

RCW 76.09.350 Long-term multispecies landscape management plans—Pilot projects, selection—Plan approval, elements—Notice of agreement recorded—Memorandums of agreements—Report, evaluation. The legislature recognizes the importance of providing the greatest diversity of habitats, particularly riparian, wetland, and old growth habitats, and of assuring the greatest diversity of species within those habitats for the survival and reproduction of enough individuals to maintain the native wildlife of Washington forestlands. The legislature also recognizes the importance of long-term habitat productivity for natural and wild fish, for the protection of hatchery water supplies, and for the protection of water quality and quantity to meet the needs of people, fish, and wildlife. The legislature recognizes the importance of maintaining and enhancing fish and wildlife habitats capable of sustaining the commercial and noncommercial uses of fish and wildlife. The legislature further recognizes the importance of the continued growth and development of the state's forest products industry which has a vital stake in the long-term productivity of both the public and private forestland base.

The development of a landscape planning system would help achieve these goals. Landowners and resource managers should be provided incentives to voluntarily develop long-term multispecies landscape management plans that will provide protection to public resources. Because landscape planning represents a departure from the use of standard baseline rules and may result in unintended consequences to both the affected habitats and to a landowner's economic interests, the legislature desires to establish up to seven experimental pilot programs to gain experience with landscape planning that may prove useful in fashioning legislation of a more general application.

(1) Until December 31, 2000, the department in cooperation with the department of fish and wildlife, and the department of ecology when relating to water quality protection, is granted authority to select not more than seven pilot projects for the purpose of developing individual landowner multispecies landscape management plans.

(a) Pilot project participants must be selected by the department in cooperation with the department of fish and wildlife, and the department of ecology when relating to water quality protection, no later than October 1, 1997.

(b) The number and the location of the pilot projects are to be determined by the department in cooperation with the department of fish and wildlife, and the department of ecology when relating to water quality protection, and should be selected on the basis of risk to the habitat and species, variety and importance of species and habitats in the planning area, geographic distribution, surrounding ownership, other ongoing landscape and watershed planning activities in the area, potential benefits to water quantity and quality, financial and staffing capabilities of participants, and other factors that will contribute to the creation of landowner multispecies landscape planning efforts.

(c) Each pilot project shall have a landscape management plan with the following elements:

(i) An identification of public resources selected for coverage under the plan and measurable objectives for the protection of the selected public resources;

(ii) A termination date of not later than 2050;

- (iii) A general description of the planning area including its geographic location, physical and biological features, habitats, and species known to be present;
 - (iv) An identification of the existing forest practices rules that will not apply during the term of the plan;
 - (v) Proposed habitat management strategies or prescriptions;
 - (vi) A projection of the habitat conditions likely to result from the implementation of the specified management strategies or prescriptions;
 - (vii) An assessment of habitat requirements and the current habitat conditions of representative species included in the plan;
 - (viii) An assessment of potential or likely impacts to representative species resulting from the prescribed forest practices;
 - (ix) A description of the anticipated benefits to those species or other species as a result of plan implementation;
 - (x) A monitoring plan;
 - (xi) Reporting requirements including a schedule for review of the plan's performance in meeting its objectives;
 - (xii) Conditions under which a plan may be modified, including a procedure for adaptive management;
 - (xiii) Conditions under which a plan may be terminated;
 - (xiv) A procedure for adaptive management that evaluates the effectiveness of the plan to meet its measurable public resources objectives, reflects changes in the best available science, and provides changes to its habitat management strategies, prescriptions, and hydraulic project standards to the extent agreed to in the plan and in a timely manner and schedule;
 - (xv) A description of how the plan relates to publicly available plans of adjacent federal, state, tribal, and private timberland owners; and
 - (xvi) A statement of whether the landowner intends to apply for approval of the plan under applicable federal law.
- (2) Until December 31, 2000, the department, in agreement with the department of fish and wildlife, and the department of ecology when the landowner elects to cover water quality in the plan, shall approve a landscape management plan and enter into a binding implementation agreement with the landowner when such departments find, based upon the best scientific data available, that:
- (a) The plan contains all of the elements required under this section including measurable public resource objectives;
 - (b) The plan is expected to be effective in meeting those objectives;
 - (c) The landowner has sufficient financial resources to implement the management strategies or prescriptions to be implemented by the landowner under the plan;
 - (d) The plan will:
 - (i) Provide better protection than current state law for the public resources selected for coverage under the plan considered in the aggregate; and
 - (ii) Compared to conditions that could result from compliance with current state law:
 - (A) Not result in poorer habitat conditions over the life of the plan for any species selected for coverage that is listed as threatened or endangered under federal or state law, or that has been identified as a candidate for such listing, at the time the plan is approved; and

(B) Measurably improve habitat conditions for species selected for special consideration under the plan;

(e) The plan shall include watershed analysis or provide for a level of protection that meets or exceeds the protection that would be provided by watershed analysis, if the landowner selects fish or water quality as a public resource to be covered under the plan. Any alternative process to watershed analysis would be subject to timely peer review;

(f) The planning process provides for a public participation process during the development of the plan, which shall be developed by the department in cooperation with the landowner.

The management plans must be submitted to the department and the department of fish and wildlife, and the department of ecology when the landowner elects to cover water quality in the plan, no later than March 1, 2000. The department shall provide an opportunity for public comment on the proposed plan. The comment period shall not be less than forty-five days. The department shall approve or reject plans within one hundred twenty days of submittal by the landowner of a final plan. The decision by the department, in agreement with the department of fish and wildlife, and the department of ecology when the landowner has elected to cover water quality in the plan, to approve or disapprove the management plan is subject to the environmental review process of chapter 43.21C RCW, provided that any public comment period provided for under chapter 43.21C RCW shall run concurrently with the public comment period provided in this subsection (2).

(3) After a landscape management plan is adopted:

(a) Forest practices consistent with the plan need not comply with:

(i) The specific forest practices rules identified in the plan; and

(ii) Any forest practice rules and policies adopted after the approval of the plan to the extent that the rules:

(A) Have been adopted primarily for the protection of a public resource selected for coverage under the plan; or

(B) Provide for procedural or administrative obligations inconsistent with or in addition to those provided for in the plan with respect to those public resources; and

(b) If the landowner has selected fish as one of the public resources to be covered under the plan, the plan shall serve as the hydraulic project approval for the life of the plan, in compliance with *RCW 77.55.100.

(4) The department is authorized to issue a single landscape level permit valid for the life of the plan to a landowner who has an approved landscape management plan and who has requested a landscape permit from the department. Landowners receiving a landscape level permit shall meet annually with the department and the department of fish and wildlife, and the department of ecology where water quality has been selected as a public resource to be covered under the plan, to review the specific forest practices activities planned for the next twelve months and to determine whether such activities are in compliance with the plan. The departments will consult with the affected Indian tribes and other interested parties who have expressed an interest in connection with the review. The landowner is to provide ten calendar days' notice to the department prior to the commencement of any forest practices authorized under a landscape level permit. The landscape level permit will not impose additional conditions relating

to the public resources selected for coverage under the plan beyond those agreed to in the plan. For the purposes of chapter 43.21C RCW, forest practices conducted in compliance with an approved plan are deemed not to have the potential for a substantial impact on the environment as to any public resource selected for coverage under the plan.

(5) Except as otherwise provided in a plan, the agreement implementing the landscape management plan is an agreement that runs with the property covered by the approved landscape management plan and the department shall record notice of the plan in the real property records of the counties in which the affected properties are located. Prior to its termination, no plan shall permit forestland covered by its terms to be withdrawn from such coverage, whether by sale, exchange, or other means, nor to be converted to nonforestry uses except to the extent that such withdrawal or conversion would not measurably impair the achievement of the plan's stated public resource objectives. If a participant transfers all or part of its interest in the property, the terms of the plan still apply to the new landowner for the plan's stated duration unless the plan is terminated under its terms or unless the plan specifies the conditions under which the terms of the plan do not apply to the new landowner.

(6) The departments of natural resources, fish and wildlife, and ecology shall seek to develop memorandums of agreements with federal agencies and affected Indian tribes relating to tribal issues in the landscape management plans. The departments shall solicit input from affected Indian tribes in connection with the selection, review, and approval of any landscape management plan. If any recommendation is received from an affected Indian tribe and is not adopted by the departments, the departments shall provide a written explanation of their reasons for not adopting the recommendation.

(7) The department is directed to report to the forest practices board annually through the year 2000, but no later than December 31st of each year, on the status of each pilot project. The department is directed to provide to the forest practices board, no later than December 31, 2000, an evaluation of the pilot projects including a determination if a permanent landscape planning process should be established along with a discussion of what legislative and rule modifications are necessary. [2003 c 39 § 34; 1997 c 290 § 1.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 77.55.100 was repealed by 2005 c 146 § 1006.