

APPENDIX I

OREGON COASTAL COHO CONSERVATION PROJECT Stakeholder Team

Final Report to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission

Oregon Coastal Coho Stakeholder Team Facilitators' Report

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**FINAL REPORT TO THE
OREGON FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION**

**COASTAL COHO CONSERVATION PLAN
STAKEHOLDER TEAM
FACILITATORS' REPORT**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Early in 2004, the State of Oregon and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) joined together to engage in a collaborative project to address the conservation of coastal coho on the Oregon Coast. The primary objectives of the project, presented at the formation meeting of the Stakeholder Team, were to:

1. Assess actions under the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds to conserve and rebuild coastal coho populations.
2. Use the assessment to inform NOAA Fisheries' decision on listing coastal coho under the federal Endangered Species Act.
3. Use the assessment as a basis to seek legal assurances for local participants.
4. Use the assessment as a foundation for developing a conservation plan for coho consistent with the Oregon Plan and the state's Native Fish Conservation Policy, as well as federal recovery guidelines.

Three groups were established to support this joint state/federal process:

- 1) a diverse stakeholder team comprised of members of the public and affected interest groups (Stakeholder Team),
- 2) a team of representatives from core state agencies that have regulatory or other authority that impact coho conservation (Core Team), and
- 3) a team of federal and state scientists with knowledge and expertise in the area of coastal coho (Technical Recovery Team).

Each of these three groups has served an important role providing unique perspectives on the current status of coastal coho, the desired status of these fish (both societal and scientifically), and their input on the actions that may be needed to reach those goals. Oregon's Coastal Coho

Conservation Plan is the culmination of the efforts of these three teams working with the state's Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Governor's Natural Resources Office.

The Stakeholder Team process was funded by NOAA Fisheries and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. The US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution assisted in the initial convening efforts, and the Oregon Consensus Program of Portland State University managed the consensus process and provided the impartial facilitation services of DS Consulting. This report is a summary of the activities and key inputs provided by the Stakeholder Team since its first meeting on June 21, 2004 through its last on September 26, 2006.

A few areas on which the stakeholder team had general agreement are noted here and explained in more depth in the body of this report:

- In-stream complexity is the primary non-ocean factor which limits the species success. As such, management strategies and partners should be utilized more strategically to increase the habitability of these important areas.
- There should be enhanced oversight of and increased accountability from those state agencies that have active management roles which could positively impact the over-wintering habitats of Oregon's coastal coho ESU.
- Water quality and quantity issues are and will remain important factors in some areas within the ESU.
- Effective management of the state's hatcheries and utilizing research results from the Hatchery Research Center is important.
- A "Business Plan" with an analysis of projected costs and anticipated returns on investments will help the public (and legislature) understand the overall approach.
- Local groups, such as watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, STEP volunteers, and land-owner groups are vital partners in any successful conservation effort. As such, they should be actively consulted for their ideas and approaches for managing coho at the local level and provided with enough resources to fulfill their responsibilities under this Plan.
- There is, and will continue to be, a need for effective monitoring and evaluation of the efforts to conserve coho salmon.

Additionally, the Stakeholder Team agreed to the following vision for the future of coho salmon:

Oregon Coastal Coho Project Stakeholder Team: Guiding Principles for Coastal Coho Conservation *(the following statement is taken directly from the approved 5/9/05 Stakeholder Team meeting minutes):*

The mission of the Oregon Plan is to restore the watersheds of Oregon and to recover the fish and wildlife populations of those watersheds to productive and sustainable levels in a manner that provides substantial ecological, cultural and economic benefits. (ORS 541.405(2)(a)).

The goals of Oregon's Native Fish Conservation Policy are to:

(1) Prevent the serious depletion of any native fish species by protecting natural ecological communities, conserving genetic resources, managing consumptive and non-consumptive fisheries, and using hatcheries responsibly so that naturally produced native fish are sustainable.

(2) Maintain and restore naturally produced native fish species, taking full advantage of the productive capacity of natural habitats, in order to provide substantial ecological, economic and cultural benefits to the citizens of Oregon.

(3) Foster and sustain opportunities for sport, commercial and tribal fishers consistent with the conservation of naturally produced native fish and responsible use of hatcheries.

(OAR 635-007-0503)

To support these policy ends, the Coastal Coho Stakeholder Team has identified societal values that should be balanced throughout the on-going effort to conserve, rebuild, restore and utilize Oregon's coastal Coho:

- Salmon in our rivers and ocean support Oregon's ecosystem health and economic well-being.
 - Ecosystem health is supported by
 - the nutrients returning salmon bring to local streams,
 - the efforts Oregonians' make to help protect and restore functional salmon habitats, and
 - the stewardship of industries and local residents who live and work in salmon supporting habitats.
 - Community livability and economic well-being is supported by, among others, strong fish runs that
 - enable commercial fisheries to command premium market prices,
 - enable sport fishers to experience success, and
 - invite tourism which enjoys the aesthetic qualities of salmon in Oregon's coastal landscapes.
 - Oregonians believe that productive, clean streams can (and do) exist in and contribute to economically productive landscapes.
- The recovery of salmon in Oregon will symbolize Oregonian's ability to work together to achieve positive, measurable environmental results for salmon compatible with local economies, jobs, property values and property rights.

- Oregonians have shown their commitment to conserving these species by providing public and private funds. They want to see those funds used to produce real results in a cost effective manner.
- While we focus on Coho salmon, the health of other native fish and wildlife species will be enhanced and sustained through
 - the protection of the ecosystems upon which they all depend,
 - the control of non-native species, and
 - the restoration of balanced predator/prey relationships.

Finally, Oregonians value salmon and their unique life cycles as an important source of cultural, subsistence, nutritional and educational enrichment for tribal peoples and all Oregonians.

BACKGROUND

Conserving Oregon's native fish has been a topic of discussion for a number of years, if not decades. Direct attention was brought to bear on the topic in 2002 when the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, at the urging of the Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Governor, developed a Native Fish Conservation Policy. In that instance, a diverse team of affected stakeholders were asked to help the state draft a policy and rule through a consensus process. An important piece of that policy was the requirement that an assessment of various native species be completed prior to crafting conservation plans on an evolutionarily significant unit (ESU) scale. While not a part of the final rule that is the underpinning to Oregon's Native Fish Conservation Policy, the state committed to working with a broad range of interested and affected stakeholders to help assess and then craft conservation plans.

The Oregon Coast Coho Conservation Plan is the first in a series of plans that the state will be drafting. It is unique from other conservation planning processes now underway because the species under review was simultaneously being considered for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act by NOAA fisheries. That additional review was the basis for forming a joint effort by the state and federal agencies with feedback and input from a diverse Stakeholder Team, an agency-based Core Team, and a federal/state scientific Technical Recovery Team. Even though unique, the process and the plan itself serve as vehicles for understanding how the state might approach future plans. This report, drafted by an impartial facilitation team, is meant to address this and to clarify the level of support, as well as the issues and the concerns that the stakeholder team expressed throughout and at the end of the Coast Coho Conservation Planning Process.

The nature of the approach used to get input (multiple teams giving input to one agency who served as the primary author of the Plan), the "Key Questions" for stakeholder team members (see page 7) and a variety of externalities that affected this effort (see page 10) **has provided the state an opportunity to glean valuable information from a diverse set of interest groups and to hear from a broader spectrum of the public than they would have heard from in the absence of this process.** It has not, however, led to a consensus recommendation from the stakeholder team for reasons that are explained in this report.

Stakeholder Team Role, Tasks and Key Questions

Role

At the outset, the Stakeholder Team was asked to play a "vital role in shaping the future management of Oregon coastal coho by providing feedback to the State of Oregon on the effectiveness of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds on a statewide basis". For the Team to carry out these two tasks, it needed a thorough understanding of the state's Coastal Coho Assessment.

Initially, Team members, through presentations by state and federal scientists and managers, gained a detailed understanding of the Oregon Plan Coastal Coho assessment while it was being developed by the state. After the assessment was completed, the Team reviewed and discussed

the results and provided input to the state on issues identified by the assessment that could help improve implementation of the Oregon Plan in the coastal region and statewide. Finally, the Stakeholder Team worked with the State to develop ideas and concepts for the Coastal Coho Conservation Plan.

Tasks

Over the course of two plus years and 20 meetings, the Stakeholder Team:

- tracked and provided input to the state on the Oregon Plan assessment during its development;
- provided feedback to the state on the completed assessment regarding issues, ideas or strategies that could improve effectiveness of implementation of the Oregon Plan in the coastal region and statewide;
- worked with the state to develop an Oregon Coast Coho recovery/conservation plan; and
- informed their constituents and the public on the development and completion of both the assessment and the conservation plan.

(Note: Representatives from Trout Unlimited, Native Fish Society and one public-at-large member did not feel they had an adequate opportunity to jointly develop management options with the state. Instead, they merely responded to state proposals).

Key Questions

The following questions were presented at the outset of this process to help guide the Stakeholder Team review and feedback on information from the State's assessment and conservation plan:

- Was the information, data and analyses presented in a way that is logical and easy to understand?
- Did the State miss anything in its assessment or conservation plan?
- Are the results and conclusions understandable?
- What comments and recommendations does your interest group have on the assessment/plan?
- Does your group have any comments and recommendations on the potential policy implications of the assessment/plan?

(Roles, Tasks and Key Questions stated at the Stakeholder Team's orientation meeting, June 21, 2004)

STAKEHOLDER TEAM MEMBERSHIP AND OPERATION

The Coastal Coho Stakeholder Team membership consisted of the following representatives of organizations and agencies who were present for all or most of the meetings:

<u>Interest/Group/Government</u>	<u>Representative (for all or part of the process)</u>
Commercial Fishing	Paul Heikkila/Bob Jacobson
Gravel Industry	John Phelan/Bill Yocum
Municipalities: Oregon Cities Oregon Counties	Sam Sasaki/Lisa Phipps Terry Thompson
Native Fish Society	Bill Bakke/Les Helgeson
NW Sport Fishing Industry	Rick Hall/Richard Oba
Oregon Anglers / NW Steelheaders	Dennis Richey
OR Farm Bureau	Tom Forgatsch
Oregon Forest Industries	Blake Rowe
Oregon Ports (Siuslaw)	Tom Kartrude
Oregon Tribes (Siletz)	Stan van de Wetering
Oregon Trout	Mark McCollister/Jason Miner
Public at Large/Alesea Alliance	Wayne Geisy
Public at Large/National Audubon Society	Paul Engelmeyer
Public at Large/STEP Volunteers	Cindy Heller
Save the Salmon Coalition	Bill Moshofsky
Trout Unlimited	Kaitlin Lovell
Watershed Councils	Jennifer Hampel & Wayne Hoffman
Conservation Districts	Shawn Reiersgaard & Johnny Sundstrom

Resource Advisors

The following Resource Advisors were present and active in discussions at all meetings, but were not “voting” members of the Stakeholder Team

<u>Interest/Group/Government</u>	<u>Representative</u>
NOAA Fisheries	Rosemary Furfey
Office of the Governor	Tom Byler/Louise Solliday/Sue Knapp
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife	Ed Bowles/Kevin Goodson/Bruce McIntosh/Jay Nicholas

Technical Resources and Others

An additional group of “technical resources” from ODFW, all Core Team and TRT agencies were present to provide information and answer questions at all meetings. Noted in the Protocols are:

Keith Braun, ODFW District Biologist
Bob Buckman, ODFW District Biologist
Mark Chilcote, ODFW Conservation Biologist
Charlie Corrarino, ODFW
Brandon Ford, ODFW
Kevin Goodson, ODFW
Mike Gray, ODFW District Biologist
Pete Lawson, NOAA Fisheries/TRT Member
Dave Loomis, ODFW District Biologist
Jeff Lockwood, NOAA Fisheries
Bruce McIntosh, ODFW
Jay Nicholas, ODFW
Heather Stout, NOAA Fisheries

Additional agency representation came from ODA, ODEQ, ODF, ODLCD, ODOT, ODSL, OPR, OWEB, OWRD, BLM, and USFS.

All meetings were open to the public, with more than 100 people in attendance over the course of 20 meetings. Every meeting had time set aside on the agenda to allow public comment on the issues under discussion.

FACILITATOR'S PROCESS DISCUSSION

The Coastal Coho Stakeholder Team project was unique from other collaborative, interest-based processes in a couple of ways. First, the state and federal agencies that convened the process involved the stakeholder team very early in the process during the assessment phase. The agencies sought to combine efforts of doing the assessment of the Oregon Plan as it related to Coast Coho with the education or 'grounding' phase for stakeholders. As such, the first year of work together consisted of presentations from the scientists and managers who were in the midst of assessing how well the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds was conserving coast coho. This assessment phase allowed everyone to hear what conclusions the state was making as it was making them. This served two important ends: 1) transparency of process and decisions of the state and 2) provided a mechanism for the agencies to get very quick feedback on how and what information they were presenting (for example, the group was able to give quick, visceral reactions to graphs and charts that, had the state not heard this, could have led to serious uproar from various industry or public interest groups). On the other hand, it also presented the opportunity for mistakes to be made in a very public setting (for example, at least one early presentation provided information that had not been fully 'vetted' and had inaccuracies that got the group fired up unnecessarily). While the phase did ground the Stakeholder Team in the information, methods and conclusions being drawn by the state and federal agencies presenting them, the format of hearing presentations and engaging primarily in a question and answer process with presenters did not facilitate the opportunity for the group of individuals to form as a cohesive team.

A second unique feature of this process was the number of external forces that were inhibiting open, frank discussions of stakeholder team members. Those external forces included:

- the perceived threat of a list/no list decision by the federal government and what impact that would have on each of the interest groups represented on the team (some wanted the species listing as much as others did not),
- a delay in that decision (causing the initial year-long time commitment of stakeholder team members to be dramatically extended),
- once the federal decision was made, several groups represented on the Stakeholder Team were among a broader group that filed a lawsuit against the federal government. While it was understood that a lawsuit might have been filed no matter what decision the federal agency made, there was an impact to the process: The suit led some team members to feel unable/unwilling to negotiate potential management actions out of belief that those negotiations might be used against them at a later date,
- changes in representation from the state and stakeholder team members impacted the team's ability to keep making steady progress. For example, the representation from the Governor's Office rotated during the 2 ½ year process as did the leadership from ODFW leading to an uncertainty among team members about leadership and accountability issues. Stakeholder Team membership also shifted leading to new members joining the group one year (or more) into the process. These changes resulted in a loss of momentum which affected the overall timeframes of the process.
- Finally, many of the stakeholder team members came into the process with strongly held positions that were clearly stated very early in the process. While this is often the case in collaborative decision groups, the members were unable/unwilling to move from some of those positions throughout the process (for example, the stated position that 'more

regulations were needed’ on one side of the issue versus the stated position that ‘new regulations are unacceptable’ if there were to be support for the final Plan). The clarity and strength of conviction in which these views were stated reduced the ability of the group to work as a team exploring alternatives.

And third, was an uncertainty about the end product that began at the outset and lasted until the final meeting: was the state asking the group to help draft the plan or merely provide input on what the state was writing? While the initial questions for the group were written to clarify the advisory role of the team (see page 7), discussion throughout the process focused on whether there might be a consensus decision on any resulting product. For many stakeholders, so long as the state was the primary author, a ‘consensus’ was not needed nor appropriate—instead they viewed their role as one of providing input. For others, they wanted to help craft actual language and management actions upon which the entire team could reach consensus. This uncertainty distracted the efforts of the group and, with clearer direction from the convening agencies, might have reduced some of the tension that pervaded the meetings.

Process Used

Uniqueness of the project aside, the process used by the group followed a relatively clear format utilized for other collaborative problem solving efforts:

Case Assessment: The facilitation team began by doing a full assessment of the issues and concerns that each member of the stakeholder team had prior to any face-to-face meeting of the group. Each of the members were asked a series of questions that were intended to provide a better understanding of the level of controversy, whether and where there was a possibility for consensus, what additional data was needed to have a fully informed discussion of the issues, who could provide that data, and what type of process the group thought would best help them provide feedback to the state and NOAA.

Protocols: Once the assessment was complete, the Stakeholder Team members met and negotiated a set of protocols to guide their work together (attached as Attachment V). This effort served the group by establishing a set of norms that would guide them throughout the process. Through the Protocols, the Stakeholder Team committed to seek consensus on any recommendations submitted to the Commission. Consensus was agreed to mean “the willingness to go along with the recommendation either in active support of it or in not opposing it.” To this end, the group agreed “the commitment to work for consensus means that members will participate in the give and take of the process in a way that seeks to understand the interests of all and will work together to find the solutions workable for all.” (*Stakeholder Team Protocols, Section III D & E*).

Professional Facilitation: Each meeting of the Stakeholder Team was professionally facilitated. The facilitators drafted summaries of each meeting to capture the major areas of discussion and the range of views on issues discussed. Stakeholder Team members offered corrections to “draft” meeting summaries that were in turn revised into final summaries. These final meeting summaries are attached as Attachment V. The meeting summaries represent the views and the discussions at the particular time of that meeting. They may reflect tentative agreements that were not reflected in the final recommendations, as all agreements were treated as tentative until

the full plan was put together. The Stakeholder team agreed that the facilitators would draft this “Report to the Commission” that outlines the issues discussed, the areas in which there was consensus, and any remaining issues on which consensus was not reached. Members will have the opportunity to review and sign-off on the report that will be presented to the Commission and may supply any alternative views or comments directly to the Commission itself.

Meetings: The Stakeholder Team, which established itself as a dedicated, well-prepared and committed group at its first meeting, met every month or two from June 21, 2004 through September 26, 2006. There were seventeen one-day and three two-day meetings at which the full group was present and three meetings at which a smaller sub-group met to discuss technical details. The Stakeholder Team agreed at its first meeting that meetings would be held within the ESU to allow local groups and members of the public to attend meetings, to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to see the geography of the ESU (field trip opportunities were provided at a number of locations) and to benefit the local economies in which the meetings were held (often members stayed in hotels, meetings were catered by local providers, and local press attended in some locations). It should be acknowledged that the final two meetings were not held in the ESU and this lack of follow through with the initial agreement caused concern for at least one stakeholder team member.

The facilitation team developed meeting agendas with input from ODFW staff and Stakeholder Team members. Each meeting sought to provide a blend of the technical information necessary to inform policy making and a discussion of the various interests and underlying needs that each of the representatives or their groups brought to the table. Additional information about related programs and policies was provided by ODFW, state, federal, tribal and other fish management specialists including watershed council and Soil and Water Conservation District members. The goal of the facilitation team was to make certain that the Stakeholder Team and state had heard, from each other and others, all relevant and necessary information needed to help inform sound state policy.

Decision-Making Methodology: While the Stakeholder Team did not set out to reach consensus, all agreed that the diversity of the group and the interests they represented might lead them to agree on some aspects of the Plan—and a ‘sign-off’ on this report was necessary. While the team did not attempt to reach consensus on the Plan itself, they did have agreement about how they would make decisions: They indicated their level of agreement by a number system:

- 1- I completely agree/support
- 2- I agree/support
- 3- I have questions or reservations
- 4- I have reservations, but will not block a consensus
- 5- I completely disagree and will actively block consensus

NOTE: All members present at the Stakeholder Team’s final meeting on September 26, 2006 supported the representations in this summary report with the number 1.

Work Between Meetings:

At the meetings, the Stakeholder Team heard presentations about data collected from various groups, sources and agencies and then staff drafts of the Plan. They provided oral and written

input for changes to the drafts. Over the course of the two and a half years, the group reviewed and discussed numerous drafts. Between meetings, ODFW and other agency staff worked to incorporate changes that attempted to reflect the input from group members. These drafts were then distributed prior to meetings and discussed in upcoming meetings. The facilitation team worked between meetings to clarify issues and concerns with stakeholder team members and served as a sounding board and a “ground-truthing” for issues discussed by the Team--at its meetings and, subsequently, in e-mail responses from Stakeholder Team members.

DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT PLAN, AREAS OF IMPASSE AND RELATED ISSUES

The Commission has work to do in its final decision about the policy issues related to the Plan that remained in debate amongst the Stakeholder Team members. To help the Commission in that effort, we have presented the Commission with the variety of issues and interests that the Stakeholder Team members believe must be included in order for the conservation strategy to be successful. The following section summarizes substantive input provided by members of the Stakeholder Team and highlights areas where there was general agreement with the content of the Plan and areas where concerns remain.

1. **Current Status**: The process opened in June 2004 with the State's review and assessment of actions to support coastal coho in the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. After considering input from the Stakeholder Team, Core Team and TRT, the State shared its final assessment with the Stakeholder Team in May 2005. The assessment determined that Oregon coastal coho are "viable", signifying that the ESU's current status is at sufficient levels of abundance, productivity, and diversity to be sustainable over time. NOAA followed with a 'no list' decision in January 2006.

Aside from any disagreements that members had with these decisions, the Stakeholder Team remained committed to working with the state to continue development of a conservation plan to improve and sustain the health of coastal coho regardless of their listing status. The state articulated its intent in developing a conservation plan as follows:

'This Conservation Plan is designed in a manner that is intended to improve the status of the ESU and virtually all of its constituent populations and to improve the productive capacity of the coho and their habitat to levels significantly higher than a level where the ESU could be considered a potential candidate for listing under federal ESA.'

Remaining Concerns:

- While there was indeed support for creating a Conservation Plan for coho, disagreement amongst the stakeholders about the current status of the ESU remained throughout the process--even after the state and federal assessments were made. Some stakeholders do not believe they are viable.
- At least one stakeholder, from the outset and repeatedly throughout the process, felt that the state (and stakeholder team) should use additional scientific information to assess current status (e.g. Gordie Reeves' CLAMS work and IMST reports on lowland areas). Other stakeholders, viewing their role to be more policy oriented, did not share this interest. Such presentations were not provided at stakeholder team meetings but reports were shared with members and issues were discussed in other forums.

2. **Desired Status**: Using the parameters of the current status assessments, three options were presented for desired status: two ODFW proposals (one based on work of the TRT), and a Stakeholder Team member proposal. ODFW then worked with a subgroup of the stakeholder team to refine the desired status based on feedback received at stakeholder team meetings.

A refined desired status proposal was developed by ODFW per the sub-group effort and was presented in the first Draft of the Plan. With the caveat that the state would pursue further development of habitat conditions criteria, the group agreed on the desired status abundance number, for the entire ESU, of 101,000 at 1.1% marine survival.

Remaining Concerns:

- The diversity criterion was not fully supported by all members of the stakeholder team because it relies on assumptions and parameters of a simulation model developed by ODFW that contains too many uncertainties upon which to rely, and it only measures one aspect of diversity. (It should be noted that ODFW has committed to making improvements to this criterion as more information is gathered.)
- Concerns remained about the desired status timeframe, which is discussed in further detail below.

3. **Addressing Limiting Factors:** The Stakeholder Team agrees with ODFW's assessment that stream complexity is *the most critical* of all limiting factors across the ESU. They also agree that water quality is a secondary limiting factor in many parts of the ESU.

Taking steps to address coho stream complexity was widely supported by the team. The stakeholder team supports the State's inclusion of predators as a research priority, though some felt more emphasis should be placed on this as a limiting factor while others felt it should not be as high a research priority. Many members believe that emphasis on predation, because of its significance as a social issue and at least a publicly perceived limiting factor, would enhance broader public buy-in to the Plan if included as a limiting factor. It was also suggested that the Plan clearly state that limiting factors are also being addressed for dependent populations.

Remaining Concerns:

- Some members felt that additional local (by basin) limiting factors should be emphasized in the Plan as the main driver for local efforts.
- Concern was raised that the tone of the Plan reflected a bias against hatcheries as supplemental production.
- Water quantity as a limiting factor and water storage as an important management strategy was proposed throughout the process but not addressed in the Plan.
- Suggestions were made throughout the process to acknowledge a number of other limiting factors/future threats, including ocean conditions, non-coho hatcheries, fish passage, data gaps, funding for implementation, toxics, urban development/population growth, climate change, invasive species and decaying infrastructures.
- In addition, the State was urged to link specific management actions to key limiting factors (e.g. describe what the Private Lands Initiative 'action' is meant to address – better technical assistance? More willing landowners?)

4. **Conservation Priorities:** The Stakeholder Team supported encouraging local entities to take the lead in refining conservation strategies. Strong concern was raised in the second draft with the State's prioritization of conservation efforts among independent populations. The concern expressed was that this method for prioritizing actions would likely create competition

and conflict amongst local groups all vying for limited funding sources. Instead, collaboration and joint efforts will be needed for the Plan to be successful and therefore the Plan should not set up a conflicting structure through its prioritization list. Staff responded to this by removing the prioritization table.

Remaining Concerns:

- While SWCD's and watershed councils are called upon to be the 'delivery systems' to lead on the ground implementation of the Plan, the Plan does not provide guidance as to how each group can best function in those roles or what the specific roles and responsibilities for each should be.
- Finally, the Plan does not commit to securing additional funding as a high priority to support administrative capacity of local groups to implement the plan.

5. **Conservation Strategies:** The Stakeholder Team supports the Plan's ecosystem perspective on conservation strategies. Suggestions were made to strengthen this concept by providing specific management actions that would support the ecosystem perspective. The Stakeholder Team supports ODFW in finding opportunities for monitoring and evaluating beaver management as a strategy for addressing limiting factors, and some members encourage more specific commitments and even more focus on beavers as a management action opportunity.

ODFW responded to concerns about the use of Amendment 13 as a harvest management strategy with a commitment to review and, as appropriate, revise the Amendment. A further suggestion was made to commit to a timeline for conducting this review. Suggestions were made to also emphasize the multi-species benefits that will come from addressing stream complexity.

Remaining Concerns:

- Few if any new actions were committed to, voluntary or regulatory.
- While emphasis on multi-agency commitments, leadership and accountability as a conservation strategy were applauded, some stakeholder team members feel that the Plan falls short of including the full breadth of actions that agencies should be accountable for and that the Plan lacks a means for holding agencies accountable.
- Concerns were raised that maintaining current land use practices would not suffice to achieve desired status of the coho and that more actions should be included specifically to address stream complexity across the landscape.
- Alternatively, some felt that additional rules would erode landowner support for the Oregon Plan.
- Some stakeholder team members feel that regulatory and voluntary efforts to date have made significant contributions and should be 'counted' toward improvements already made to coho health, and that accountability and obligations should be balanced amongst all resource users affecting coastal coho across the landscape.
- Not all stakeholders agreed that this process provided true opportunity for input on conservation actions.
 - It was suggested that the Governor's office take the lead in convening a 'negotiation workshop' with all of the stakeholders, without the state agencies and with the help of the facilitation team to identify specific additional actions and incentives between the stakeholder team members that can be incorporated into the Plan.

- One stakeholder shared specific management action suggestions to address habitat, hatchery management, funding, predators, water quantity and other limiting factors.

6. **Research Monitoring & Evaluation**: The Stakeholder Team supports enhancements to current RM&E efforts. In particular, they agree that evaluating methods to support beaver management should be a top tier priority. Information from Hatchery Research Center studies should be used to inform and achieve desired status. Also, information about high intrinsic potential habitat is a priority.

Remaining Concerns:

- Suggested RM&E topics that did not find their way to the high priority research needs list were: Effectiveness of fish carcass placement; use of the state's innovative technology (e.g. underwater cameras, forward looking infrared); stress analysis; tide gate studies; ocean effects; continuing dike analysis; impacts of catch and release practice; and comparison of salt and freshwater habitat relative to significance to coho rearing.

7. **Adaptive Management**: The adaptive management component of the Plan involves a process that includes an Early Warning System through an annual status report that reviews the most current data available; assessing implementation efforts every six years via a status report; and assessing the ESU status every 12 years. The Stakeholder Team generally supported the early warning system and series of check-ins.

Remaining Concerns:

- Not all stakeholders agreed with the state's proposed timeframes for the various status assessments – some felt 6- and 12-year evaluations were not frequent enough while others felt they could happen too soon to allow conservation actions to reveal progress and improvements to fish health.
- A suggestion was made to include an independent scientific review of the Plan as an additional assessment benchmark.
- Suggestions were made to include a more 'rigorous' adaptive management system by clearly describing what management changes would take place in response to new information, not simply that assessments and re-evaluations will take place.

8. **Governance/Implementation Leadership**: The shared vision of protecting coho over the long term requires the need for implementation leadership and accountability, also over the long term. Stakeholders supported the section on state agency and local entity leadership and accountability in the Plan.

Remaining Concerns:

- Not all stakeholders supported asking state agencies to ramp up their commitment to add new regulatory policies if necessary to support coho conservation from an ecosystem perspective.
- To support accountability, the state was encouraged to show a clear line of accountability and authority of each agency as directed by the Governor's office. One suggestion was to

build in a system to reward agencies for making significant contributions toward the desired status goal.

- Using the Core and Implementation Teams to provide leadership was supported so long as local implementation teams, if already in place, are utilized rather than forming new teams and thereby duplicating efforts.

9. **Time Frame Expectations:** Throughout the process, discussions occurred around time scale perspectives for a number of components of the plan, including management actions and timeframe for achieving desired status. ODFW responded to the call for inclusion of timeframe expectations for achieving desired status (and benchmarks for assessing management actions and triggers for changing course) by including in its second draft a 50-year target and 6- and 12- year status assessments in the Plan. In a later draft, the Plan addresses the uncertainties confounding the state's ability to make predictions about a timeframe for achieving desired status (ecological processes, level of participation and scientific uncertainty). The state committed to assess the Plan at the 12-year benchmark and better define a timeframe for reaching desired status at that time.

Remaining Concerns:

- Some stakeholders felt the Plan should acknowledge short and long term actions to address limiting factors as well as short and long term desired status goals. One stakeholder submitted ideas for actions that could improve coho restoration in a shorter time frame than “five or more decades”.
- Some felt the Plan needs to clearly articulate shorter term milestones or benchmarks.

10. **Critique/Assessment of the Conservation Plan – Uncertainties and Basis for Optimism:**

While some stakeholders share ODFW's optimism that the Plan provides direction for making improvements to the status of coastal coho, others do not. All shared the state's concern for what the state called its ‘monitoring investment quandary’ and suggested the Plan be written and implemented in a way that is mindful of the demands of all ESU's across Oregon. For example, with limited resources, it will be important to balance between increasing RM&E efforts and continuing to support ongoing local conservation efforts.

Remaining Concerns:

- Some stakeholders felt the Plan was not directive enough to provide assurance (through agency commitments, funding and human resources, and regulatory and voluntary efforts) that implementation would occur or that desired status would be attained. To provide assurance of implementation, a suggestion was made to get specific funding commitments to support local partners beyond current levels to carry out the plan.
- Members of the Stakeholder team recommended throughout the process that the state use the Plan as a marketing tool for getting buy-in from the public. To achieve this, one suggestion was to write a “Business Plan” with a cost-benefit analysis to show economic and other impacts of Plan implementation.
- Some members had expected that they would have had more influence in developing the Plan than they actually did and that the agencies would have been more responsive to stakeholder team needs and stated concerns. This was especially true for the other agencies that participated as resources and wrote separate chapters in the Plan.

- One stakeholder expressed disappointment at the defensiveness that ODFW expressed about its original Oregon Coastal Coho Assessment. Instead, this member had hoped there could have been more discussion about concepts and analysis in the assessment that might have led to different approaches being included in the Plan.

11. **OARs**: The Stakeholder Team was unable to review a set of OARs prior to its final meeting on September 26, 2006 and therefore there is no comment on this at the time of writing this report.

CONCLUSION

The involvement of this diverse Stakeholder Team clarifies for all who watched it work that conserving Oregon's salmon runs continues to be an important issue for Oregonians. The diversity of interests represented on the Coast Coho Conservation Project Stakeholder Team made it clear that finding a *practical* way to protect these fish over the long term is essential if the state is to be successful implementing its own policies. Members of the Stakeholder Team, while not agreeing on all of the issues all the time, were dedicated to the notion of finding a common sense and common ground solution that meets the challenge of protecting species, while making societal advances in the 21st Century. The state listened to the Stakeholder Team members input and responded as staff determined was appropriate for a state Conservation Plan.

The efforts of the Stakeholder Team and all those dedicated staff and others who actively participated as presenters and observers in the process represent a microcosm of the tremendous commitment that so many Oregonians have made to help protect the state's natural resources. The Commission and the State is fortunate to have had the time, effort and commitment that this group of talented and thoughtful individuals and organizations gave on its behalf. Their input should be appreciated and their ideas should be reflected in the on-going efforts to conserve Oregon's native fish. The lessons learned through their efforts should be shared and improved upon by other conservation planning processes now underway.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Silverberg & Robin Harkless, facilitators
For the _____, 2006 Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

(10-5-06 draft report)