

## 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 (ODFW) has initiated a 10-year comprehensive revision of the OCS and ONS as required by the USFWS. ODFW must review and update both strategies by October 1<sup>st</sup>, 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 an overview of the revision and the timeline for accomplishing it. On April 24, 2015 the Commission was presented with an informational update focusing on content: Strategy Species, Strategy Habitats, and Key Conservation Issues. This Agenda Item provides an update regarding revision of the Conservation Opportunity Areas, a summary of the public process, and an outline of the changes made to the ONS.

### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

#### **Oregon Conservation Strategy:**

Over the past year, ODFW has reached out to over two hundred technical experts, tribal biologists, and federal and state agency representatives for assistance in updating the OCS. In addition, over one hundred ODFW staff, across programs and divisions, have provided valuable input. ODFW provided numerous briefings and presentations at conferences throughout the state to a diverse range of audiences. Revision updates and requests for input have also been provided in the ODFW Conservation Newsletter, at Conservation Leaders Group Meetings, and on the ODFW website.

ODFW convened a Stakeholder Advisory Committee, including: outdoor interest groups, agriculture and forestry interest groups, conservation organizations, travel industry, and government and professional society representation. The committee met three times to review updated content, provide input, and offer guidance for keeping the content and format relevant to their partner organizations.

**Oregon Nearshore Strategy:**

The update process has included extensive opportunity for public input. Key ocean stakeholders and coastal leaders were informed of the revision process and public notice with directions for providing input has been posted on the ODFW website since September 2014. Stakeholder input is being accepted on an ongoing basis. Updates on the revision were presented at a Conservation Leaders meeting on January 29 in Portland and a poster was presented at the Wildlife Society meeting in Eugene on April 29-30. A Technical Review Team provided input on nearshore revisions. Public meetings were held in North Bend and Newport on July 7 and 9, respectively, and a press release to notify the public of these meetings was sent to media outlets on June 26. Staff presented an overview of the ONS, changes for the 2015 updated version and took public input.

**A request for public comment on both the Oregon Conservation Strategy and Oregon Nearshore Strategy** was announced in a press release on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Both draft documents will be posted on the ODFW website from June 19 – July 20, 2015 for public comment. Announcements were also made through the OCS Stakeholder Advisory Committee, ODFW Conservation Newsletter, and circulated by partners statewide.

**ISSUE 1**

**Update on the Oregon Conservation Strategy and Oregon Nearshore Strategy revision process**

**ANALYSIS****Oregon Conservation Strategy:**

The Conservation Program continues the comprehensive update of the Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS), focusing on key areas that have proven useful to partners and ODFW programs. Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs) were identified by ODFW staff and external partners as a valuable resource and recommended focal area for the OCS revision. COAs are voluntary, non-regulatory boundaries for landscapes where broad fish and wildlife conservation goals would best be met. COAs were developed to guide voluntary actions, and land use or other activities within these areas will not be subject to any new regulations. Focusing investments in prioritized areas can increase the likelihood of long-term success over larger landscapes, improve funding efficiency, and promote cooperative efforts across ownership boundaries.

For this 10-year update, ODFW incorporated newly available data into the analysis to redefine COA boundaries. COAs were delineated through spatial analysis and expert review. They were selected based on high concentrations of Strategy Species, Strategy Habitats, and additional datasets related to Key Conservation Issues (e.g., Climate Change, Disruption of Disturbance Regimes, and Barriers to Animal Movement). Staff are also working to update and improve the supplemental information provided in the new COA profiles. Profiles will include specifics on species, habitats, recommended conservation actions, relevant conservation plans, current on-the-ground efforts, and key partners for each COA. ODFW district staff and stakeholder advisory committee members contributed expertise and information throughout the 2015 COA update process.

**Oregon Nearshore Strategy:**

After review, technical team and subject matter expert input, the public review draft of the updated Oregon Nearshore Strategy was posted to the ODFW website for a 30 day public comment period on June 19.

**Summary of Changes to Nearshore Strategy:**

The review, extensive input, new information and better integration with the Oregon Conservation Strategy resulted in a number of changes to both the Oregon Conservation Strategy and the Nearshore Strategy. A brief summary of changes relevant to the Nearshore Strategy follows:

- The term “nearshore” was expanded to include all of Oregon’s Territorial Sea, shoreline areas in the supratidal zone, and portions of Oregon’s estuaries (see Chapter 1 and 6).
- Information on coastal communities was updated (see Chapter 4).
- The Nearshore Strategy was reorganized to make it easier to find information on species (see Chapter 5), habitats (see Chapter 6), factors and stressors affecting species and habitats (see Chapter 7), and research and monitoring needs (see Chapter 8), with new and updated information incorporated.
- Species lists were modified based on new information, better integration with the Oregon Conservation Strategy and inclusion of estuaries as part of the nearshore (see Table 3.2 and Chapter 5).
- The new federally-adopted Coastal and Marine Ecological Classification Standard was integrated to describe habitats (see Chapter 6).
- Better integration resulted in more links between the Oregon Nearshore Strategy and the Oregon Conservation Strategy, including an integrated Strategy Species list and a Nearshore Ecoregion in the Oregon Conservation Strategy (see the Oregon Conservation Strategy).
- Updates to the recommended actions for 1) Outreach and Education; 2) Research and Monitoring; 3) Policy and Management (see Chapter 9).

**Next steps:**

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

<b>DRAFT MOTION</b>	N/A
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>	