

Forest conservation plan worries counties

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

A proposed habitat conservation plan for protected species in Oregon’s state-owned forests has alarmed some counties that receive logging revenues from those lands.

Since 2017, the Oregon Department of Forestry has been evaluating a plan for threatened spotted owls and marbled murrelets, nine protected aquatic species and several wildlife species that may be listed under the Endangered Species Act.

State forestlands are managed to avoid killing or harming federally protected species, while the proposed plan would allow some “incidental take” as long as the plan’s mitigation and prevention strategies are followed.

As the Oregon Board of Forestry prepares to decide whether to proceed with the next phase of the plan process, preliminary forecasts of timber harvest have caused consternation among some members of the Council of Forest Trust Land Counties.

“This HCP does not reflect any concern or understanding of counties’ financial condition or needs,” said David Yamamoto, chairman of the council and the Tillamook County Board of Commissioners, during an Aug. 14 online meeting.

Based on the Department of Forestry’s modeling data, logging on state-owned forestland in western Oregon would decline steadily from recent levels of about 250 million to 300 million board-feet a year to roughly 175 million board-feet in 2080, after which harvests would begin rising again, accord-



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

A habitat conservation plan for Oregon’s state-owned forests has worried some counties that depend on timber revenue.

ing to the Mason, Bruce & Girard natural resources consulting firm.

About 60% to 62% of 640,000 acres of state-owned forestland would become unavailable for logging under the plan, compared to 49% under current management, said Mark Rasmussen, a principal at the consulting firm.

To compare, only about 44% of state-owned forestlands in western Washington state are unavailable for logging under its habitat conservation plan, Rasmussen said. “Is Oregon being asked to give up more than other landowners who’ve pursued and achieved an HCP?”

The plan should not replicate economic hardship that occurred in Oregon due to logging curtailments on federal lands after the northern spotted owl was listing under

the Endangered Species Act 30 years ago, said Steve Zika, CEO of Hampton Lumber.

“Any kind of reduction of the ODF’s state harvest will have a dramatic effect on many businesses in Northwest Oregon,” Zika said, noting that a plan would be acceptable as a concept if it were less financially burdensome.

“In order for us to support this HCP, Oregon’s commitments need to be more balanced and in line with other landowner HCPs,” he said.

Yamamoto, the council’s chairman, pointed out that forestry and logging jobs pay an average annual salary of \$54,400 in Oregon, while wood products and manufacturing jobs pay an average annual salary of about \$51,600 — compared to about \$22,750 for jobs in lei-

sure and hospitality.

“These are not living-wage, fully benefited jobs,” Yamamoto said of the tourism industry. “Tillamook is never going to be home to a Nike or a Columbia Sportswear or a Google. Small rural counties really depend very much on natural resource-based jobs.”

The most recent models for how the plan would affect the Department of Forestry’s finances haven’t yet been finished but will be ready by October, when the Board of Forestry is expected to decide whether to undertake a Nation Environmental Policy Act analysis of the plan, said Liz Dent, the agency’s state forests division chief.

When asked why Oregon’s plan would restrict logging on a larger proportion of land than Washington’s plan, Dent said the conservation areas were designed based on surveys of marbled murrelets and spotted owls conducted over two decades.

There would still be the opportunity to manage forestland within these conservation areas, she said.

“Each HCP is going to be different based on forest conditions, the species we are seeking coverage for, their distribution, (and) it depends who the landowner is and what the landowner’s objectives are,” Dent said.

The plan is intended to bring regulatory certainty that would allow Oregon to continue managing its forests as “working forests,” but the decision whether to adopt the plan won’t be made until mid-2022, said Peter Daugherty, Oregon’s state forester.

“I don’t consider myself an adversary to the counties but a partner to the counties,” he said.

Virus relief program will issue \$500 checks

By GARY WARNER
Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon residents facing financial hardship from the coronavirus pandemic are eligible for \$500 one-time checks through a new program.

The \$35 million plan created by the Legislature will use federal coronavirus relief funds to issue checks for up to 70,000 residents. The program is separate from regular state and federal unemployment programs.

Checks are available by visiting one of 150 locations of participating financial institutions and filling out an application. If approved, a cashier’s check or in some cases, cash, will be issued on the spot.

Participants include Umpqua Bank, Columbia Bank and members of the Northwest Oregon Credit Union Association.

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Be a current resident of Oregon and 18 or older.
- Be able to provide documents, such as a driver’s license, that prove they are currently living in Oregon.
- Attest that they are experiencing severe financial hardship directly or indirectly due to the governor’s “Stay Home, Save Lives” executive orders issued in March.
- Have earned \$4,000 a month or less pre-tax prior to their income loss due to COVID-19.
- Not received all unemployment payments they are owed.

The program requires in-person visits to participating banks and credit unions to reduce the risk of fraud in the program. While applying, applicants must adhere to public health rules, including wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing.

State Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, and House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, said in a joint statement announcing the program that it was intended to be a faster way for Oregonians in need to receive relief funds amid a backlog caused by over 400,000 people filing for unemployment since March.

The Employment Department has experienced long delays — in some cases months — in getting aid to applicants.

“The Governor’s order prevented thousands of COVID-19 cases and saved hundreds of lives,” Courtney said in the statement. “But it also impacted many people’s income. With such a huge jump in unemployment, some people are still waiting for their benefits. We know \$500 isn’t going to solve all of these problems, but if we can help a family buy groceries for the month, pay for child care, or cover an unexpected repair, it’s worth it.”

Kotek spokesman Danny Moran said each branch of an institution is limited in the number of checks it can issue.

“There will be a daily capacity limit in the sense that each branch can only take so many in-person applicants per day,” Moran said. “Those who developed the program went to great lengths to ensure there was statewide representation in all regions of the state. We’re hopeful this will provide an opportunity for Oregonians in all corners of the state to access the funds.”

Residents are strongly urged to check with the banks and credit unions that they are involved in the program and that walk-in service is available. Some branches may require an appointment to ensure social distancing and room capacity limits are met.

Liberty: Expect to wear a mask, practice social distancing

Continued from Page A1

“Even if we don’t have full audiences, it’s not a big gamble or risk for the theater. I’m hopeful we’ll break even.”

Attendees are expected to wear a mask and stay 6 feet from each other as a precaution against the virus.

Groups of no more than 10 will be allowed. Tickets will only be sold online, concessions will be set up as no-contact pickups and bathrooms will be cleaned hourly. There will be specific exits and entrances for patrons and the theater will be deep cleaned before and after events.

Movies scheduled through September include “Amazing Grace,” a documentary about Aretha Franklin; “Missing Link,” an animated film about a yeti; “Western Stars,” a Bruce Springsteen concert and biopic; and “Maleficent: Mistress of Evil,” a Disney film.

“We picked films that are just fun,” Crockett said. “We don’t anticipate that we’re going to sell a lot of tickets anyways. I’ll be surprised if we sell out. The purpose isn’t selling out, it’s coming back and getting some routines established under these new



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

The Liberty Theatre will reopen Friday for a series of movie screenings.

circumstances.”

The Liberty’s staff and a few volunteers have been working to prepare for the theater’s reopening.

“We have to follow a number of guidelines, CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) guidelines, Oregon guidelines and also group gathering guidelines. We’re combining all three to be safe,” Crockett said. “It’s a pretty heavy lift. We usually have events down to a science.”

A question in a survey to patrons during the Liberty’s closure asked, “Are you ready to come back? What would you like the theater to do to feel safe?” A major-

ity answered they’d consider coming back, Crockett said. The support helped encourage the theater to reopen.

“We want to be mindful and not jump ahead of anyone’s comfort,” Crockett said. “We chose films because it’s really easy to track the path for films. People come in, go to concessions and stay in their seats for the most part.”

The Liberty may also host live performances and the Astoria International Film Festival in October.

“As a musician myself, I don’t know what the vibe is going to be for 50 people to spread out from the stage to the back,” Crockett said. “I want it to be fun for both the

performers and the guests so we have to be thoughtful and creative about that.”

Friday’s reopening will mark the completion of the first half of the theater’s renovations. Major improvements include a new box office and concessions stand.

“The first phase, for all intensive purposes, is done except for a few nit-picky things,” Crockett said. “We received lottery funds from the state, which were restricted just to that project. We’ve continued on construction and we’re able to finish a little ahead of schedule because the construction crew didn’t have to work around our event schedule.”

Phase two of the project will include more behind-the-scenes work, like sprucing up an unused space for more dressing rooms. The theater’s staff is working on designs for the project, Crockett said.

“That phase we think will take a little longer. There’s still some foundations and donors interested in capital projects but right now our focus is making sure the theater is sustainable and gets through the pandemic,” Crockett said.

Herbert “Herbie” Kaul



A graveside service is scheduled for 1:00pm on Saturday, August 22, 2020 at the Ocean View Cemetery at 575 18th Street Warrenton Oregon 97146



**Conrad Bredleau
1950-2020**

In lieu of a standard memorial, Conrad's daughter, brother, two sisters, and niece represented the rest of his loving family and friends in an intimate memorial ritual in Oceanside to honor his memory.

The date and time were 8/19 at 8:19am in what would have been Conrad's 70th birthday.

