

STATE FORESTLAND HCP RECEIVES FIRST FEDERAL PERMIT



News Release from **Oregon Dept. of Forestry**
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SALEM, Ore.—The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) received an incidental take permit (ITP) today from the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, signaling the federal agency's approval of ODF's Western State Forests Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).

"Reaching this major milestone is the culmination of significant work over the past eight years," said Kacey KC, Oregon State Forester. "This permit allows us to manage state forestlands with more stability and consistency because we'll have regulatory certainty under the Endangered Species Act when it comes to the covered fish species. I want to express my sincere appreciation for the time, effort, collaboration and dedication of all partners throughout the process."

State forests are required by law to be managed for social, economic and environmental benefits to Oregonians. The HCP will provide ODF with certainty and consistency when developing and implementing plans that could impact protected species. The plan balances impacts with management provisions that will benefit fish through improved habitat over the long-term.

"This is a win for Oregon on many fronts: The state keeps benefiting from working forests while management activities improve habitat for native fish including salmon and steelhead that benefit Oregon fisheries," said Lance Kruzic, Oregon Coast and Willamette River Branch Chief at NOAA Fisheries' West Coast Region. "We appreciate the collaboration, strong science, and practical thinking that demonstrates economic and environmental stewardship can go hand-in-hand."

"ODF's management of state forests provides habitat for native fish and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species," said Mike Wilson, ODF's State Forests Division Chief. "The HCP provides an integrated, ecosystem-based approach to species conservation across the landscape. The HCP conservation measures are designed to minimize and mitigate potential impacts from forest management, ensuring species conservation and stability in management activity for the 70-year permit term. The HCP is a more holistic, cost-effective approach to complying with the ESA, while providing valuable forest products, popular recreational activities, and improved fishing opportunities."

The 10 fish species covered in the ITP include: Three species of coho salmon (Oregon Coast coho, Lower Columbia River coho, and Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast coho), four species of Chinook salmon (Oregon Coast Chinook, Lower Columbia River Chinook, Upper Willamette River spring-run Chinook, and Southern Oregon/Northern California Coastal Chinook), Columbia River chum salmon, Upper Willamette River winter steelhead and eulachon. The ITP also frees ODF from potential legal delays or restrictions for the covered species and helps ensure predictable timber harvest levels in the future. Those revenues not only fund ODF's management of state forests, but two-thirds of the revenues are shared with the counties and local special districts where the harvest of state forests timber occurs.

"This is a win-win for everyone," Wilson said. "Fish win because their habitat is managed and protected for the long-term and ODF gets regulatory certainty and protection from lawsuits, which translates into more certain and predictable economic outcomes for jobs and revenue for essential services."

Although this is a critical milestone, the department is continuing to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service towards issuance of an ITP that will cover additional species under their jurisdiction including the northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, Oregon slender salamander, coastal marten, and red tree vole.

“We continue to work closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as they finalize the analyses to support their ITP issuance,” Wilson said. “We anticipate receiving that ITP later this year or early in 2027. Once we have that permit as well, then all species are covered.”

The HCP began as a collaborative concept that included technical experts and leadership from the Oregon departments of Fish and Wildlife, Environmental Quality, and State Lands, along with Oregon State University. For more on Oregon’s western state forests HCP, see: [Oregon Department of Forestry : Habitat Conservation Plan initiative : About ODF : State of Oregon](#)

For more on NOAA Fisheries ITP process, see: [Permits for the Incidental Taking of Endangered and Threatened Species | NOAA Fisheries](#)

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