

## Agenda Item Summary

### BACKGROUND

The Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS) and the Oregon Nearshore Strategy (ONS) are broad, overarching strategies for the long-term conservation of Oregon's native fish and wildlife. They were developed in 2005 as part of a nation-wide effort funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to reduce the number of future federal Endangered Species Act listings. The goals of the strategies include:

- 1) maintaining healthy fish and wildlife populations by maintaining and restoring functioning habitats,
- 2) preventing declines of at-risk species, and
- 3) reversing declines in these resources where possible.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) has initiated a 10-year comprehensive revision of the OCS and ONS as required by the USFWS. The Department must review and update both strategies by October 1, 2015 in order to continue to receive State Wildlife Grant (SWG) funding. SWG funds are used to cover Conservation Program staff positions and projects, and to assist in the implementation of the Oregon Nearshore Strategy and the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan.

Revision of the OCS is being led by the Conservation Program in the Wildlife Division, while the revision of the ONS is being led by the Marine Resources Program. Both programs are working in close coordination to streamline the process between the two parallel efforts.

On January 9, 2015 the Commission was presented with the planned focus for the required comprehensive revision and the timeline for accomplishing it. This Agenda Item provides a progress update.

### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Revision of the Oregon Conservation Strategy continues with extensive public involvement. A Technical Review Team (TRT) is currently reviewing draft updated content on Strategy Species, Key Conservation Issues, and other supporting background materials. A Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) has been established including: hunting, angling, agriculture, and forestry interest groups; conservation organizations; travel and tourism interests; and professional society representation. An optional briefing on the background to the Conservation Strategy was provided to the SAC on February 27, and the committee's work sessions are now scheduled for April 27, May 27, and June 23. Updates and presentations on the revision process have also been provided in the ODFW Conservation Newsletter, at Conservation Leaders Group Meetings, and at various partner conferences.

Revision of the Oregon Nearshore Strategy is underway with extensive opportunity for public input. Key ocean stakeholders and coastal leaders have been informed of the revision process and public notice with directions for providing input is posted on the ODFW website. Updates on the revision were presented at a Conservation Leaders meeting on January 29 in Portland. A Technical Review Team has been formed and is reviewing sections as they are completed. Stakeholder input is being accepted on an ongoing basis and several public meetings in coastal communities are planned for June and July during the public review period of the revised draft.

### **Update on the progress of the Oregon Conservation Strategy and Oregon Nearshore Strategy revision process**

## **ISSUE 1**

## **ANALYSIS**

The Conservation Program has initiated the 10-year comprehensive revision of the Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS). The focus is on key areas of the OCS that have proven of great use to partners and ODFW programs, and have experienced the most scientific advancements in the past 10 years. These key sections include the Strategy Species; Strategy Habitats; Conservation Opportunity Areas; and Key Conservation Issues. The information associated with each of these sections (e.g., their limiting factors, research data gaps, recommended conservation actions, and available tools/resources) is currently being updated using new data and resources that have been developed within the past 10 years.

Staff are also working to completely web-enable the OCS. By creating a web application, users can more easily navigate through the document, quickly find the information they are looking for, and link to additional tools and resources. In addition, staff are working to map the datasets or GIS layers associated with each section. This will allow users to view maps associated with specific sections in the OCS by clicking a link (ex. Strategy Species linked to a species range map). Staff are working to integrate the web-enabled OCS with the updated Oregon Nearshore Strategy (ONS) to the extent possible.

Conservation Program staff have worked with programs throughout the agency and with representatives from other agencies and organizations to complete a draft of updated content on Strategy Species, Key Conservation Issues, and other supporting background materials. The Technical Review Team is currently reviewing these drafts. Draft updated information about Ecoregions, Strategy Habitats, and Conservation Opportunity Areas will be available for review from April-May 2015. After each section receives technical input, the Stakeholder Advisory Committee will review content and provide additional guidance.

The Oregon Nearshore Strategy 10-year revision process is under way in the Marine Resources Program, in close coordination with the OCS process. The focus is on updating key areas of the document in light of newly available scientific and socio-economic information. The sections on coastal communities, strategy species, habitat, and stressors are being

updated first. Information about the Coastal Communities which are an important part of the marine ecosystem is being updated. A review of the Strategy Species has been completed. This work included a search for relevant new information and published literature, and input from the Marine Resources Program (MRP) staff with a wide variety of subject matter expertise. Also as part of the process of providing USFWS a single Strategy Species list, staff with several programs in the agency evaluated whether species listed in the OCS should be included in or transferred to the Nearshore Marine Ecoregion. Several changes to the Strategy Species list in the ONS are being proposed based on this work. Changes include adding a number of birds, fish, and invertebrate species as well as moving a few species currently listed as Strategy Species to the Watch List. This list is currently under review for input by technical advisors.

Habitat descriptions are undergoing revisions for consistency with the Coastal and Marine Ecological Classification Standard which was adopted by the federal government in 2012. A new section on estuary habitats is being drafted. Estuaries are an important part of Oregon's marine ecosystem, and their inclusion in the ONS is consistent with public input. Estuaries are already designated as a Strategy Habitat in the OCS, and staff from the MRP and the Conservation Program are working together to update that section of the OCS. Estuaries are a natural integration point of the two Strategy documents. Habitat maps in the OCS are being updated with newly available geographic information system (GIS) layers that incorporate the extensive survey efforts undertaken in the last decade. The sections on stressors to species and habitats are also being updated with newly available scientific information including the effects of climate change and ocean acidification

Sometime in June, complete revised drafts of both documents will be posted on the ODFW website for a 30-day review period for public comment. The final drafts of the revised OCS and ONS will be brought to the Commission for approval in September 2015, and submitted to the USFWS by October 1, 2015.

**OPTIONS**

**STAFF  
RECOMMENDATION**

NA – Information only

**DRAFT MOTION**

**EFFECTIVE DATE**