

# Oregon Board of Forestry Meeting

## January 25, 29 and 31, 2024

### *How to Provide Public Comments on the Habitat Conservation Plan*

Thank you for commenting at the Board of Forestry listening sessions in January! This may be our last chance to speak directly to the Board members in support of our state forests, so let's make the most of it. Included below are sign up instructions and talking points that you can use to guide your comments to the Board. Personalized comments are always more compelling!

**Sign up Now for the virtual listing session on January 29 at 1 p.m.!** [LINK](#)

There are only 65 spots for testimony so **sign up right away** to make sure that the State Forester and the Board hear loud and clear that we want a strong HCP finalized without further delay. A Zoom link and other information will be provided by email following registration. [More information](#) on the listening sessions is provided on ODF's website.

**There are also two in-person listening sessions coming right up.**

- Eugene - Jan. 25 at the Lane Events Center, Meeting Room #4, W. 13<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- Astoria - Jan. 31 at The Loft at the Red Building, 20 Basin St.

For both in-person sessions, doors open for signup at 5 p.m. and the meeting starts at 5:30 p.m. Each speaker gets a maximum of 2 minutes. **These meetings will be well attended, so get there early to sign up!**

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### **Public Comment Guide for the Board of Forestry Meeting:**

*Please adapt these talking points to focus on key points most relevant to your experience.*

- **Aim for 2 minutes** for your verbal comments (that's less than 300 words).
- **Intro:** Begin by saying, "My name is \_\_\_\_\_. (Give organizational affiliation, if any) **I'm commenting today in support of a strong Habitat Conservation Plan for state forests. I also support a new Forest Management Plan that protects salmon, wildlife, clean water and provides carbon storage to fight climate change.**"

- **Make it personal.** Why do you care about this issue? Do you live in the area of a state forest? Have you spent time in Oregon's state forests? How does this affect your family, community?
- **Ask the Board to support a strong HCP and reject efforts to weaken it.** Make sure that you ask the Board to support a strong Habitat Conservation Plan that is grounded in science. Ask the Board to oppose any efforts to open up the HCP and reduce habitat protections and clearcut thousands of additional acres.
- **Opening up the HCP to create more clearcuts on state forests is risky.** It would cause more delays, and could endanger the entire HCP, which still must be approved by federal agencies.
- Remind the Board that **state law requires them to make their decisions based on the best available science.** Any changes to the HCP that would reduce protected areas would not be supported by science. Instead, they are based on political pressure.
- **State forests have already been overharvested for decades.** That's why we need a strong HCP that protects enough habitat for the survival of imperiled salmon and wildlife and restores more sustainable levels of harvest.
- **The new timber harvest estimates** issued by the Department of Forestry staff show that the HCP will restore balance to state forests, protect habitat, and allow more sustainable levels of timber harvest over time.
- **The HCP protects an adequate amount of habitat for threatened species, especially considering future uncertainties, such as fire, disease, and climate change.** Any less habitat would likely doom these species to extinction throughout the region and would be rejected by federal agencies who must approve the plan.
- **Prevent logging near tributary streams and around landslide-prone areas.** There is a strong scientific basis for these protections. Expand protective buffers to 50 feet on small streams.
- Thank the Board for considering your comments.

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**Additional Points to Include in Your Testimony:**

**Ask the Board to support passage of the State Forest Habitat Conservation Plan Alternative 3.**

- Alternative 3 is a better path for fish and wildlife species, their habitat, and broad conservation values on state-managed public forests to benefit current and future generations of Oregonians. While even greater protections are needed, HCP Alternative 3 offers necessary, long-term protections for fish and wildlife in the face of climate change.

- **HCP Alternative 3 is supported by the best available science.** A recent peer reviewed study on the Trask River in Tillamook County proves that 35-foot buffers for clearcutting near small streams results in harm to downstream aquatic species. Small headwater streams need to be protected by 50-foot buffers.
- Approving a strong HCP not only brings more certainty to habitat conservation, it enhances recreation, economic diversity and ongoing timber production.
- In the Linn County court decision, the courts have affirmed the state's mandate to manage state forests for the greatest permanent value for all Oregonians. It's time to support a strong Habitat Conservation Plan that meets this standard.
- Oregonians overwhelmingly support [prioritizing fish and wildlife habitat, clean water, and recreation on state lands](#) in a recent poll. A strong HCP protects Oregon's public lands legacy.

#### Healthy state forest lands mean healthy local economies and communities

- More than 500,000 people in Northwest Oregon get their drinking water from streams and rivers that flow out of state forest land.
- State forests provide substantial economic benefits by supporting fish and wildlife habitat, drinking water, recreation, carbon sequestration and climate stabilization.
- State forests on the North Coast anchor a \$550 million a year tourism and recreation economy in the region that contributes over \$50 million a year in tax revenues to local communities.
- The HCP provides for ample timber harvest and revenue for the counties. However, Oregon needs to diversify funding for county services to take the pressure off of logging our state forests.

#### Climate – manage conservation areas for carbon as well

- Conservation Areas, both Habitat Conservation Areas (HCAs) and Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs) should be co-managed for the protection and recovery of threatened and endangered species and as carbon reserves. This will help support implementing the Climate Change and Forest Carbon Plan (Climate Plan) adopted by the Board of Forestry in 2021.
- State forest management should prioritize carbon absorption and storage to fully implement the Climate Plan and establish Oregon as a national leader in climate-smart forestry.

#### Public lands belong to all Oregonians

- Public lands must be managed for the public good of all Oregonians, for current and future generations.
- The fish, wildlife, rivers and forests that exist in our state lands belong to, and are the responsibility of, all Oregonians.

- We have an obligation to plan for the protection of watersheds, soils and climate now and for future generations.
- Oregonians overwhelmingly support [prioritizing fish and wildlife habitat, clean water, and recreation on state lands](#).

HCP necessary to protect, preserve, and restore habitat

- Tillamook, Clatsop and other state forests have been overcut for decades, following a long recovery after the Tillamook Burn.
- Clearcut timber harvest is the greatest limiting factor to the survival of covered threatened and endangered species over which we have direct control.
- A strong HCP based on Alternative 3 is essential, and is the minimum of what we should be doing to ensure the survival of salmon and other endangered species.
- A permit term of 50 years can and focus on adaptive management efforts would improve the chances for survival of 17 imperiled species covered by the HCP, including salmon, spotted owls, marbled murrelets and coastal martens.