



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office

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November 21, 2009

Subject: Lists of threatened and endangered species that may occur in selected Oregon counties

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter accompanies a species list(s) downloaded from our website (<http://www.fws.gov/oregonfwo/Species/Lists/RequestList.asp>), which shows threatened and endangered species that may occur within the area of your proposed project. The species list(s) fulfills the requirement of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems on which they depend may be conserved. Under section 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2) of the Act and pursuant to 50 CFR 402 *et seq.*, Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs which further species conservation and to determine whether projects may affect threatened and endangered species, and/or designated critical habitat. A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4332 (2)(c)). For projects other than major construction activities, the Service suggests that a biological evaluation similar to the Biological Assessment be prepared to determine whether they may affect listed and proposed species or critical habitats. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described in Enclosure A, as well as 50 CFR 402.12.

If a Federal agency determines, based on the Biological Assessment or biological evaluation, that threatened and endangered species and/or designated critical habitat may be affected by the project, the agency is required to consult with the Service following the requirements of the regulations that implement the Act (50 CFR 402).

The county species list(s) includes a list of candidate species under review for listing and those species that the Service considers "species of concern." Candidate species have no protection under the Act but are included for consideration as it is possible candidates could be listed prior to the completion of your project. Species of concern are those taxa whose conservation status is of concern to the Service (many previously known as Category 2 candidates), but for which further information is still needed.



If a proposed project may affect only candidate species or species of concern, you are not required to perform a Biological Assessment or evaluation or consult with the Service. However, the Service recommends minimizing impacts to these species to the extent possible in order to prevent potential future conflicts. Therefore, if early evaluation of the project indicates that it is likely to adversely impact a candidate species or species of concern, your agency may wish to request technical assistance from this office.

If your project includes communications or cell towers, you should be aware that migratory birds, another of our Trust Resources, can suffer significant mortality from collisions with towers. Further information on this issue can be obtained from the following web sites: <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov> (Click on “issues”), and <http://www.towerkill.com>. Please refer to the recently approved Service Guidance on the Siting, Construction, Operation and Decommissioning of Communications Towers (<http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/issues/towers/comtow.html>). We recommend its application to relevant projects. We also recommend the tower site evaluation form (found on the guidance webpage), which you may find useful in helping to determine the effects of your proposed project to endangered species and migratory birds.

The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) has recovered and was removed from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants in 2007. The bald eagle occurs in all Oregon counties, and the species continues to be protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. For more information on bald eagles, and for the Service’s “National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines,” please visit the Service’s regional webpage devoted to the bald eagle (<http://www.fws.gov/pacific/eagle/>).

We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. The Service encourages Federal agencies to investigate opportunities for incorporating conservation of threatened and endangered species into project planning processes as a means of complying with the Act. Please include a copy of this letter and any species lists downloaded from our website with any request for consultation or correspondence about your project that you submit to our office. If you have questions regarding your responsibilities under the Act, please contact Cat Brown at (503) 231-6179. For questions regarding listed salmon and steelhead trout, please contact NOAA Fisheries Service, 525 NE Oregon Street, Suite 500, Portland, Oregon 97232, (503) 230-5400.

Enclosure A

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FEDERAL AGENCIES UNDER SECTION 7(a) and (c) OF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

SECTION 7(a) Consultation/Conference

Section 7(a) of the Act requires:

1. Federal agencies to utilize their authorities to carry out programs to conserve endangered and threatened species;
2. Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) when a Federal action may affect a listed endangered or threatened species or designated critical habitat to insure that any action authorized, funded or carried out by a Federal agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat. The process is initiated by the Federal agency after it has determined if its action may affect a listed species; and
3. Conference with the Service when a Federal action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a proposed species or result in destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat.

SECTION 7(c) Preparation of a Biological Assessment

Section 7(c) of the Act requires Federal agencies or their designees to prepare a Biological Assessment (BA) for construction projects.¹ For actions that are not construction projects, we recommend that a biological evaluation similar to a BA be prepared to evaluate the effects of the proposed project on listed and proposed species and critical habitats. The purpose of the BA or biological evaluation is to identify listed and proposed species which are likely to be affected by a proposed project. The process is initiated by a Federal agency by requesting a list of threatened and endangered species and critical habitats. The BA or biological evaluation should be completed within 180 days after its initiation (or within such a time period as is mutually agreeable). If the BA is not initiated within 90 days of receipt of the species list, the accuracy of the species list should be informally verified with the Service. No irreversible commitment of resources is to be made during the preparation of the BA which would foreclose reasonable and prudent alternatives to jeopardy to listed species. Planning, design, and administrative actions may be taken; however, no construction may begin.

A biological assessment or biological evaluation should include the following information:

1. Description of proposed action (project).

Describe the following and attach any relevant maps, diagrams, or designs;

- **Who** is proposing the action?
- **Where** is the action? Be as specific as possible. Include maps, county, township, range, stream, and any other pertinent information.
- **What** is the proposed action? Describe what is planned, the objectives of the action, include designs, diagrams, and best management practices applied, etc.
- **How** is the action going to be implemented? Give specific details, such as what type

¹A construction project (or other undertaking having similar physical impacts) is a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as referred to in NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4332. (2)c).

of equipment is used, how the action area will be accessed, etc.

- **When** will the action be implemented?

2. Description of listed and proposed species and critical habitat, status, distribution and habitat use by the species in the project area.

Identify which listed, proposed and candidate species and critical habitats may potentially be affected (beneficially or adversely) by the action. Describe how the species use the project area. Assistance with this information can be obtained from local offices of the Service.

3. Description of the action area.

Describe all areas affected by the proposed project. The action area refers to the area directly or indirectly affected by the proposed action; this area will usually be larger than the project footprint. Include on-site inspection or survey data, views of recognized experts (e.g., ODFW), and literature reviews.

4. Effects of the proposed action on listed and proposed species and designated or proposed critical habitat.

Describe in detail the effects of the action on the species and their habitats including direct and indirect effects, as well as effects that are interrelated and interdependent effects. Summarize your analysis of all project effects.

5. Description of measures to minimize effects to listed species, and proposed project monitoring.

Describe methods to be used to avoid, minimize and correct adverse short and long-term effects. Describe what will be monitored, who will monitor and the frequency of monitoring.

6. Determination of effect.

Clearly state your final effects determination for each listed and proposed species and designated and proposed critical habitat. Effects determinations may be:

- no effect
- may affect, not likely to adversely affect (appropriate for actions that have only beneficial, insignificant, or discountable effects)
- may affect, likely to adversely affect (appropriate for actions with effects to listed species or designated critical habitat that are not entirely insignificant, discountable or wholly beneficial)

7. Attachments.

Attachments should include all relevant information supporting the above categories such as maps, project design, drawings, specifications, pollution control plan, photos of project site and adjacent area, site survey data, and literature cited.

For more information on consultation under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, visit the Service's national consultation website at <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/consultations/index.html>.