

## INTERAGENCY FISHER STEERING COMMITTEE CHARTER

**I. BACKGROUND:** An interagency fisher (*Martes pennanti*) conservation effort was proposed in mid-2004 in response to the 12-month status review and subsequent finding by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. On April 8, 2004, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) published in the Federal Register (Vol. 69 No. 68, April 8, 2004) a "...warranted but precluded by higher priority actions to amend the Lists of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants" finding for the West Coast Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of the fisher. The Interagency Fisher Steering Committee (hereafter, the Committee) was formed in 2005 to provide interagency oversight and coordination of fisher conservation in these areas.

**II. ROLE:** The Committee provides oversight and direction in the preparation and implementation of a Conservation Assessment and a Conservation Strategy for fishers in the Western United States. Through the Fisher Science Team, the Committee ensures coordination with Forest Service scientists at the Pacific Northwest and Pacific Southwest Research Stations (Olympia, WA and Arcata, CA, respectively) and the broader scientific community, as appropriate, in the preparation and implementation of research and administrative studies.

**III. MEMBERSHIP:** The membership includes Forest Service Wildlife Directors from Regions 1, 5 and 6; Bureau of Land Management (Oregon and California State Offices); US Fish and Wildlife Service Region 1 (California and Portland offices); National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, States of Washington, Oregon and California, and invitations to Native American tribes to participate.

**IV. COMMITTEE CHAIR:** The Committee Chair is the Natural Resources Director, Region 6 of the Forest Service.

### **V. ADVISOR(S)**

Fisher Science Team  
Fisher Biology Team

**VI. INVITEES:** Representatives of large private land holding (e.g. timber companies) and interested conservation organizations may be invited to participate in meetings, to share information, but will not provide direction for document development or participate in decisions made by the Committee

**VII. MEETINGS:** Meetings are held as necessary and agreed to by the Committee members.

**VIII. CONFERENCE CALLS:** Conference calls shall be scheduled as needed.

## **IX. OPERATIONS**

### **A. RESOLUTION OF ISSUES**

The Committee operates by consensus whenever possible. Where the Committee cannot agree on a course of action, the Committee Chair will make the decision, based on the majority opinion; a minority report will be documented when necessary. The Chair, in the event of an impasse, will convene a conference call with the Committee to consult with agency leaders and discuss all points of view prior to making the decision.

### **B. PROCEDURES TO DEVELOP A CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT AND A CONSERVATION STRATEGY**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of preparing a Conservation Assessment in the western United States is to provide a reliable and scientifically sound assessment of current ecological information on fishers. The Conservation Strategy will provide a consistent approach to identifying conservation issues and providing options to management for reducing or eliminating potential risks to population persistence and species recovery.

#### **Process**

1. The Biology Team will review existing information (primarily peer-reviewed literature) and document in the Conservation Assessment the historic and current ranges, habitat requirements (including primary prey requirements), population demographics, relationships with other species, and other ecological parameters.
2. The Biology Team will develop a Conservation Strategy which identifies the conservation risks to the species, including habitat loss, mortality factors and disturbance issues and develops conservation measures to reduce or eliminate the identified risks.
3. The Science Team will provide scientific support to the Biology Team including identification of knowledge gaps, clarification of habitat requirements, or other aspects of species needs.
4. The Science Team will establish a process and conduct a peer-review of the Conservation Assessment and the Conservation Strategy when completed.
5. The Biology Team will provide recommendations for research and monitoring to address information gaps and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.
6. The Biology Team and Steering Committee will assist agencies with interpretation of the Conservation Assessment and Strategy.

7. The Steering Committee will recommend the process to incorporate the Conservation Strategy into existing forest plans or BLM district plans.

### **Definitions**

**Biology Team** – Interagency wildlife biologists that apply scientific data and management principles to develop an assessment of risks to a particular species or group of species, thereby formulating the basis for management guidelines designed to conserve species and habitats described in the Conservation Strategy. The team advises the Steering Committee on the merits of proposals to amend conservation and management strategies based upon scientific analyses provided by the Science Team.

**Science Team** – Scientists that create, interpret, and review data to provide a scientific basis for management and conservation of the species. The team advises the Steering Committee and Biology Team on the merits and scientific basis of proposals to amend conservation strategies.