March 1, 2022

Dear Recipient:

In accordance with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), we announce the availability for public review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Western Oregon State Forests Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).

The Oregon Department of Forestry prepared the HCP to support its request for incidental take permits (ITPs) from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The ITPs would authorize incidental take of covered species associated with forest and recreation management activities on state-owned and managed forestlands in accordance with the requirements of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Under limited circumstances, NMFS and FWS may issue permits to take listed species incidental to, and not the purpose of, otherwise lawful activities. The proposed issuance of the ITPs is considered a major federal action under NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and requires the preparation of an EIS.

The Draft EIS and the HCP are available for review and comment at the project website: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/western-oregon-state-forests-habitat-conservation-plan. Comments on the Draft EIS and HCP will be accepted via http://www.regulations.gov. Follow instructions for submitting comments on Docket NOAA-NMFS-2021-0019-0001. Please specify in your comments whether the comments provided pertain to the Draft EIS or the HCP. When submitting comments, please refer to the specific section and/or page number and the subject of your comment.

NMFS will also accept oral comments at the virtual public meeting for the Draft EIS, which will take place on April 6, 2022, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Instructions for connecting or calling into the meeting will be posted at the project website listed above. If you have questions about how to view the documents, please contact the comment coordinator, Michelle McMullin, at the contact information provided below.

Comment Coordinator:
Michelle McMullin, Fishery Biologist
National Marine Fisheries Service, West Coast Region
(541) 957-3378

Thank you in advance for your input and assistance in finalizing the Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely,

Barry A. Thom
Regional Administrator