

# Washington State Department of Natural Resources

## Adaptive Management Program



### Quarterly Updates to the Forest Practices Board

#### Summary

The **Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research Committee (CMER)** held regular monthly meetings this quarter. CMER will be hosting the 2023 CMER Conference on May 11th (see details on page 7). The Committee approved or advanced to TFW Policy the following Adaptive Management Program (AMP) project deliverables:

- Approved the Riparian Characteristics and Shade (RCS) Eastside Tribes Memo,
- Approved the Wetland Management Zone Effectiveness Monitoring Program (WMZ) Charter,
- Approved the 2023-2023 CMER Work Plan, and
- Provided edits to Protocols and Standards Manual (PSM) Sections 4 & 5 .

CMER successfully resolved the Dispute Resolution Process over the Study Design for the Empirical Evaluation of Shallow Landslide Susceptibility and Frequency by Landform (Project 3) and the Empirical Evaluation of Shallow Landslide Runout (Project 4) and this Study Design is currently in Independent Science Panel Review (ISPR).

**TFW Policy Committee** will attend an Interest-Based Negotiation follow-up training on May 3, 2023, to continue conversations regarding their interests, resolving differences of opinion, collaboration versus competition, how each caucus interests are being served, and the challenges they face in the Adaptive Management Program (AMP). This will be the third training that TFW Policy Committee members have attended with the intent to improve conflict resolution and collaboration.

The TFW Policy Committee held regular monthly, in-person meetings this quarter. The Committee approved the following AMP project deliverables:

- Provided edits to the Wetland Management Zone Effectiveness Monitoring Program (WMZ) Charter for CMER consideration,
- Approved the Eastside Forest Health Strategy response to CMER,
- Approved an Extensive Monitoring response to CMER, and
- Requested CMER’s review of the RCS Eastside Tribes Memo.

**May 2023**

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MANAGEMENT TEAM



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## PROJECT UPDATES

### ROADS PRESCRIPTION SCALE EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING PROJECT

The Roads Prescription Scale Effectiveness Monitoring Project examines high-traffic, near-stream forest logging roads as sources of sediment and seeks to better understand and evaluate mitigating best management practices. The project team is completing the third year of main experiment data collection, with two subsequent additional years of data collection planned. In this last quarter, the project team diligently implemented the second year of the Short Time Scale Interactions (STS) parameterization experiment over the course of multiple field excursions. The STS experiment examines the within-plot contribution of sediment from traffic relative to that from the ditch and the cutslope by sampling water from: a) the tread that flows longitudinally down the road surface; b) the tread as it enters the ditch from the roadside; c) the ditch upstream of the tread contribution; and d) the outlet of the cross-drain culvert after all the sources have combined. The project team is currently working on another parametrization project, the Cost vs. Maintenance Survey, in which road engineers and forest managers will be surveyed about the BMPs they utilize on forest roads and the costs and benefits they experience. This will inform the selection of ditch line BMPs that we test in the second phase of our main experiment. In the next quarter, the project team will be wrapping up this year's main experiment data collection and preparing for a significant round of roads maintenance and BMP treatment changes planned for this summer.

### EXTENSIVE RIPARIAN STATUS AND TRENDS MONITORING – RIPARIAN VEGETATION AND STREAM TEMPERATURE, TYPE F/N WESTSIDE AND EASTSIDE PROJECT

The Extensive Riparian Status and Trends Monitoring – Riparian Vegetation and Stream Temperature, Type F/N Westside and Eastside Project's purpose is to evaluate the current status of key watershed input processes and habitat condition indicators, such as stream temperature and riparian functions, across Forest Practices Habitat Conservation Lands, and document trends in these indicators over time as the Forest Practices prescriptions are applied across the landscape. This project is in an early stage of development in which the project team is considering how to scope and design the long-term study as well as how to tackle the development of specific critical questions and objectives. To support the development of the project, a second joint workshop between CMER and TFW Policy was held in January 2023, to address project goals, problems, and solutions were discussed and additional clarifications on the directive from the Timber Fish and Wildlife Policy Committee (TFW Policy). Since then, a project team has been convened within the Riparian Scientific Advisory Group (RSAG) to make final changes to a project charter and begin the scoping process.

## WESTSIDE TYPE F RIPARIAN PRESCRIPTION EFFECTIVENESS- EXPLORATORY FIELD STUDY

The Westside Type F Riparian Prescription Effectiveness- Exploratory Field Study evaluates the effectiveness of westside riparian prescriptions for F and S streams in achieving resource objectives and performance targets. This exploratory study is intended to reduce uncertainties associated with the relative sensitivity of post-harvest riparian stand conditions and riparian functions to harvest prescriptions and to potential harvest-associated disturbances as well as to be used to focus and refine the development of a future Study Design for a more rigorous test of the effectiveness of the Type F rule buffers. At the November 5, 2022, Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research Committee (CMER) meeting two relevant motions were passed, one that approved the final draft of the “Westside Type F Exploratory Report” and another which moved to forward the approved report to ISPR. Department of Natural Resources Adaptive Management Program (DNR AMP) staff subsequently submitted the Westside Type F Riparian Management Zone Exploratory Study Report to ISPR. The project team and report authors are currently working on the document package that will be sent back to ISPR including a revised report, comment matrix, and summary memo.

## EASTSIDE TYPE N RIPARIAN EFFECTIVENESS PROJECT (ENREP)

The Eastside Type N Riparian Effectiveness Project (ENREP) will help inform if, and to what extent, the prescriptions found in the Type N Riparian Prescriptions Rule Group are effective in protecting water quality and some riparian functions, particularly as they apply to sediment and stream temperature in eastern Washington. The project is currently in full implementation. Springdale and Tripps basins were harvested in 2021. Two years of pre-harvest data, harvest year, and one year of post-harvest data have been collected at these basins. Blue Grouse basin harvest was completed in 2022. Three years of pre-harvest data and harvest year data have been collected here. Fish Creek and Coxit basins are scheduled for harvest in 2023. Two years of pre-harvest data have been collected in these basins. Data collection includes: biophysical variables, including streamflow, wetted channel extent, suspended sediment concentrations, stream shade, riparian forest mensuration, large wood, temperature, and stream cross sections, aquatic life (benthic macroinvertebrates), and habitat. At their February 2023 meeting, the Forest Practices Board approved a pilot rule request that a small segment of Type F stream in one of the harvest basins be treated as Type Np for the purposes for the study. The project team is in the process of preparing for the 2023 field season. Additionally, the project team is planning a joint Policy/CMER field trip to the Blue Grouse and Tripps basins on September 27, 2023.

## AMP PROJECT MANAGERS

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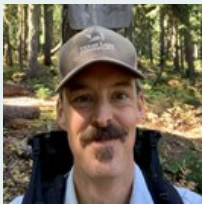
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## EASTSIDE TIMBER HABITAT EVALUATION TYPES (ETHEP)

The Eastside Timber Habitat Evaluation Types (ETHEP) project is scoped to develop an ecologically meaningful and reliable framework for applying riparian harvest rules along fish-bearing (Type S and Type F) streams in eastern Washington. A post-doc was hired to assist in completion of the Study Design. The Study Design was approved by SAGE in February 2023 and was sent to CMER for review. CMER reviewers have provided comments on the Study Design, which the Project Team is addressing. The revised Study Design is expected to be returned to CMER in May.

## WATER TYPING STRATEGY

The Water Typing Strategy projects are intended to determine possibility/ advisability of combining the 'Potential Habitat Breaks (PHB),' 'Default Physical Criteria (DPC),' and/or 'LiDAR Model' studies. The Potential Habitat Breaks (PHB) Project Team developed a Study Design to assess PHBs, which was approved by CMER in September 2022 and has entered an interactive (open) ISPR process. The Project Team responded to ISPR comments and returned the revised Study Design to ISPR in April. The Default Physical Criteria (DPC) Project Team has initiated work on the DPC Study Design that will allow an assessment of the default physical criteria. That Study Design is expected to be delivered to CMER to initiate a concurrent CMER/ISAG review in spring 2023. A statistical consulting firm is assisting the Project Team in evaluating methods for the PHB and DPC Study Designs. Once these two projects are complete, the results would then be used in the development of a study to try and create an effective LiDAR-based water typing model.

## RIPARIAN CHARACTERISTICS AND SHADE (RCS)

The Riparian Characteristics and Shade (RCS) project is a field research project intended to evaluate the combined effect of stream-adjacent no-harvest zone width and adjacent-stand harvest intensity (i.e., thinning density) on stream shade. The Project Team completed a field trial in summer 2022 to provide a more detailed understanding of the cost and logistical elements of implementation. The Forest Practices Board approved, at their February 2023 meeting, a pilot rule request to authorize the implementation of experimental harvest treatments on five sites in western Washington. The Project Team did not identify any sites for implementation in 2023, but is focusing their efforts on site selection for 2024.

## **RIPARIAN FUNCTION LITERATURE SYNTHESIS**

The Riparian Function Literature Synthesis will address questions regarding the effects of timber harvest on riparian functions. A contract was developed with the University of Idaho to complete the literature synthesis. The literature synthesis is expected to be delivered to RSAG in June 2023.

## **FORESTED WETLANDS EFFECTIVENESS PROJECT (FWEP)**

The Forested Wetlands Effectiveness Project (FWEP) projects will look at the effectiveness of forest practices prescriptions to protect, maintain, and restore aquatic resources, namely water quality and wetland hydrologic and ecological functions. It will be evaluated to determine if they achieve the FPHCP goal of no-net-loss of functions of those wetlands by half of a timber rotation cycle while meeting water quality standards (FPHCP). FWEP has an approved Study Design. Tanner Williamson, CMER Wetland Scientist, along with the Project Team completed the instrumentation of 4 pilot sites and have collected some preliminary data. Preliminary data is being used to verify instrumentation methods and plan for additional site implementation. Site Selection and landowner permissions continued through the winter for the additional twenty sites. Field work for site validation has resumed in April and Instrumentation is scheduled to begin the first of May and will be completed by the end of June.

## **WETLAND MANAGEMENT ZONE EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING PROJECT (WMZ)**

The Wetland Management Zone Effectiveness Monitoring Project (WMZ) will evaluate wetland functions to determine if the target of no-net-loss of hydrologic function, CWA assurance targets, and hydrologic connectivity are being achieved. Following the April 2022 CMER approval of the project charter, the project team has begun to plan out the scoping process. The development of scoping documents such as the Best Available Science Document and Prospective Six Questions Document have begun and an initial draft to be completed in Summer 2023. Funding for the WMZ begins in FY26, with implementation funding slated to begin in FY28. Funding to assist in this work was moved out 3 years on the MPS, approved in August 2020 (funding begins FY26) due to the AMP budget limitations.

## **TYPE N EXPERIMENTAL BUFFER TREATMENT PROJECT IN HARD ROCK LITHOLOGIES AMPHIBIAN MONITORING PHASE III**

The Type N Experimental Buffer Treatment Project in Hard Rock Lithologies Amphibian Monitoring Phase III project is in implementation, collecting additional data for stream-associated amphibians and other relevant covariate data (e.g., stream temperature data) to evaluate continued trends in amphibian densities. Amphibian demographics sampling began June 2022, and continued through early October. The team have QA/QCed the data and some preliminary summaries have been developed. The final sampling event for this project will begin in June.



## **EASTSIDE FOREST HEALTH STRATEGY**

The Eastside Forest Health Strategy workgroup developed a document intended to inform full strategy development and eventual scoping of studies. The document was reviewed and approved by CMER in April 2022. The workgroup recommended the development of a research and monitoring strategy investigating active RMZ management approaches that build on current RMZ prescriptions and are designed to balance disturbance resiliency and resource protection objectives outlined in the FP HCP (Schedule L-1 functional objectives and performance targets, Appendix N). The Eastside Forest Health Strategy document was approved at the March TFW Policy meeting to be further developed by CMER. In the next few months, SAGE will begin to develop the full strategy.

## **DEEP-SEATED LANDSLIDE RESEARCH STRATEGY**

The Deep-Seated Landslide (DSL) Research Strategy utilizes the results of the literature reviews for forest harvest effects on glacial and bedrock deep-seated landslides to address key knowledge gaps identified during the literature reviews and to address questions from the Forest Practices Board and Policy regarding the potential effects of forest practices on deep-seated landslides.

A consultant was hired to assist UPSAG in the development of the DSL Study Design based on the Policy-approved Scoping Document for the Landslide Mapping and Classification Project (4.5 and 4.6) under the Deep-Seated Landslide Research Strategy. BGC Engineering delivered a draft Study Design to the Project Team on December 15, 2022. The Project Team and UPSAG have been working with BGC to finalize the report to send to CMER in April 2023 for approval to submit to ISPR.



# WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

### 2023 SCIENCE CONFERENCE

May 11, 2023  
9:00AM-4:30PM

#### Where

The conference will be held on the Washington State Capitol Campus at the DSHS Office Building 2 Auditorium in Olympia, 1115 Washington St. SE, Olympia, 98501. Please see directions on the next page.

#### Registration

There is no fee for the conference, however registration is required. To register, please send an e-mail including your name, affiliation, and e-mail address to [Natalie.Church@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:Natalie.Church@dnr.wa.gov) by May 4, 2023.



Cooperative Monitoring  
Evaluation & Research

The Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Committee (CMER) will host their eleventh Forest Practices Adaptive Management Science Conference on **Thursday, May 11, 2023, 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM**, in Olympia, Washington. CMER is responsible for conducting research and monitoring in support of adaptive management of the Forest Practices Rules. This conference will highlight CMER studies covering a variety of research topics.

Time	Topic	Presenter
9:00-9:30AM	Welcome and Introductions	Commissioner Hilary Franz Lori Clark, AMPA
9:30-10:00AM	Phase II Wetland Intrinsic Potential	Meghan Halabisky, PhD, University of Washington
10:00-10:30AM	Deep Seated Landslide Strategy: Landslide Mapping and Classification	Corey Froese, BGC Mike Porter, BGC
10:30-10:45AM	Break	
10:45-11:15AM	Water Quality and Temperature Response to Forest Management in Non-fish Streams on Hard and Soft Rock Lithologies	Bill Ehinger
11:15-11:45AM	In-stream Physical and Amphibian Demographic Response to Forest Management in Non-fish Streams on Hard Rock Lithologies	Aimee McIntyre, WDFW
11:45AM- 12:15PM	Water Typing / eDNA	Jason Walter, Weyerhaeuser
12:15-1:15PM	Lunch	
1:15-1:45PM	Eastside Modeling Effectiveness Project (EMEP)	Kevin Ceder, PhD Woodland Creek Consulting
1:45-2:15PM	Eastside Type F Riparian Effectiveness Monitoring - BTO Add-on	Dave Schuett-Hames
2:15-2:45PM	Roads Prescription-Scale Effectiveness Monitoring Project	Amanda Alvis, University of Washington
2:45-3:00PM	Break	
3:00-3:30PM	Extensive Monitoring	Jenelle Black, NWIFC
3:30-4:00PM	Westside Type N Buffer Characteristics, Integrity, and Function (BCIF)	Dave Schuett-Hames
4:00-4:30PM	General Questions and Answers	



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM  
2023 SCIENCE CONFERENCE

Area Hotels

Downtown Olympia:

Double Tree by Hilton,  
415 Capitol Way N,  
Olympia 98501 – (360)  
570-0555

Hilton Garden Inn, 2101  
Henderson Park Ln. SE,  
Olympia 98501 – (360)  
236-9934

The Governor Hotel, 621  
Capitol Way S, Olympia  
98501 – (360) 352-7700

West Olympia:

Red Lion, 2300 Evergreen  
Park Drive SW, Olympia  
98502 – (360) 943-4000

Lacey:

La Quinta Inn & Suites,  
4704 Park Center Ave NE,  
Lacey 98516 – (360) 412-  
1200

Ramada Inn, 4520 Martin  
Way E, Lacey 98516 –  
(360) 459-8866

Tumwater:

Best Western Tumwater  
Inn, 5188 Capitol Blvd SE,  
Tumwater 98501 – (360)  
956-1235

OYO Hotel Olympia, 1600  
74<sup>th</sup> Ave SW, Tumwater  
98501 – (360) 587-4810

La Quinta Inn & Suites,  
4600 Capitol Blvd. SE,  
Tumwater 98501 – (360)  
352-5433

**Southbound:**

Take I-5 Exit 105 A. Follow the “State Capitol” lane, which parallels the freeway, for 1/4 mile.

**Northbound:**

Take I-5 Exit 105. Keep to the LEFT following the “State Capitol” lane.  
Go through the roundabout and the tunnel. At first traffic light (Capitol Way), turn RIGHT. Turn RIGHT again at the next traffic light (11th Ave.). At next traffic light (Washington St. SE), turn RIGHT once more. Turn LEFT into the visitor parking lot.

**Metered visitor parking available at the Natural Resources Building**  
111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA 98501



Visit the CMER web site: [Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation & Research](https://www.wa.gov/CMER)

Please forward this announcement to others who may be interested.





DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES

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April 21, 2023

**TO:** Forest Practices Board *TM*  
**FROM:** Tami Miketa, Manager, Small Forest Landowner Office  
**SUBJECT:** Small Forest Landowner Office and Advisory Committee

**Small Forest Landowner Advisory Committee**

The Small Forest Landowner Advisory Committee met on April 18, 2023. Topics discussed were the creation of a cultural resource’s brochure for small forest landowners, the creation of a SFLAC Charter and updated Action Plan, the concept of an enhanced FREP compensation plan, the SFLAC’s role in the update of Board Manual 21 – Alternate Plans, and an update on the Carbon Work Group.

**SFLO Program Updates**

Dan Pomerenk, the SFLO Forestry Riparian Easement Program Manager retired as of April 14, 2023. Dan has 35+ years of service with DNR. Specifically, Dan managed the Forestry Riparian Easement Program since its inception in 2002.

For the FY23-25 biennium the Small Forest Landowner Office submitted to the Legislature the following program budget requests:

As of this date, the legislative session has ended and it appears the SFLO Capital funded programs are allotted the following at this time\*:

Small Forest Landowner:

Capital Programs	Funding Level		Total
	Reappropriation	New Appropriation	
FREP	10,145,000	10,000,000	<b>20,145,000</b>
FFFPP	3,561,000	7,780,000	<b>11,341,000</b>
RHOSP	1,409,000	5,014,000	<b>6,423,000</b>

\*The Capital Budget is currently on Governor Inslee’s desk for signature.

### **Long-Term Applications (LTA)**

In this Forest Practices Board report, the SFLO regularly shows the status of Long-Term Applications. There are currently 313 approved long-term applications, which is the same number of approved LTA's since the end of the last reporting period (01/20/2023).

<b>LTA Applications</b>	<b>LTA Phase 1</b>	<b>LTA Phase 2</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Under Review	4	0	<b>4</b>
Approved	1	313	<b>314</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>318</b>

### **Upcoming Events**

#### [Emerald Ash Borer Free Webinar](#)

April 26, 2023

1-2 PM (Online)

#### [What the old forest taught us:](#)

#### [Forest stewardship in the 21st century](#)

May 3, 2023

7-8 PM (online or in-person)

Seattle, WA.

#### [Birds of the Willamette Valley Webinar](#)

May 18, 2023

7 – 8:30 PM (online)

### **Workshops**

#### [Operational Lidar Inventory Meeting-virtual or in-person Vancouver, WA](#)

April 5, 2023

8 – 5:00 PM

Vancouver, WA or virtual

#### [Stewarding a Climate-Resilient Forest West of the Cascades-Chimacum, WA](#)

April 29, 2023

1 – 4:00 PM

Chimacum, WA

### **Classes**

#### [2023 Western Washington Forest Owners' Field Day](#)

June 10, 2023

8:00 AM-4:00 PM

Eatonville, WA.

Forest Practices Board

April 21, 2023

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[Vashon Forest Stewardship Coached Planning-9 week course begins](#)

April 18 – June 13, 2023

Tuesdays, 5– 7:30 PM

Vashon, WA

[2023 Eastern Washington Forest and Range Owners Field Day](#)

June 24, 2023

8 AM – 4 PM

Newport, WA

[Forest Stewardship University](#)

Online, register for free, on-demand, self-paced learning modules

[WSU Forestry Extension Forest Stewardship University Modules](#)

On-demand, self-paced, online learning on forest stewardship topics.

**Podcast Series**

[The Forest Overstory Podcast- WSU extension forestry](#)

For more information regarding these events, go to <http://forestry.wsu.edu>

Please contact me at (360) 902-1415 or [tamara.miketa@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:tamara.miketa@dnr.wa.gov) if you have questions.  
TM/



**Timber, Fish and Wildlife Policy Committee  
Forest Practices Board**

**PO BOX 47012, Olympia, WA 98504-4712**

**Policy Co-Chair:**

Court Stanley, Washington Association of  
Counties  
Brandon Austin, Department of Ecology

April 19, 2023

TO: Forest Practices Board  
FROM: Court Stanley and Brandon Austin  
SUBJECT: TFW Policy Committee Report

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The Timber, Fish, & Wildlife Policy Committee (Policy) workload is driven by internal process deadlines and priorities directed by the Forest Practices Board (Board). To accommodate the heavy workload, Policy relies on additional meetings, email communications between meetings and policy workgroups to address specific issues and meet deadlines to accomplish their work.

**TFW POLICY COMMITTEE BUSINESS UPDATE for February 2023- April 2023**

Extensive Monitoring

Policy prepared a memo to CMER outlining the question policy is asking that extensive monitoring answer. CMER has accepted the memo and is working through the process.

SAO Recommendation #5

Policy had formed an SAO working group and is meeting monthly to develop implementation strategies for the Audit findings. Several recommendations are being worked on including structured decision making, decision criteria, onboarding for new members, review of Schedule L-1, and how to handle non-CMER science.

TFW Policy Operating Manual

Policy is working with Triangle Associates to develop a manual to assist members on processes in the Adaptive Management Process. This manual is just beginning, and we are working on the outline of the document.

Budget Workgroup

The Policy budget workgroup continues to meet to discuss projects and funding in future years and has developed a contingency budget should the legislature reduce adaptive management program funding for the Board approved Master Project Schedule. This contingency budget will become a regular part of the ongoing budget requests to the FPB.

May Offsite

Policy is planning a one day offsite facilitated retreat on May 3<sup>rd</sup> to work on our shared values and continue to practice interest-based negotiations. This retreat will have no policy decisions but is intended to create trust and a collaborative attitude with all caucuses. A seafood dinner is planned for after the retreat.

**MAJOR TFW POLICY COMMITTEE TOPICS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2023**



- **Adaptive Management Program (AMP) budget and the Master Project Schedule (MPS):** Policy will review and prepare recommendations to present to the Board at the May 2023 meeting.
- **CMER Work Plan:** CMER delivered to Policy for approval in January 2023
- **SAO:** Policy is developing the implementation criteria for SAO recommendation #5 (Net Gains Options) and 6 (adopt decision criteria) for inclusion in the rule or guidance in calendar year 2024. Policy is assisting to develop onboarding and training for new Policy members (SAO Recommendation 8).
- **Small Forest Landowner Experimental Harvest Prescriptions:** Policy has received the workgroup recommendations for two alternative harvest prescriptions. Policy has formed a workgroup and will bring forward recommendations for experimental harvest prescriptions to the Board in 2023.
- **Unstable Slope Criteria Project – Object Based Landform Mapping with High Resolution Topography Report:** CMER is expected to deliver it to Policy in fall 2023.
- **Extensive Riparian Monitoring:** Policy will receive approval from CMER a recommended extensive riparian monitoring charter for riparian vegetation and stream temperature in July 2023. The scoping document will follow in fall of 2023.
- **Riparian Literature Synthesis Report:** CMER will deliver to Policy in August 2023
- **Eastside Forest Health Strategy:** CMER will deliver to Policy in November 2023
- **Wetland Management Zone Effectiveness Monitoring Program Scoping Document:** CMER will deliver to Policy in December 2023

New Projects:

The Policy Committee workload is heavy yet must also remain sensitive to the changes in various timelines and to new issues as they come up. The capacity for Policy to accept any new work as assigned by the Forest Practices Board or taken on for other reasons could require delaying existing priorities and/or scheduling additional meetings.



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Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA

April 21, 2023

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Forest Practices Board  
**From:** Darric Lowery, WDFW Forest Habitats Section Manager  
**Subject:** Upland Wildlife Update

The following provides a brief status update for ongoing or pending actions pertaining to priority wildlife species in forested habitats:

### Marbled Murrelet

1992: Federally listed as Threatened  
1993: State listed as Threatened  
1996: Federal critical habitat designated  
1997: FPB enacted State Forest Practices Rules  
2017: State uplisted to Endangered

The status of the Marbled Murrelet has not changed since the October 2022 update. The Forest Practices rules review initiated in 2018 is complete. On April 5, 2023, the Marbled Murrelet Wildlife Working Group (WWG) met for the last time prior to submitting deliverables to the Board to discuss remaining items and addressed feedback received on March 15 in the final drafts of the rule recommendations and the supporting briefing report. The WWG materials have been finalized and were submitted to the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) on April 20. With the support of the WWG, WDFW will present the recommendations and the supporting material at the May 2023 Board meeting. A memo requesting consideration was presented at the Board's August 2022 meeting.

The species' status has not improved since state listing in 1993. State-wide, Washington's murrelet population has declined by 4.1% annually (2001-2020) overall. It has declined by 3.3% annually along the Washington coast (2001-2021) and 5.0% in the U.S. portion of the Salish Sea (2001-2020) (McIver et al. 2022). To put these numbers in perspective, in the Salish Sea during the breeding season in 2001 for example, there were an estimated 5,740 birds. In 2020, there were approximately 3,140 birds in this same area. There has been nearly a 50% decline in the regional population over those 20 years. Following the 2017 state uplisting to endangered status, the WDNR, in consultation with the WDFW, recommended that the Forest Practices Board (Board) support a forest practices rule assessment including relevant stakeholders. WDFW established a WWG to evaluate efficacy of the rules, identify potential rule modifications to improve clarity and implementation, and provide recommendations to the Board.

WDFW continues to monitor Marbled Murrelet populations at-sea in the Puget Sound and Straits (most recently monitored in 2022) and the Washington coast (monitored in 2021) every other year during the nesting season. These are the only data available to assess murrelet abundance and trends. The NW Forest Plan Effectiveness Monitoring team's 25-year report has been published ([https://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/pubs/pnw\\_gtr996.pdf](https://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/pubs/pnw_gtr996.pdf)) as well as a report on trends in habitat conditions (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/treesearch/pubs/63314>). The 2020 and 2021 at-sea survey reports are now available (Lance & Pearson, 2021; Pearson et al. 2021; McIver et al. 2022) and a paper on winter trends over an 8-year period was recently published that found strong non-breeding season declines in Puget Sound (Pearson et al. 2022). Ongoing research in collaboration with Dr. Beth Gardner and PhD Student

Sierra Gillman at the University of Washington is developing predictive density surfaces for the murrelet and examining the factors driving changes in abundance and distribution.

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### **Canada Lynx**

1993: State listed as Threatened

1994: FPB enacted voluntary management approach

2000: Federally listed as Threatened

2017: State uplisted to Endangered

With the 2017 uplisting to state endangered status, it was recommended that no action be taken to include lynx in the forest practices rule designation for critical habitat (state) and to maintain existing voluntary protections. WDFW continues to explore lynx conservation opportunities in collaboration with landowners, Canadian federal and provincial entities, US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), US Forest Service (USFS), conservation organizations, tribes, and academic partners. The goal is to refine recovery actions that can be implemented in the near- and long-term to benefit lynx conservation in Washington.

Evaluation of Forest Practices Applications (FPAs) on private lands continues in order to identify potential impacts to lynx habitat. Given wildfire impacts in northcentral Washington, WDFW has pursued ongoing coordination with partners to bring awareness of the importance of balancing habitat protection with the need to address fire risk, including on federal lands.

Under DNR's Lynx Habitat Management Plan (2006), DNR and Washington State University (WSU) have begun developing a proposal to investigate the effects of different pre-commercial thinning designs on snowshoe hare use of habitat, vulnerability to predation, and sources of mortality. The information gathered may then be used to better inform forest management treatments favorable for snowshoe hares while also providing increased foraging opportunities for lynx. Additionally, Colville Confederated Tribes is leading a lynx conservation project and they have released 19 lynx from 2021 to 2022 into the Washington Kettle Range.

To further lynx conservation, WDFW participates in ongoing multi-agency surveys for lynx in the North Cascades, WDFW maintains a current database of verifiable lynx detections, and WDFW is currently updating the periodic status review for the lynx (last done in 2017), and this updated version is expected to be available for public review in 2023.

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### **Northern Spotted Owl**

1988: State listed as Endangered

1990: Federally listed as Threatened

1996: FPB enacted State Forest Practices Rules

2012: USFWS designation of revised critical habitat

2016: State retention of Endangered status

The Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) population has continued to decline primarily due to ongoing competitive interactions with Barred Owls. The Barred Owl removal experiment, which included study areas in Washington, Oregon, and California, indicated, among other findings, a positive response in survival rates by Spotted Owls following Barred Owl removal (Wiens et al. 2021).

In February 2021 a Bill was introduced to the legislature that, if passed, would give WDNR the authority to develop and manage a Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA) for NSO with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Before granting authority, the legislature determined that it wanted to see a draft of the SHA and gave WDNR funding to complete that effort. WDNR, WDFW, and the Northern Spotted Owl Implementation Team (NSOIT) worked with WDNR's consultant to develop the SHA. The team completed drafts of the SHA, Environmental Assessment (EA), and an explanation of an enrollment mechanism for landowners to voluntarily enroll in June 2022. The SHA is designed to provide federal regulatory assurances to nonfederal landowners through a voluntary program regarding forest management

of Spotted Owl habitat. On January 16, 2023, the Bill was reintroduced to the legislature for consideration. WDFW submitted a Bill Analysis on January 19, 2023, that supports the Bill.

The USFWS has continued to address Barred Owl management and subsequent conservation of Spotted Owls in Washington, Oregon, and California. WDFW is an active partner in a process to develop management concepts and scenarios that will guide decision making by USFWS about the scope of Barred Owl management options that will be evaluated in an Environmental Impact Statement.

The Department is in the process of finalizing the 2023 NSO Periodic Status Review (PSR). The last status review was published in 2016. A draft of the PSR was provided to Department Programs in February for internal review and comments were received on March 23. The final document is expected to be published during the summer or fall of 2023.

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### **Fisher**

1998: State listed as Endangered

2016: Federal status: Final decision for west coast DPS - not warranted for listing (April 2016)

2018: Ruling on 2017 withdrawal of proposed ESA listing, USFWS ordered to revisit that decision

2019: Federal revised proposed rule to list fishers, excluded fisher in Washington

The status of fisher remains unchanged since the October 2022 quarterly report. Fisher reintroductions into Washington have been completed by WDFW and cooperating partners, with a total of 260 fishers, including 90 in Olympic National Park (2008-2010), and 170 in other federal lands within the Cascade Range. Non-federal landowners can continue to voluntarily enroll in the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) and receive federal regulatory assurances if the fisher were to become listed under the ESA in the future. By enrolling in the CCAA, landowners agree to follow basic conservation measures that protect fishers that may use their lands. To date, 62 entities who own or manage 3,442,491 acres of non-federal forest lands are enrolled in the CCAA.

WDFW and project partners are continuing the long term monitoring of reintroduced fisher populations in the state, following the 2013- 2016 monitoring project on the Olympic Peninsula. WDFW and project partners, beginning October 2022, have initiated a distribution and occupancy survey of much of the federal lands in the South Cascades Ecosystem (between I-90 and the Columbia River). This survey will be completed in July of 2023 and then WDFW and partners will conduct a similar survey in the North Cascade Ecosystem (from I-90 north to the WA-BC border) from October 2023 to July 2024.

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### **Western Gray Squirrel**

1993: State listed as Threatened

2002: Petitioned for Federal listing

2003: Federal listing denied

2013: FPB enacted voluntary management approach

2016: State retention of Threatened status

A final report has been completed that summarizes results of the statewide western gray squirrel hair tube survey concluded in 2020. A report summarizing results of a statewide habitat change assessment was recently completed as well. Results of these reports will be incorporated into the Periodic Status Review (PSR) currently underway. The PSR report was released for public review in winter 2023. The public comment period is now closed, and the document is currently being finalized for submission to the Fish and Wildlife Commission in late summer or fall of 2023.

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### **Future Updates to the Board**

The forest practices rules require that when a species is listed by the Washington Fish and Wildlife



Commission and/or the U.S. Secretary of the Interior or Commerce, WDNR will consult with WDFW and makes a recommendation to the Forest Practices Board as to whether protection is needed under the Critical Habitat (State) rule (WAC 222-16-080). WDFW and WDNR coordinate to anticipate federal actions and to respond to changes in the status of species addressed by the rules.

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