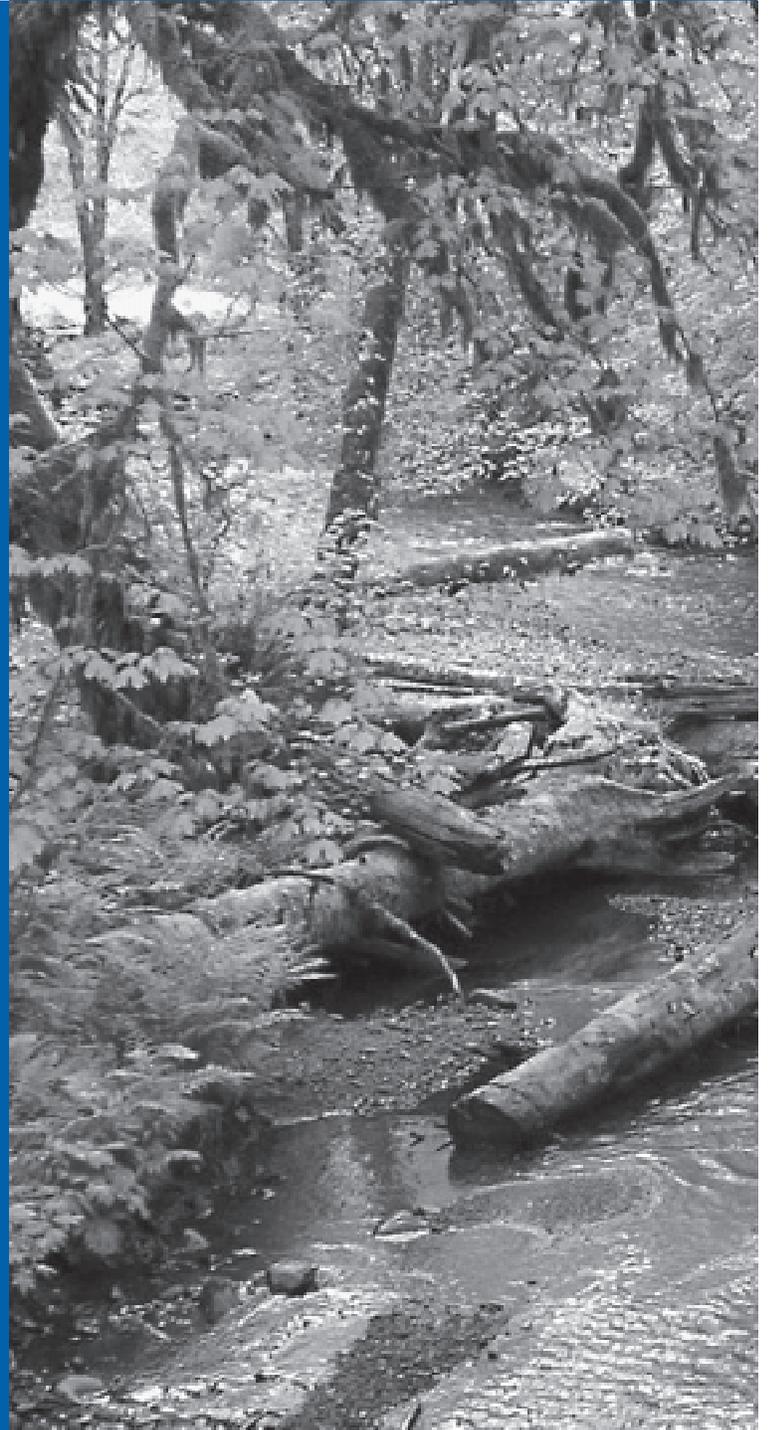


Implementation Procedures
for the

**HABITAT
CONSERVATION
PLAN
RIPARIAN
FOREST
RESTORATION
STRATEGY**

For Westside Planning Units excluding the
Olympic Experimental State Forest

April 2006



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
Natural Resources
Doug Sutherland - Commissioner of Public Lands

Acknowledgments

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We thank the Washington State Department of Natural Resources' Region and Division staff and many other external reviewers that commented on earlier drafts of this strategy. The authors would like to thank the following people for their — significant contribution to either the concepts or the development of this conservation strategy:

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Photo Credits

Florian Deisenhofer	Cover photo
Richard Bigley	All photos within document

Suggested citation

Bigley, R.E. and F.U. Deisenhofer. 2006 Implementation Procedures for the Habitat Conservation Plan Riparian Forest Restoration Strategy. DNR Scientific Support Section, Olympia, Washington.



April 20, 2006

Dear Reader,

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has completed a strategy for restoring and protecting streamside forests on state trust lands in Western Washington. As directed in the trust lands Habitat Conservation Plan Conservation Strategy, DNR was to develop procedures detailing methods for making site-specific forest restoration decisions in the riparian areas.

I am pleased to inform you that DNR has completed this work through the creation of this document: *Implementation Procedures for the Habitat Conservation Plan Riparian Forest Restoration Strategy*, April 2006. The procedures cover five of the plan's Westside planning units, and help DNR restore and maintain freshwater habitat for salmonid species, and contribute to the conservation of other species that depend on aquatic and riparian areas.

The procedures will guide the management and restoration activities in the 300,000 acres of forested riparian and wetland areas across the 1.6 million acres of Westside forested state trust landscape. The objective of this restoration strategy is to use thinning activities to hasten the development of riparian forests toward long-term structurally complex, fully functional forests. The strategy focuses on: the growth of large, site-adapted conifer trees, down woody debris (on the forest floor), layering of the tree canopy, and important structural components such as large snags.

These procedures were developed in collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service. The Services also will be working with DNR as we move forward with a measured approach to restore those riparian forests that are most in need. The four Westside regions each will design and carry out a pilot restoration project in collaboration with the Riparian Forest Restoration Strategy Technical Review Committee and the two Services. Information gained from the pilot projects will be used to inform future riparian restoration activities.

In addition to the pilot projects, the first three years of this strategy will be considered the initial Implementation Period. At the end of this time, the Technical Review Committee will reconvene to address issues pertinent to the implementation of the Procedures for the HCP Riparian Forest Restoration Strategy and determine if refinements are necessary.

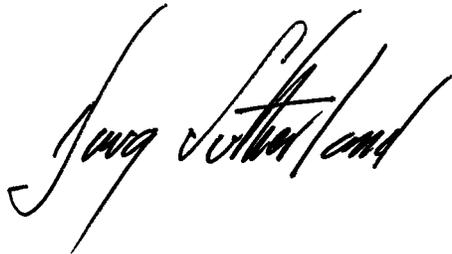
Ongoing research continues to support the value of riparian forests. Riparian ecosystems produce abundant natural resource values including habitat for salmon and numerous plant and animal

April 20, 2006
Page 2 of 2

species. Myriad species rely on clean water, shade, large woody debris and nutrients for aquatic habitat, damp soil and logs for terrestrial habitat, and snags for cavity nesting birds. In addition, riparian forests help control flooding, and filter and clean the water that seeps through the landscape.

I greatly appreciate the time and work that DNR's team members devoted to this important effort, and the rigorous scientific contributions that the Technical Review Committee provided. They have given us a valuable product that will be useful in the conservation and restoration of this important riparian ecological community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Sutherland". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "D".

Doug Sutherland
Commissioner of Public Lands



United States Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
United States Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service



National Marine Fisheries Service
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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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August 15, 2005

R. Bruce Mackey
Lands Steward
Washington State Department of Natural Resources
PO Box 47000
Olympia, WA 98504-7000

Dear Mr. Mackey:

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) (together, the Services) are writing to inform you and other interested parties that our staff has reviewed the August 2005 version of the Implementation Procedures for the Riparian Forest Restoration Strategy (RFRS) and find it is consistent with the elements outlined in your Habitat Conservation Plan HCP (State Lands HCP, approved by the Services January 1997). These riparian Implementation Procedures fulfill the requirements outlined in the HCP (IV. 61) and provide the promised guidance for site specific riparian management while not changing any existing HCP conservation strategies. In our view, implementing these riparian procedures as described will not lead to an increased level of incidental take authorized by the Services in 1997, or lead to an appreciable reduction in riparian ecosystem functions.

As described in the HCP, the Implementation Procedures document has been prepared by Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff in close collaboration with the Services. This August 2005 document addresses substantive concerns with previous versions raised by the Services, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC) and others. Based on our review, we believe that the procedures will meet the HCP riparian objectives: 1) to maintain or restore salmonid freshwater habitat on DNR managed lands, and 2) contribute to the conservation of other aquatic and riparian obligate species (HCP IV. 55 - 79).

Invariably, questions of implementation will arise with these riparian Implementation Procedures that we cannot now foresee. In that instance, we expect to continue our constructive interagency dialog to find solutions that meet the intent of the procedures and HCP objectives. If DNR or the Services believe it is necessary, the Technical Review Committee consisting of scientists from the DNR, the Services, the NWIFC, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will be convened to address the implementation issue.

In addition, the Services will continue to fulfill their government-to-government role with western Washington Tribes on the implementation of this HCP.

The 2009 Compliance Monitoring Report, as described in the Implementation Procedures, will provide an early opportunity to diagnose implementation issues and allow the Technical Review Committee to adapt the procedures, if needed, based on the latest observations and information. We believe this three-year Implementation Period integrates well with the HCP adaptive management process to give us a high level of confidence in the effectiveness of HCP implementation of riparian areas.

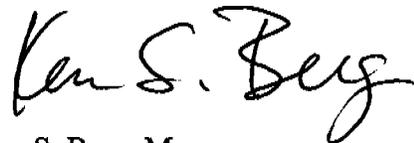
The Services have worked closely with your staff to understand the details of the riparian Implementation Procedures and the DNR has been receptive to our suggestions. We agree with DNR that this document is important to guide HCP implementers as they develop the site-specific forest prescriptions to achieve the desired future conditions of ecologically functional forests along streams and wetlands. Based on our review of the RFRS, the Services believe the August 2005 version of the Implementation Procedures for the Riparian Forest Restoration Strategy is consistent with the intent and goals of the riparian conservation strategy described in the HCP.

We look forward to working with the DNR on implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of the riparian procedures. Thank you for your attention and your staff's commitment to ensure the HCP is effectively implemented. If you have questions about this letter, please contact Matthew.Longenbaugh@noaa.gov, (360) 753-7761, or Mark_Ostwald@FWS.gov, (360) 753-9564.

Sincerely,



Steven W. Landino
Washington State Director
for Habitat Conservation



Ken S. Berg, Manager
Western Washington Fish and Wildlife
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

cc: Becky Kelley, WEC
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Tami Riepe, DNR
Gretchen Nicholas, DNR
Paula Swedeen, WDFW

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Habitat Conservation Plan Science Section
Land Management Division

April 2006



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF

Natural Resources

Doug Sutherland - Commissioner of Public Lands



Preface

As directed by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), this document describes the goals and objectives for site-specific forest management decisions in the Riparian Management Zone (DNR 1997 IV. 61). Materials from this document will be reformatted for training and used by field foresters. The Department is replacing the 1999 Forestry Handbook procedure PR 14-004-150 with the procedure in Section 3 of this document, and implementing this Riparian Forest Restoration Strategy with this new guidance and field forester training.

Implementation of this Riparian Forest Restoration Strategy will be through the training of region-based specialists and the training of field personnel. The Technical Review Committee and the Federal Services will work with DNR as it moves forward with the measured approach to restore riparian forests on state trust lands. Each Westside region will carry out a pilot restoration project. Information from the pilot projects will be used to inform later riparian restoration activities.

These silvicultural activity prescriptions are to be applied to forested state trust lands managed under the HCP, mostly west of the Cascade Crest. Management of Riparian Management Zones (RMZ) in the Olympic Experimental State Forest (OESF) will continue under the guidance in the OESF management options defined in the HCP.

Strategies described in this document are required to be implemented in the field when RMZ restoration is being considered, unless alternate plans are approved in writing by the HCP Implementation Management or their designees, in consultation with the Region Manager or Region State Lands Assistant Manager.

Changes to this Riparian Forest Restoration Strategy can be made by written agreement between the appropriate agency representatives.

Non-riparian associated wetland management strategies are found in:

Bigley, R. E. and S. W. Hull. 2000. *Recognizing Wetlands and Wetland Indicator Plants on State Lands in Washington*. DNR Scientific Support Section, Olympia, Washington

Bigley, R. E. and S. W. Hull. 2000. *Managing Wetlands on State Lands in Washington*. DNR Scientific Support Section, Olympia, Washington 154 p.

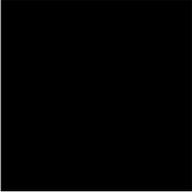


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