



635-500-6575 (New Rule)

Implementing the Lower Columbia River Conservation and Recovery Plan for Oregon Populations of Salmon and Steelhead

(1) Policy.

The Lower Columbia River Conservation and Recovery Plan for Oregon Populations of Salmon and Steelhead (Oregon LCR Recovery Plan) (State of Oregon 2010, available at Department offices) implements the State's strategy for protecting and enhancing Oregon populations of coho salmon, Chinook salmon, chum salmon, and steelhead trout in the Lower Columbia, in cooperation with other federal and local partners, including Oregon Plan natural resource agencies and NOAA Fisheries. The Oregon LCR Plan is based on the premise that the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds provides the best vehicle for securing partnerships, both private and governmental, to successfully implement the actions called for in this plan. This rule describes the Commission's contribution toward this collective effort and directs the Department's implementation of the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan. This rule describes the Department's role in implementing the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan consistent with the Department's statutory authorities and the Native Fish Conservation Policy (OAR 635-007-502 thru 635-007-0505). The rule is not intended to be a rigid recipe but rather to identify the range of opportunities the Department should pursue and how the effectiveness of those opportunities should be evaluated, following the template first established in the Native Fish Conservation Policy.

(2) Description of Species Management Unit and Populations.

The Species Management Units (SMUs) for Oregon Lower Columbia salmon and steelhead are the Oregon portions of the Lower Columbia River Evolutionarily Significant Units (ESUs) for coho and Chinook, the Columbia River ESU for chum, and the Lower Columbia River and Southwest Washington Distinct Population Segments (DPSs) for steelhead that are comprised of geographical strata and independent populations, as defined in Chapter 2 of the Oregon LCR Plan. To avoid confusion and because the SMUs are the same as the federal ESUs, or DPSs, designations, the term ESU will be used to designate the SMUs for Oregon Lower Columbia salmon and steelhead.

(3) Desired Status.

The desired status goal for Oregon populations of Lower Columbia salmon and steelhead is two-tiered such that:

(a) Delisting Goal. All ESUs covered by the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan can be removed from the federal Endangered Species Act threatened and endangered list. This shall be achieved through the following:

(A) All independent populations achieve the status called for under the Desired Status for Delisting identified in Chapter 6 of the plan; and

(B) Significant improvements are achieved in salmon and steelhead survival from actions implemented to reduce habitat, hydrosystem, harvest, hatcheries, and/or predation threats, as identified in Chapter 6 for each population; and



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(b) Broad Sense Goal. Eventual improvements in salmon and steelhead survival from management actions provide for all independent populations to be sufficiently abundant, productive, and diverse (in terms of life histories and geographic distribution) so that they provide significant ecological, social, cultural, and economic benefits. These broad sense recovery goals for the ESUs shall be achieved by the following:

(A) All Oregon independent Lower Columbia River salmon and steelhead populations pass all of the measurable criteria for highly viable status.

(c) The three measurable criteria for desired status of Oregon Lower Columbia salmon and steelhead independent populations are defined in Chapter 8 of the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan and include:

(A) Abundance and productivity;

(B) Spatial structure; and

(C) Diversity.

(d) While criteria for survival rate to each critical life history stage can not yet be developed with the available information and monitoring, staff shall establish such criteria for these biological attributes when adequate information and monitoring is available.

(4) Current Status.

The current status of each Oregon Lower Columbia salmon and steelhead ESU at the time of the adoption of this rule is described in Chapter 4 of the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan. This assessment describes the biological attributes, criteria and metrics used to assess the status of each ESU. Those biological attributes, criteria, and metrics are adopted by reference into this rule. The Department shall update current status periodically consistent with timelines described under Adaptive Management in Chapter 9 of the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan. These updates do not require rule modification of current status, but rather will serve as a measurement of progress toward desired status.

(5) Primary Limiting Factors.

(a) Numerous factors contribute to the gap between current and desired status of populations comprising the Oregon Lower Columbia Salmon and Steelhead ESUs. Marine survival of salmon and steelhead associated with ocean conditions is the largest single factor regulating salmon and steelhead productivity and abundance. Marine survival is not considered a primary limiting factor for salmon and steelhead because management has little influence on marine survival.

(b) The factors generally causing the gap between current and desired status for the Oregon Lower Columbia Salmon and Steelhead ESUs that can be managed are:

(A) Impaired fish passage;

(B) Stream habitat complexity including riparian condition;

(C) Water quality;

(D) Water quantity;

(E) Altered hydrology;

(F) Excessive sediment;



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(G) Harvest;

(H) Hatchery fish interactions; and

(I) Predation.

(c) Primary and secondary limiting factors are identified for each population within the Oregon portion of each ESU in Chapter 5 of the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan. Staff will continue to help revise and identify new management actions addressing these factors to aid in reaching desired status. Staff may analyze the limiting factors at a finer, more localized scale when selecting or prioritizing management actions for specific areas. These analyses may find primary and secondary factors different at a local scale than what was found at the ESU or population scale.

(6) Management Strategies.

Management strategies to address limiting factors for each population are identified in Chapter 7 of the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan. Staff shall consider and attempt to implement these management strategies designed for the ESUs as a whole, and for constituent populations as applicable, as mechanisms to reach the desired status.

(a) Short-term Strategies (1 to 5 years):

(A) Provide technical support to local watershed groups to inform them of the primary and secondary limiting factors at local scales within populations.

(B) Educate and inform watershed groups and co-managers of the highest priority tributary management actions. Facilitate implementation of the highest priority tributary habitat actions.

(C) Provide support to oversee the tracking and reporting of plan action implementation and development of implementation schedules as called for in Chapter 9 of the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan.

(D) Work cooperatively with co-managers and harvest groups to determine the feasibility of implementing selective, weak stock, and abundance-based harvest management for Chinook and coho.

(E) Implement actions to reduce the abundance of naturally spawning hatchery fish in those populations where reductions are called for in Chapter 6 of the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan to achieve desired status.

(F) Conduct analyses to determine the effect of climate change on individual populations to help prioritize action implementation.

(b) Additional Long-term Strategies (1 to 25 years):

(A) Implement the research, monitoring and evaluation identified in Chapter 8 of the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan within funding and staffing constraints.

(B) Facilitate the implementation of the adaptive management strategy and framework identified in Chapter 9 of the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan.

(C) Collect monitoring data, conduct analyses, and complete or support reports and assessments documenting progress toward the desired status goals for the Oregon Lower Columbia River ESUs.

(D) Provide technical support to, and coordinate with, federal, state and local agencies and groups to protect existing high quality salmon and steelhead habitat.



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(E) Provide technical support to, and coordinate with, federal, state and local agencies and groups to create additional high quality salmon and steelhead habitat.

(F) Provide technical and outreach support to willing landowners that will enhance the maintenance and/or creation of high quality salmon and steelhead habitat.

(7) Adaptive Management.

The Department shall employ adaptive management principles within its statutory authority in support of achieving the desired status goal for the ESUs by participating in the adaptive management and implementation processes defined in Chapter 9 of the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan. The Department's contribution to adaptive management of the ESUs by the state of Oregon will include five elements: research; monitoring; evaluation; a feedback loop; and reporting.

(a) Research. The Department shall support high priority research identified in the Plan that addresses uncertainties related to management strategies and actions needed to achieve desired status. Research needs at the time of adoption (but which are not intended to be the exclusive research projects to be pursued) are identified in the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan in Chapter 8.

(A) Future research needs shall be identified during periodic assessments of the effectiveness of the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan.

(b) Monitoring. The Department shall continue to identify, implement, and support monitoring needed to assess the status of each ESU and the salmon and steelhead populations relative to desired status criteria and evaluate habitat status trends in the Oregon Lower Columbia ESUs, as funding and staffing allow. Monitoring needs at the time of adoption are identified in the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan in Chapter 8.

(A) Future monitoring needs shall be identified during periodic assessments of the effectiveness of the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan.

(c) Evaluation. The Department shall identify and support evaluation needed to determine status assessment and the effectiveness of management strategies and actions in achieving their intended outcomes. Evaluation needs at the time of adoption are identified in the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan in Chapter 8.

(A) Future evaluation needs shall be identified during periodic assessments of the effectiveness of the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan.

(d) Feedback Loop. The Department shall review the results of reports and assessments identified in 635-500-6575(7)(e) and modify management strategies and actions as appropriate and within its statutory authority based on the review results. The Department shall implement the Adaptive Management processes identified in the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan and recommend to the Oregon Lower Columbia Recovery and Oregon Plan Core Teams and other agencies or entities, as necessary, appropriate modifications to management strategies and actions needed to support attainment of the desired status goals for each ESU. This feedback shall include refinement of management actions, research, monitoring and evaluation programs and desired status criteria based on the best available scientific information.



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(e) Reporting. Annual and periodic evaluations of Plan implementation and ESU status shall be made available to the public. The Department shall participate in the preparation of annual and 5-year (2015) status reports, the 12-year (2022) ESU assessment of the effectiveness of the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan, and additional assessments as necessitated by new information or significant population declines.

(f) Modifications to the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan are required if the fish become listed as endangered under the federal ESA or by the direction of the Oregon Lower Columbia Recovery Team in periodic Oregon LCR Recovery Plan status reports. These reports by the Recovery Team will serve as an early warning system that will direct additional monitoring, evaluation, or management actions, if needed, based on annual review of monitoring data.

(8) Impact on Other Native Fish Species.

Management strategies identified in the Oregon LCR Recovery Plan are likely to be beneficial to other native fish species present in the ESUs because they focus on restoring natural processes. New or modified actions shall consider impacts to other native species, as appropriate, to minimize harm and optimize benefits.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 496.138, 496.146, and 506.119

Stats. Implemented: ORS 506.109 and 506.129