

Agenda Item Summary

BACKGROUND

The Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS) is a comprehensive, broad, overarching vision for the long-term conservation of Oregon's native fish and wildlife. The OCS includes a marine component called the Oregon Nearshore Strategy (ONS). Both strategies were originally developed in 2006 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 strategy 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 completed a 10-year comprehensive revision of the OCS and ONS as required by the USFWS. ODFW must submit the revised document by October 1st, 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 ONS and the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan.

Revision of the OCS was led by the Conservation Program in the Wildlife Division, while the revision of the ONS component was led by the Marine Resources Program. Both programs have worked in close coordination to streamline the process between the two parallel efforts.

On January 9, 2015 the Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) was presented with an overview of the revision and the timeline for accomplishing it. On April 24th, the FWC was presented with an informational update focusing on content: Strategy Species, Strategy Habitats, and Key Conservation Issues. At the August 7th meeting, the FWC was presented with an update regarding revision of the Conservation Opportunity Areas in the OCS, a summary of the public process, and an outline of the changes made to the public review draft of the ONS.

This Agenda Item provides a summary of the OCS and ONS updates, and seeks final approval.

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 to assist 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:

Revision of the Oregon Nearshore Strategy has provided 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 was posted on the ODFW website. Staff worked with Technical Review Team on changes to the document. Updates and information on the revision were presented at several forums in 2015, often in conjunction with the OCS.

A request for public comment on public review drafts of both the Oregon Conservation Strategy and Oregon Nearshore Strategy was announced in a press release on June 19th, 2015. Both draft documents were posted on the ODFW website from June 19th – July 20th for public comment. Announcements were also made through the OCS Stakeholder Advisory Committee, ODFW Conservation Newsletter, and circulated by partners statewide. Town hall public meetings focused on the ONS were held in North Bend and Newport on July 7th and 9th, respectively. Public input was taken at the August 7th Commission meeting.

ISSUE 1

Present the updated Oregon Conservation Strategy and Oregon Nearshore Strategy for final approval

ANALYSIS

Oregon Conservation Strategy:

The Conservation Program completed the comprehensive update of the Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS), focusing on key areas that were identified by partners and ODFW programs. These focus areas consisted of: Strategy Species, Strategy Habitats, Key Conservation Issues, Monitoring, Conservation Opportunity Areas, and facilitating the use of the OCS. New science, resources, and available data were used to update all sections of the Strategy. ODFW staff, conservation partners, stakeholders, and members of the public contributed information and expertise throughout the update process.

Staff are also working to completely web-enable the OCS. By creating a web application, users can more easily navigate through the document and link to additional tools and resources. In addition, staff are working to map the associated datasets or GIS layers in Compass, allowing users to view maps associated with specific sections in the OCS by clicking a link.

Oregon Nearshore Strategy:

The Marine Resources Program completed the comprehensive update of the Oregon Nearshore Strategy (ONS) component, focusing on topics that were identified by staff, technical advisors, partners and the public. The focus was on updating the document with new information available about nearshore species, habitats, factors affecting those species and habitats using the best available science. The update also focused on better integration between the OCS and ONS that included incorporating the saline portion of estuaries into the ONS. The Recommendations were updated to reflect priorities for nearshore conservation efforts for the next decade. Staff analyzed all comments and suggestions for change to the public review draft and incorporated those deemed appropriate to the degree practicable.

OPTIONS

- Option 1. Approve the updated OCS, including the ONS component.
- Option 2. Approve the updated OCS, including the ONS component, with recommended changes.
- Option 3. Reject the updated OCS and the ONS component.

**STAFF
RECOMMENDATION**

Option 1. Approve completion of the 10-year update of the OCS, including the ONS component, for submission to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

DRAFT MOTION	I move to approve completion of the 10-year update of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, including the Oregon Nearshore Strategy component, for submission to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
EFFECTIVE DATE	Upon review and approval by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.