

## ESA Consultation

### Resource Management Plans (RMP) for Western Oregon

#### *Background:*

On February 1, 2016, the BLM initiated formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service under Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). In addition to their role as formal cooperators, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service have met with the BLM repeatedly throughout the planning process to coordinate and collaborate in preparation for the ESA consultation process.

#### *Key Points:*

- The BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Marine Fisheries Service signed an ESA Consultation Agreement, which identifies responsibilities for each agency and defines the processes, products, actions, timeframe, and expectations for the consultation process. The BLM prepared both terrestrial and aquatic biological assessments of the potential effects of implementing the Proposed RMP. In these biological assessments, the BLM described the Proposed RMP, the geographic area addressed by the Proposed RMP, and the manner in which the Proposed RMP would affect threatened, endangered, and candidate species and their designated and proposed critical habitats. The BLM sent these biological assessments to the consulting agencies on February 1, 2016.
- As part of this consultation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service will provide their biological opinions in the summer of 2016. These biological opinions will assess the status of the species and critical habitats involved, review the potential effects of the Proposed RMP on these species and habitats, and evaluate whether the Proposed RMP would be likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any species or destroy or adversely modify their critical habitats. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service will prepare separate biological opinions dealing with terrestrial and aquatic species under their respective ESA jurisdiction. Additional information on the biological assessments and biological opinions is available on the RMP website and in the ESA Consultation Agreement here: <http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/rmpswesternoregon/consultation.php>.
- As part of that work, and consistent with the ESA Consultation Agreement, the BLM and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have met as a Terrestrial Technical Team in April and September 2013, and January, February, and March 2014. The Terrestrial Technical Team collaborated on the development of the analytical methodology for evaluating the effects of the alternatives and the Proposed RMP on listed species in the Environmental Impact Statement, and for producing analytical information for the biological assessments.
- The BLM convened a group including representatives of the National Marine Fisheries Service and Environment Protection Agency in April and May 2013 to develop a strategic proposal for riparian management. The Environmental Protection Agency has participated in these meetings to provide technical expertise related to water quality. The BLM, National



Marine Fisheries Service, Environmental Protection Agency, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service met as a Riparian Technical Team to develop the riparian management strategic proposal in detail that was included among the alternatives in the Draft RMP/EIS. DS Consulting facilitated all meetings of the Riparian Technical Team. The Riparian Technical Team met repeatedly from August 2013 to January 2014 and presented their work to the Cooperating Agency Advisory Group on January 30, 2014.

- In addition, the BLM has met directly with the National Marine Fisheries Service in March, April, and June 2014 to discuss analytical methodology for evaluating the effects of the alternatives and Proposed RMP on listed fish species in the Environmental Impact Statement, and for producing analytical information for the biological assessment.

The Resource Management Plans for Western Oregon will determine how the BLM-administered lands in western Oregon will be managed to produce a sustained yield of timber products, to further the recovery of threatened and endangered species, to provide for clean water, to restore fire-adapted ecosystems, , to provide for recreation opportunities, and to coordinate management of lands surrounding the Coquille Forest with the Coquille Tribe.

For more information, please visit the BLM's Resource Management Plans of western Oregon website at <http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/rmpswesternoregon/index.php>.