



Pulling Together to Make a Difference: a Collaborative Approach to Conservation

Over the past three decades, a growing number of Oregonians have recognized that the state's landscape has changed, affecting the fish and wildlife populations that depend on it. Past efforts to conserve fish and wildlife have mostly been crisis-driven, focused on individual species, and contingent upon available funds. Now, conservation partners have a clearer understanding that nature works on many scales and that a strategic and comprehensive approach is needed to address species and their habitats across broad landscapes as well as at local sites. Nationally and in Oregon, people are seeking ways to be more effective. Only by engaging every Oregonian and working together in the spirit of cooperation will Oregon achieve long-term fish and wildlife conservation.

A Solid Foundation: Oregon's Existing Planning, Regulatory, and Voluntary Framework

Oregon already has a conservation framework in the form of plans, regulations, and grass-roots voluntary efforts. These processes have built the knowledge base, standards, and relationships that set the stage for creating a statewide conservation strategy. The Conservation Strategy works to promote integration and innovation within Oregon's existing conservation framework.

Plans - Numerous planning efforts by a variety of entities have identified priority species, habitats and actions within Oregon. These plans have all differed in their purposes, goals, and scales of analysis. Some examples of large-scale planning efforts include the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds, Northwest Power and Conservation Council Subbasin Plans, and The Nature Conservancy's Ecoregional Assessments.

Regulations – State and federal laws govern issues such as water quality, air quality, land use, and species protection. For example, the legal and institutional framework for maintaining private forestland in economically viable use is already in place through the Oregon Board of Forestry's Forest Program for

Oregon, the Forest Practices Act, and statewide planning Goal 4, Forest Lands. Within the Forestry Program for Oregon, one of seven central Oregon Board of Forestry strategies is to "contribute to the conservation of diverse native plant and animal populations and their habitats in Oregon's forests" (Strategy E).

Voluntary Efforts – From counting birds during the annual Christmas Bird Count to planting willows in riparian areas, watershed councils, non-profit organizations, private landowners and other interested citizens already are contributing voluntarily to conserving Oregon's fish and wildlife through both organized and individual efforts.

The Oregon Conservation Strategy builds on these efforts to provide a framework for a cohesive, statewide, non-regulatory approach to habitat and species conservation. Implementation of the Conservation Strategy will require coordination between the state and federal agencies that implement existing regulations, as well between a variety of groups that implement plans. Implementation of the Conservation Strategy can also support and expand existing voluntary efforts. For more information on Oregon's existing planning and regulatory framework, see Appendix II.

Oregon's Conservation Strategy: What It Is and What It Can Do

The Conservation Strategy is intended to provide a long-term, big-picture "blue print" for conserving Oregon's natural resources to maintain or improve environmental health for today and for future generations. It outlines how and where the state and its conservation partners, including landowners and land managers, can best focus this work. The Conservation Strategy is intended to:

- Encourage voluntary conservation and recognize contributions already made by landowners, land managers and other entities

- Expand the successful voluntary approach of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds to maintain and restore upland areas for improved watershed function.
- Provide a wide range of voluntary conservation tools, so local communities and landowners can choose what is appropriate for their situations and goals
- Increase the efficiency and conservation benefits of existing voluntary incentive programs, and also identify additional needs
- Synthesize existing plans and credible, peer-reviewed information to provide a larger context (ecoregional and statewide) in which to address the state's conservation needs
- Leverage limited conservation resources, such as money, equipment and time in a more efficient and effective manner by:
 - Focusing conservation actions on the species and habitats of greatest conservation priority
 - Identifying areas where conservation activities will provide the greatest benefit at the landscape scale
 - Increasing coordination, collaboration, and partnership to produce cumulative benefits
- Demonstrate how local conservation actions fit into a broader regional or statewide perspective
- Prevent species from becoming imperiled, thereby reducing the risk of future species listings that could result in additional regulations for Oregon's businesses and industries
- Provide a common conservation vision to guide state and federal agencies toward effective coordination and fewer conflicts
- Increase coordination between states to address issues of common concern
- Provide a role for every interested Oregonian, from local neighborhood clean-ups to large-scale habitat restoration projects to citizen-based monitoring
- Provide guidance and coordination to preserve and restore the services provided by healthy ecosystems that benefit all Oregonians
- Demonstrate Oregon's commitment to conserve its species and habitats
- Assist Oregon in managing its landscapes to safeguard Oregon's high quality of life and natural resources – one of Oregon's strengths in attracting and retaining businesses
- Serve as a long-term strategy for the next decade and beyond, while still remaining a dynamic, living approach that will be adjusted as new information and insights are gained.

Oregon's Conservation Strategy: What it is Not

The Conservation Strategy is not regulatory. It works within the existing legal structure and is not a substitute for regulations. It does not, and will not, challenge, change or expand regulations. It will not add new regulations.

The Conservation Strategy is not a substitute for existing planning efforts. It synthesizes and builds upon existing planning efforts to weave them into a statewide framework for action. It also highlights ways to expand, enhance and improve conservation work.

The Conservation Strategy is not restrictive. It will not impose limits or new requirements on private landowners or public land users. It is not intended to impose additional rules, fees or processes. It instead encourages voluntary action and collaboration.

The Conservation Strategy is not an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife management plan. Rather, it is intended to be a conservation tool for all Oregonians. The issues identified in this document are often complex and cannot be solved by any one agency or entity. They require cooperative, coordinated approaches for long-term success.

The National Approach

The emphasis of each state strategy is on voluntary measures and collaboration. A state strategy that imposed additional regulation or adversely affected the state's economy and communities would not meet the intent or objectives of the State Wildlife Grants Program. Each strategy must address factors affecting the health of the nation's fish and wildlife, particularly those species in greatest need of conservation. The goal is to manage fish and wildlife populations and their habitat as a public trust, maintained as a national heritage.

Each strategy must contain eight elements addressing species, habitats, problems, conservation actions, monitoring, strategy review, interagency coordination, and public involvement.

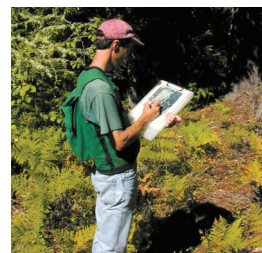


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Required Eight Elements		Oregon's Approach	Locate More Information
1	Gather information on the distribution and abundance of fish and wildlife species.	Identify "Strategy Species," those most in need of conservation, and summarize key information about them.	Strategy Species summary descriptions, pages 319 to 374.
2	Describe location and relative condition of key habitats and community types essential to conservation of these species.	Identify "Strategy Habitats" to conserve a broad suite of species that reflect the diversity of fish and wildlife in the state, and map Conservation Opportunity Areas for "Strategy Habitats," areas where conservation activities would have the greatest benefit and chances of success.	A. Information on habitat requirements of Strategy Species is found in the tables, pages 319 to 374. B. Information on Strategy Habitats is found on pages 257 to 311. C. Conservation Opportunity Areas are mapped and described within the Ecoregions Chapter pages 111 to 255.
3	Describe problems which may adversely affect these species or their habitats. Identify information needed to improve conservation of species and habitats.	Describe "limiting factors" for Strategy Species and Habitats, and "data gaps" where information is needed.	The six key conservation issues pose limiting factors to many species and habitats and are discussed on pages 36 to 64. In addition, information on limiting factors are identified for: A. Strategy Species (pages 319 to 374). B. Strategy Habitats (pages 257 to 311). C. Ecoregions (pages 111 to 255). Data gaps are identified for: A. Strategy Species (pages 319 to 374). B. Strategy Habitats (pages 305 to 307).
4	Describe necessary conservation actions for species and habitats.	Outline conservation actions for Strategy Species and Habitats.	Conservation actions are identified for: A. Key conservation issues (pages 36 to 64). B. Strategy Species (pages 319 to 374). C. Strategy Habitats (pages 257 to 311). D. Ecoregions (pages 111 to 255).
5	Propose ways to monitor the effectiveness of these conservation actions and ways to adapt actions as information or conditions change.	Describes an approach for monitoring within an adaptive management framework.	Monitoring is discussed on pages 98 to 109.
6	Describe procedures to review the Conservation Strategy at regular intervals (not to exceed 10 years).	Describe how reviews and updates will occur.	Review and revision is discussed on page 32.
7	Coordinate with federal, state, and local agencies and tribes that manage significant land and water areas or administer significant programs that affect species and habitat conservation.	Coordinate extensively with federal, state, county, and local governments; tribes; non-governmental organizations; and landowner groups in developing the Conservation Strategy.	How these agencies and groups were involved in developing the Conservation Strategy is described on page 6. How Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will continue to work with agencies and groups is described on page 32 and 101.
8	Engage the public in planning and implementing the Conservation Strategy.	A. Seek guidance from a Stakeholder Advisory Committee: a broad-based, geographically balanced committee representing working landscapes [agriculture range and forest], conservation groups, hunting and fishing interests, tourism interests, local governments, and organizations working with landowners "on the ground." B. Seek public input through public presentations. Distribute paper and web-based draft versions of the Conservation Strategy and provide opportunities for public comment. Incorporate public comment into the final version. C. Engage Oregonians throughout the state as the Conservation Strategy is implemented.	How the public was involved in developing the Conservation Strategy is described on page 6. How Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will continue to engage Oregon's citizens is described on pages 29 and 90.

Oregon's Collaborative Approach

Developing the Draft Conservation Strategy

ODFW involved as many people and entities as possible during development of the Conservation Strategy. ODFW specialists talked to hundreds of citizens, biologists, agency personnel, and elected officials to gather information and perspectives while developing the draft Conservation Strategy, using three primary collaborative forums: a Stakeholder Advisory Committee, a Technical Advisory Committee, and meetings and workshops.

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee was established as a broad-based, geographically-balanced guide to help develop the draft Conservation Strategy. The committee was comprised of 27 individuals representing the state's agriculture, forestry and rangeland management interests, as well as conservation, fishing and hunting, tourism, local governments, landowners, and groups and organizations that work with landowners on conservation and restoration efforts.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife contracted with Triangle Associates to organize and facilitate the Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings. Triangle Associates convened nine Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings that were held between September 2004 and June 2005. The committee reviewed draft material and provided recommendations on key conservation issues, Conservation Opportunity Areas, voluntary conservation tools, monitoring, and implementation. The meetings were open to the public, and time was provided at the end of each meeting for public comment.

The Technical Advisory Committee was established to help with methodologies and the selection of Strategy Species and Habitats. This committee included experts representing the timber industry, universities, consulting ecologists, conservation organizations, tribes and agencies.

ODFW field staff provided biological expertise, knowledge of local habitats, issues and opportunities, and examples of successful conservation projects and partnerships from their regions.

ODFW also gained information on species status and monitoring priorities through three workshops. Two workshops brought experts together to discuss species status and were held in partnership with Oregon State University's Natural Heritage Information Center. In addition, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife sponsored an all-bird workshop to identify current efforts, gaps, and priorities for bird monitoring in Oregon. Ideas from the workshop provided a foundation for the Monitoring Chapter.

Many agencies and groups provided guidance, content, and review of draft materials. Contributing partners in this process included Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon State University's Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Defenders of Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, and Oregon State University's Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center.

A complete list of stakeholders, technical advisors, and cooperators can be found in the Acknowledgements section on page *iv* to *v*.

Review of the Draft Conservation Strategy

The draft Conservation Strategy was distributed widely for public comment during the review process. The document was posted on ODFW's Web site, with a link for providing comments on-line. More than 600 paper and electronic (CD) copies were distributed to:

- Every county library, as well as other public libraries in the state
- All county Boards of Commissioners
- All Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- All watershed councils
- Every ODFW field office
- Experts from a variety of conservation-related fields, including planning, research, forestry, agriculture, ranching and hydro-power
- State and federal natural resource agencies, and state agencies working on tourism and economic and community development.

Dozens of local governments, organizations, agencies and tribes were sent electronic announcements to let them know how to obtain a copy of the draft Conservation Strategy or view it on-line. The announcement provided contact information for questions and was also posted to several electronic list serves.

ODFW made presentations to local governments; county natural resource advisory committees, tribes, and watershed councils, as well as agricultural, forestry and range management organizations, conservation organizations, and other state and federal agencies.

Internal review occurred throughout the process of Conservation Strategy development, with ODFW staff throughout the agency providing information and insight.

Comments and edits were incorporated into the draft document sent to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission in August 2005.