 Forest Owner Winter Schools and Regional Forest Owner Field Days. These are multisession seminars and hands-on clinics that increase awareness and prepare landowners and managers to execute practices improving forest health and resilience conditions, forest protection, function, productivity, and safety.

Also, this year WSU will be hosting 22 Forest Health and Resilience Focused Events across the state. These are focused topics and program deliveries that lead to desirable forest health and resilience conditions, forest protection, function, productivity, and safety. Programs include face-to-face workshops, clinics, field trips and tours, hands-on clinics, seminars, and webinars.

Finally, WSU will conduct 5 Choice Programming and One-on-One Engagements statewide which will be specialized workshops satisfying diverse management interests and needs (e.g., special forest products; succession and estate planning; forest navigation, Women Owning Woodlands, etc.).

Long-Term Applications (LTA)

In this Forest Practices Board report, the SFLO regularly shows the status of Long-Term Applications. There are currently 320 approved long-term applications that have passed Phase 2 of the process. This is an increase of five approved LTAs since the end of the last reporting period (January 10, 2024).

LTA Applications	LTA Phase 1	LTA Phase 2	TOTAL
Under Review	3	0	3
Approved	1	319	320

Upcoming Events

August 10 - [Steve Stinson Legacy Forest Owners' Field Day](#) –SW WA in Longview

August 23 - [Invasive Forest Weeds Field Practicum](#) –in Auburn

Sept 3 – Oct 29 [Fall 2024 Forest Stewardship Coached Planning – Preston, WA](#)

Tuesday evenings 6:00 pm. To 8:30 pm, Field trip Saturday October 19

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Sept. 6 to Nov. 8 [Fall 2024 Forest Stewardship Coached Planning – Whidbey Island](#)

Friday mornings 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Field trip Friday, October 25

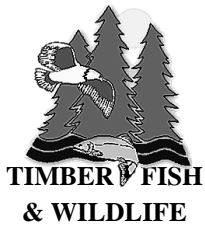
September 27 Washington Tree Farm Program Western WA Forestry Fall Seminar- UW Pack

Forest, Eatonville WA – more information forthcoming.

October. 3-5 [Northwest Innovative Forestry Summit-Trout Lake](#)

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

TM/



**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

July 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 May 2024 – July 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.

ENREP Extended Monitoring

Policy approved the collection of one additional year of post-harvest data. Discussions will continue on whether or not to extend an additional 1-4 years, as proposed by the project team.

Policy Co-Chair

Brandon Austin’s two year term as Policy Co-Chair ended in July, and Rico Vinh was nominated in June and approved as the new Policy Co-Chair in July.

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.
- **Small Forest Landowner Experimental Harvest Prescriptions:** Policy has received the workgroup recommendations for two alternative harvest prescriptions. Policy has formed a workgroup and will bring forward recommendations for experimental harvest prescriptions to the Board in 2024.
- **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.

New Projects:

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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MEMORANDUM

July 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:

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.

Contact: Darrin Masters (Darrin.masters@dfw.wa.gov) and Jennifer Mannas (jen.mannas@dfw.wa.gov)

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 treatment phase of the project, which is located in Loomis State Forest. Additionally, Colville Confederated Tribes is leading a lynx conservation project and they released 19 lynx from 2021 to 2022 into the Washington Kettle Range. They actively trapped in October, November, and December of 2023 with the goal of translocating 10 more lynx to release in this reintroduction area. We understand that seven were actually released although this number is unconfirmed. There have been no updates from the Tribe since December 2023. WDFW and partners (USFS, WSU, and Conservation Northwest) have proposed a long term lynx monitoring project for the northern Kettle Range to evaluate the ongoing and extended success of the Colville lynx reintroduction during and following the last releases. It is unknown when this monitoring effort could begin.

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 late Summer 2024.

Contact: Jeff Lewis (Jeffrey.Lewis@dfw.wa.gov)

Northern Spotted Owl

- 1988: State listed as Endangered
- 1990: Federally listed as Threatened
- 1996: FPB enacted State Forest Practices Rules
- 2012: USFWS designation of revised critical habitat
- 2016: State retention of Endangered status
- 2024: State retention of Endangered status

The Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) population has continued to decline primarily due to ongoing competitive interactions with Barred Owls. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) finalized the Barred Owl Management Strategy and Environmental Impact Statement in June 2024. WDFW continues to be a Cooperating Agency in the process.

The NSO population augmentation feasibility assessment began in January 2024 and will continue for 18 months. The first six months of the project have involved developing 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. WDFW staff have discussed the possibility of NSO captive rearing with its partners at the Woodland Park Zoo and the Portland Zoo.

WDFW initiated NSO monitoring on State land in the Teanaway Community Forest. Autonomous Recording Units were deployed starting in May and passive acoustic monitoring (PAM) surveys will continue through the NSO breeding season. Additional plans to expand monitoring are being discussed with partners in USFWS, the Mt. Barker-Snoqualmie FS and the Gifford Pinchot FS.

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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 will be completed by mid-August 2024.

Contact: Jeff Lewis (Jeffrey.Lewis@dfw.wa.gov)

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 2024) 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 fall, 2024.

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.

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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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