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The UPDATE

March 2006

News and Information for and about Small Woodland Owners

Volume 26 Issue 2

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DATES

OSWA Annual Mtg, April
20-22, World Forestry
Center, Portland
(registration form & info.
inserted)

Board of Forestry, April 28,
Salem

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calendar of forestry
events/tours:
www.oregonforests.org/

WWW.OSWA.ORG

Chapter news, local, state,
and national issues,
grants, marketing tips,
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& helpful management
techniques.

Partnerships and Oregon's Coastal Coho

by Jo Morgan, Oregon
Dep't. of Forestry Aquatic
Policy Analyst

Coho a "No List" under ESA

Following a two-year collaborative process with the state of Oregon, the National Marine Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service) announced January 17, 2006 that Oregon Coast coho are not likely to become endangered and will not be listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). An in-depth assessment by Oregon concluded that state actions to reform harvest and hatcheries had helped turn the coho population around, and that the population's ability to rebound from very low levels demonstrated that it is likely to persist into the future. NOAA Fisheries Service agreed with the Oregon analysis, although noted there are many uncertainties about what the future holds for the coho. Oregon will continue to monitor coho for population changes.

Oregon's Assessment

The State's "Oregon Plan Assessment" of Oregon coastal coho populations found that the coastal coho is viable, meaning it demonstrates sufficient abundance, productivity, distribution and diversity to be sustained and likely to maintain viability into the foreseeable

"This administration remains solidly committed to recovering Pacific salmon, and I am pleased to join the State of Oregon and local stakeholders in celebrating this important milestone. . . . I applaud the hard work of local agricultural, forestry, state, tribal and other federal partners to develop a solid plan for recovery. This is an encouraging example of the diverse interests that can come together to improve conditions for salmon in the Pacific Northwest."
— *Bob Lohn, NOAA Fisheries Northwest Regional Administrator.*

future. The assessment found that actions taken under the Oregon Plan to limit harvest and revise hatchery management have reduced the adverse impacts of those activities. The analysis identified strategic habitat protection and restoration needs throughout the geographic area of the coastal coho. The Oregon assessment identified ongoing primary and secondary risk factor bottlenecks for each coho population. Identifying these bottlenecks will help prioritize future management and restoration actions to further strengthen the viability of Oregon Coast coho to provide a full range of ecological, social and economic benefits. Stream complexity (multiple channels, overhanging banks, downed logs, etc.) and water quality were the two most

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Coho

commonly identified population bottlenecks.

“We are pleased that NOAA Fisheries agrees with this assessment...I am committed to continuing our work on conservation and recovery actions to further strengthen the viability of Oregon Coast coho and to provide a full range of ecological, social and economic benefits for our coastal communities.” –Governor Ted Kulongoski

Key Findings

The state’s assessment found that the eight-year effort under the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds has resulted in the following:

- The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has substantially reduced wild salmon harvest levels, marked all hatchery fish, improved hatchery management and implemented critical life-cycle monitoring for coastal coho salmon.
- Local watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts and other groups and individual landowners using hundreds of grants provided by the Oregon Watershed

Enhancement Board, have undertaken projects for stream improvements and habitat restoration work and have prioritized restoration efforts to address watershed conditions and improve salmon stocks.

- Oregon Plan efforts to coordinate fish and aquatic habitat monitoring have resulted in a common monitoring approach for spawning fish, juvenile fish, fish habitat, aquatic invertebrates, and water quality. The strength of this data is unmatched throughout the region.
- Private forest landowners continue their investment of more than \$31 million in forest road and culvert improvements. Nearly \$400,000 of that amount was contributed by non-

Be sure to report your watershed restoration projects to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. Call them directly (503) 986-0178 or report on-line at:
<http://oregon.gov/OWEB/MONITOR/OWRI.shtml>

SEE Coho/5

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industrial forest landowners. These contributions were for actions within the coast watersheds to improve roads, provide fish passage, manage streamside areas and provide stream complexity to improve water quality and fish habitat.

- Agricultural water quality management area plans adopted for the coastal zone are being implemented with the assistance of the local soil and water conservation districts to address water quality resulting from agricultural operations.



Volunteers plant native vegetation & apply protective tubing to plants along Clear Creek – Photo by ODFW

The Role of the Oregon Plan

Created in 1997, the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds seeks to restore salmon runs, improve water quality and achieve healthy watersheds and strong communities throughout the state. (For more information, visit www.oregon-plan.org.) Governor Ted Kulongoski lauded the wide-ranging public/private effort driven by the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. He said this effort contributed to the federal government's decision that the Oregon coastal coho populations in watersheds from Seaside to Cape Blanco do not warrant listing under the federal Endangered Species Act. The state's \$20-\$30 million annual investment in restoration actions since 1997 and the non-regulatory contributions of private forest and agriculture landowners, watershed councils, local governments and other organizations that partnered to improve coho populations along Oregon's coast, ultimately helped lead to the "no-list" decision.

Private Non-industrial Landowner Contributions to Oregon Plan Actions

According to data reported by landowners to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), private non-industrial forest landowners have contributed \$1.7 million statewide between 1997

and 2003; with nearly \$400,000 contributed in the Coast alone. These funds were spent on a variety of voluntary projects to provide fish passage, reduce sediment from roads, manage riparian stands to improve aquatic function, and improve stream complexity. However, the number of actions taken by private non-industrial forest landowners is thought to be much higher than the reported amount, because some landowners may not have reported projects they have done to OWEB. Governor Kulongoski said more work remains, noting that the assessment also identified ongoing risk factors for each coho population in the coastal streams.

"Landowners have walked the walk by practicing good forestry and protecting fish, not only within current regulations, but very often through strictly volunteer efforts." –Wayne Giesy, small woodland owner

Board of Forestry Riparian Rule Review Process

The Board of Forestry is nearing the end of a six-year process to evaluate the Forest Practices Act (FPA) to determine if changes are needed to meet water quality standards and address the needs of salmonids (salmon, steelhead and trout). New rules have been adopted to address roads and landslides. The board is continuing to review a set of recommendations for riparian rules and voluntary measures. In March, the board will consider alternatives to increasing the basal area targets for western Oregon small and medium fish bearing streams. Rules to provide riparian management areas above artificial fish passage barriers and to leave trees along debris torrent prone streams will be open for public comment on March 1. It is anticipated they will be adopted during the summer of 2006. The board also directed the department to work with landowners to develop a set of voluntary actions intended to complement the FPA and provide a menu of options for forest land managers to choose from to improve fish habitat. The department continues to involve non-industrial forest landowners in the rule making process and to invite participation in the development of new voluntary measures over the next number of months. While the board rule review process does not specifically address coastal coho needs, the current review of riparian rules is geared to address the need to increase levels of large wood for both short- and long-term aquatic function needs.

Joint State-Federal Conservation Planning Process

NOAA Fisheries Service and the State of Oregon have agreed to jointly develop a conservation plan for Oregon coast coho salmon that meets requirements of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Oregon's

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Coho

Native Fish Conservation Policy. NOAA and the state formed a diverse 21-member Coho Stakeholder Team in June 2004 to provide feedback and information on development of the plan. The draft conservation plan will be available for public review in the summer of 2006. The plan will ensure that limited resources are targeted most effectively to aid coho salmon in attaining and sustaining a restored status. The conservation plan will be a blueprint for actions needed to recover coho to levels that benefit society. Small woodland owners can participate in the conservation planning process and comment on the draft plan. Information about the Stakeholder Team's work to date and future meetings can be found on the Oregon Plan web site at <http://www.oregon-plan.org>.

"Our goal is to produce a plan that has broad public support," said Kevin Goodson, ODFW and Oregon's lead in the planning process. "This conservation plan, like the Oregon Plan, will only be successful if the citizens of Oregon are willing to participate in 'on-the-ground' local actions." The plan will identify a future goal for naturally produced coho salmon and the actions that will need to be implemented in each population to achieve that goal. Recent returns of large numbers of coho up and down the coast has shown how quickly the fish can respond to better survival conditions. It is during poor survival conditions that the future of coastal coho is most in jeopardy. Creating more high quality habitat will be the key to helping coho weather these downturns. "We hope to rebuild coho populations to levels that can provide fishery opportunities in years of good survival and remain healthy during poor survival years," Goodson said.

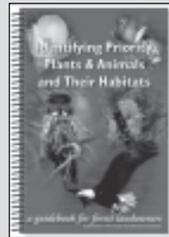
Small woodland owners living in the Coast watersheds can use the conservation plan to identify what types of projects are most needed to improve coho habitat. For instance, some non-industrial forestlands are located along streams that have a "high intrinsic potential," or high likelihood, of being able to for coho. Many road stream crossings still exist, which do not provide complete fish passage.

Coastal Landowners Continued Assistance is Needed!

Some small woodlands are located along streams that have a high potential to provide coho habitat due to stream flow, gradient and valley topography and some are not. In either case, there are things that landowners can voluntarily do to improve aquatic function for all species, or to help

downstream neighbors with projects. To find out more about what you can do, contact your local ODFW habitat biologist, watershed council or stewardship forester. OWEB and NOAA also have funds available for landowners who would appreciate assistance to conduct projects.

For coastal coho info. and map of the affected area, go to:
http://www.oregon.gov/OWEB/biennialreport_v2_05.shtml
http://www.oregon.gov/OWEB/docs/pubs/V2_05report/MapofESU.pdf



"Priority Species" Guidebook

available FREE to
OSWA members

by Dave Odgers

As the framework of state and federal environmental rules and voluntary guidelines continues to evolve and change, it may not be easy for you to keep track of which plant and animal species and habitats are "at risk" or to determine if you have any priority species on your land. Some species are listed as threatened or endangered by the state or by the federal government. Others are considered under various forest certification systems to be in need of conservation measures. And some are given priority status in the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's new *Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy*, which emphasizes conserving declining species and habitats to reduce the need for additional state and federal species listings.

A new guidebook available from the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) is designed to help private forest landowners identify these species. Called *Identifying Priority Plants & Animals and Their Habitats*, the 100-page manual also can help landowners and managers interested in meeting the biodiversity standards of various forest certification systems, and it will identify resources for forest managers to obtain further information and assistance with wildlife and habitat conservation. Included in the manual are color photos, eco-region and range maps, habitat descriptions and other information for 80 priority plant and animal species.

Some OSWA members who are participating in one of the certification programs (e.g., Oregon Tree Farm System or Sustainable Forestry Initiative) were already mailed a copy of the guidebook from OFRI. If you have not received a copy but would like one, you can order it by calling OFRI at 1-800-719-9195, Ext. 21, or by sending an e-mail with your name and address to info@ofri.com. There is no charge for the manual.