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## Where to Start?

### **Strategic Opportunism: Every Acre Counts**

Landowners and land managers throughout Oregon can contribute to conserving fish and wildlife by maintaining, restoring, and improving habitats. Conservation actions that benefit Strategy Species and Habitats are important regardless of location, size, or ownership.

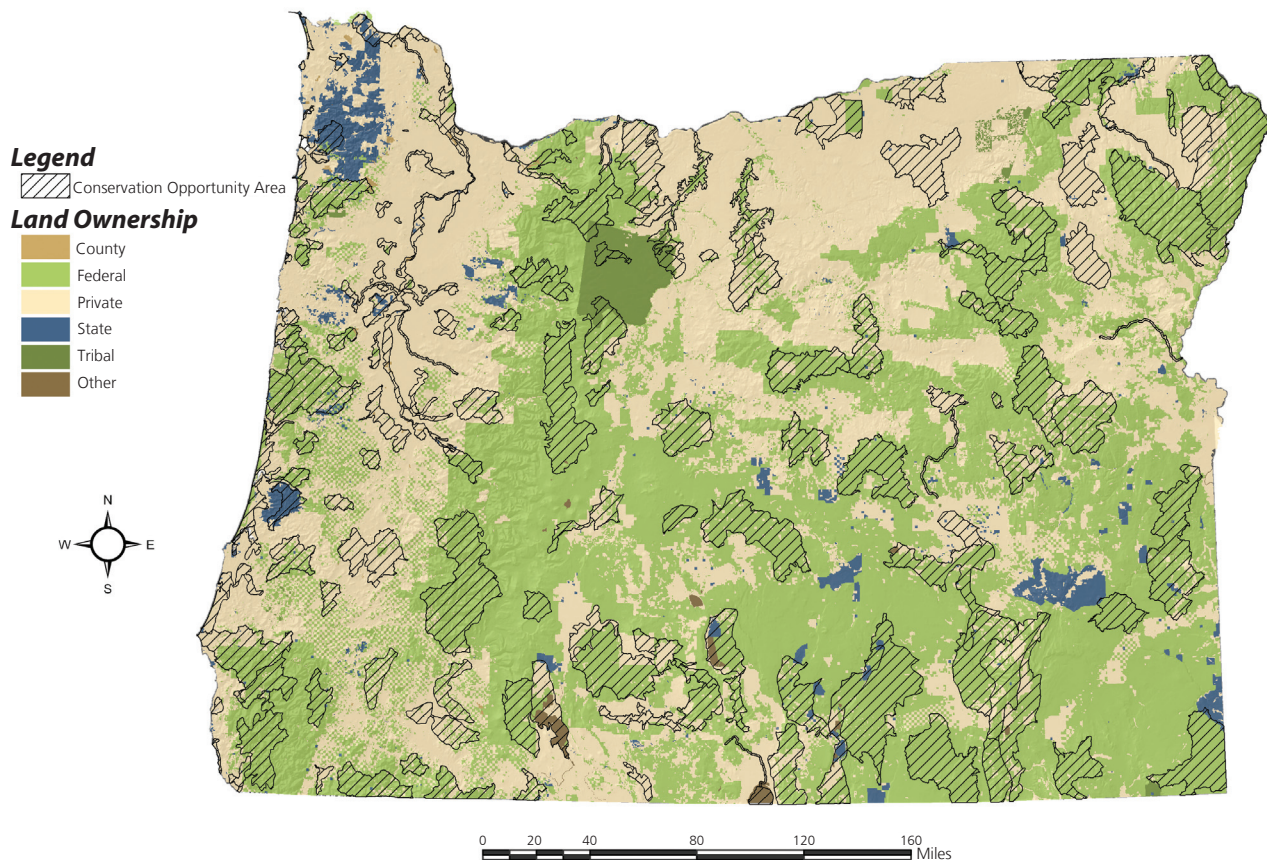
Because the Conservation Strategy takes an entirely voluntary approach, implementing conservation actions will often happen opportunistically, as shaped by landowner interest and funding availability. However, opportunistic conservation doesn't have to be random. By focusing actions on the priorities identified in this document, conservation actions can be strategic wherever they occur.

### **Prioritizing Landscapes: Conservation Opportunity Areas**

Although conservation actions taken throughout the state can help fish and wildlife, focusing investments on priority landscapes can increase likelihood of long-term success over larger areas, improve funding efficiency, and promoting cooperative efforts across ownership boundaries. Conservation Opportunity Areas are landscapes where broad fish and wildlife conservation goals could best be met. Working in these landscapes can increase effectiveness of conservation actions at larger scales than can individual projects scattered throughout the state.

Conservation Opportunity Areas were developed to guide voluntary actions. These are not regulatory boundaries, and there are no regulatory

### **Statewide Conservation Opportunity Areas**



### Strategy for Action: Summary and First Steps

requirements attached to them. Land use or other activities within these areas will not be subject to any new restrictions as a result of these delineations. This map and the associated data should only be used in ways consistent with these intentions.

Over time, voluntary conservation actions consistent with local priorities and existing plans will be carried out within these Conservation Opportunity Areas by a variety of partners (e.g., landowners, land managers, watershed councils, local land trusts, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and so on). The impact of these conservation actions on Strategy Species and Habitats will be monitored. Through this process, additional information will be gained on the habitat elements of importance to Strategy Species. Conservation Opportunity Areas, along with the rest of the Conservation Strategy, will continue to be refined as data gaps are filled and as the landscape continues to change.

In the Ecoregion Chapter (beginning on page 111) there are maps of Conservation Opportunity Areas for each of Oregon's eight ecoregions. These are the primary areas ODFW will promote as investment priorities for voluntary conservation tools. There is a profile for each one that describes the area's special features, key species and habitats, other planning efforts that identified the area as a priority, and land ownership by category. For implementation, Conservation Opportunity Area maps will be incorporated into a web-based system with links to

relevant background information and conservation actions identified in the Conservation Strategy.

The conservation action recommendations were identified through existing plans, spatial analysis, and expert review. They are not meant to be exhaustive, so other actions will also be appropriate, as influenced by local site characteristics and management goals. Actions need to be compatible with local priorities and local comprehensive plans and land use ordinances and other applicable state, federal, and local laws. Actions on federal lands need to undergo federal planning processes prior to implementation to ensure consistency with existing plans and management objectives for the area.

Selection of Areas was based on a computer-based (Geographic Information System) analysis and used a three-step process comprised of a computerized site selection program, validation of the results using expert opinion, and peer review. For more information on the methods used to select Conservation Opportunity Areas, see the Methods description (Appendix IV).

Conservation actions in areas that are not identified as Conservation Opportunity Areas can still be extremely beneficial, especially since some areas are important for connecting the existing pieces of the conservation network.



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