



Date: April 4, 2019

To: The Honorable Brad Witt, Chair
House Committee on Natural Resources



House Bill 2953

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The Department of Fish and Wildlife appreciates the opportunity to comment on House Bill 2953. House Bill 2953 would require the Department of Forestry to report on outcomes of projects pursued in the Oregon under the Good Neighbor Authority Agreement.

In 2018, the Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) received funding from Department of Forestry (ODF) to add a GNA coordinator position for a one-year period. This position greatly increased the number of projects ODFW could cooperatively plan and implement with US Forest Service (USFS) to enhance fish and wildlife habitat.

Since the Master Good Neighbor Authority Agreement (GNA) was signed in 2016, the Department of Fish and Wildlife has initiated 11 GNA Supplemental Project Agreements (SPAs) in 9 National Forests (NF) and 1 with USFS Region 6.

Completed and on-going projects include;

- White-nose Syndrome Surveillance in bats (USFS Region 6) – implemented 2016, funds added in 2017 and extended through 2019;
- Baker Wildlife Inventory (Wallowa-Whitman NF) – implemented and completed in 2017;
- Bald-Angel Road Decommissioning Project (Wallowa-Whitman NF) – implemented 2017, initial work completed (29 miles of road closed), SPA modified in 2018 to extend through 2019 due to cost savings from original agreement; and
- Damon Aspen Restoration (Malheur NF) – implemented 2017, SPA modified in 2018 to add funds and extend through 2019.

Projects in Development;

- Early Seral and Meadow Restoration Management (Siuslaw NF)
 - The USFS is funding ODFW \$20,000 to maintain early seral habitat in 4 meadows, totaling 20 acres of ridge-top, forest area.
 - Status: Signed by ODFW, awaiting final signature by USFS.

- Western Pond Turtle Site Monitoring and Assessment for Restoration Opportunities (Region 6)
 - The USFS is funding ODFW \$15,000 to put toward an existing contract to conduct Western Pond Turtle surveys and habitat assessments for future restoration work. Western Pond Turtle is currently under federal review for listing under the ESA.
 - Status: Submitted to Forest Service Grants and Agreements Section for review.
- Wildlife Partnership (Umpqua NF)
 - The USFS is funding ODFW \$98,000 to implement aquatic and terrestrial restoration activities including stream restoration and gate fabrication.
 - Status: SPA to be submitted for federal review in early April.
- Road Closures (Ochoco NF)
 - The USFS is providing ODFW \$11,500 to obliterate/camouflage road entrances to improve elk security habitat.
 - Status: SPA being developed, submit for federal review in April.
- Pigeon Prairie Restoration and Twin Sale Gate Installation (Willamette NF)
 - The USFS is providing ODFW funds (amount TBD) to install 6 gates and reduce conifer encroachment on 2 meadows (7.5 acres total).
 - Status: SPA being developed, submit for federal review in April.

Proposed Projects

ODFW, ODF, and the Fremont-Winema National Forest are meeting in May to discuss strategies to expand the use of GNA across the landscape. Additional partners include Ecotrust Forest Management and the Oregon Hunters Association as we look at leveraging resources for cross-boundary habitat restoration (connected private, state, and federal lands).

ODFW, ODF, and the Willamette NF will meet in May to discuss overlapping interests, capabilities, and interagency collaboration on GNA projects across the forest.

ODFW and ODF will participate in a Willamette NF All Collaboratives Workshop in May to give an update on GNA projects and discuss decision making on Program Income from GNA timber sales.

A BLM Good Neighbor Master Funding Announcement should be posted soon upon approval from DOI. Several ODFW districts have expressed interest in pursuing agreements with the BLM for forest and rangeland restoration.

Through the Good Neighbor Authority, the BLM is awarding ODFW \$290,000 (up to \$500,000) over 3 years to document pronghorn antelope movements and migration corridors in southeastern Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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