

**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

**Forest  
Service**

**R-6**

**OR/WA**

**Bureau of Land  
Management**

**United States  
Department of  
the Interior**

---

**Reply Refer To:** 1950 (FS)/ 1736PFP (BLM) (OR-931) P

**Date:** July 6, 2006

**FS-Memorandum**

**EMS TRANSMISSION 07/07/2006  
BLM-Information Bulletin No. OR-2006-142**

**To:** Bureau of Land Management District Managers; and Forest Service National Forest Supervisors

**Subject:** Transmittal of the Final Conservation Assessment Format and Draft Conservation Strategy Format for Forest Service Sensitive and Bureau of Land Management Special Status Species

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) State Director and Forest Service (FS) Regional Forester have emphasized the need to provide tools to field units to assist in meeting Special Status and Sensitive Species (SSSS) policies in Oregon and Washington. The development of Conservation Assessments and Conservation Strategies that provide scientific information and ecological considerations will greatly aid in the project-level evaluations of impacts to SSSS. Standardized approaches to the creation of these documents will improve our effectiveness, consistency, and credibility in managing rare species.

To ensure a more standardized approach in the creation of future Assessments and Strategies, this document transmits a Final Conservation Assessment Format and a Draft Conservation Strategy Format to be used for any new documents created by field personnel or contractors. Conservation Assessments and Strategies under development and close to completion do not need to conform to these formats.

*Conservation Assessments* synthesize the known information about the biology and ecology of a species. They include taxonomic, range, distribution, and habitat descriptions but may also contain key information regarding potential items to consider in habitat management. In addition, they often identify important inventory, research, and monitoring information. Conservation Assessments are not decision documents but are useful tools to aid biologists and botanists in evaluating project impacts, determining informational needs, and working with managers on recommendations regarding habitat management. Conservation Assessments should be developed in coordination with State and Regional Office staffs, to ensure there is no duplication of effort among units and to help facilitate peer review.

*Conservation Strategies* focus on how and when to manage habitat for the persistence of one or more Special Status and/or Sensitive species. They describe how habitat, individual sites, and populations should be managed and can also identify the habitat and/or populations needed to meet the conservation goals for the species. These documents typically cover either a significant portion or the entire range of the species and may be created by one field unit, one agency, or be interagency in nature, but are agreed upon by all units the Strategy covers. Conservation Strategies should be developed utilizing an interdisciplinary approach to ensure conservation objectives reflect current science, feasibility of implementation, conservation priority, and budget constraints. Development of Conservation Strategies should also be coordinated with State and Regional Office staffs.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) needs related to the implementation of Conservation Strategies should be discussed with field units and State/Regional Office staffs. To be implemented, Conservation

Strategies require a Decision document. The Decision document could amend Forest or Resource Area plans, or be part of a project-specific NEPA document.

***Final Conservation Assessment Format***

Last March, a Draft Conservation Assessment Format (Information Bulletin No. OR-2005-096) was transmitted for use in the development of any new Conservation Assessments by the BLM or FS in Oregon and Washington. We identified a one-year time frame for comments from users of the format or from any interested field unit personnel. After consideration and incorporation of comments, we are now transmitting a Final Conservation Assessment Format (Attachment 1). This final format should now be used for any Conservation Assessments initiated after the date of this document.

***Draft Conservation Strategy Format***

The Draft Conservation Strategy Format (Attachment 2) describes the outline and approach to be used in the development of Conservation Strategies for Oregon/Washington BLM and FS lands. Use of the Draft Conservation Strategy Format is required for all Conservation Strategies initiated after the date of this document. This format will be evaluated over the course of the next year. Field personnel and managers are asked to provide feedback on the structure, content, ease of use, and thoroughness of the format as they gain experience in the development and application of Conservation Strategies. In June 2007, this format will be modified based on those comments and will be released in final form.

***Peer Review***

The peer review process for development of Conservation Assessments previously transmitted last March is now finalized (Attachment 3). This peer review process is required for the completion of all Conservation Assessments and new Conservation Strategies.

***Questions or Comments***

Please contact Rob Huff, Interagency Conservation Planning Coordinator, at 503-808-6479 or by e-mail at [Rob\\_Huff@or.blm.gov](mailto:Rob_Huff@or.blm.gov).

/s/ Cathy L. Harris (for)  
MICHAEL S. MOTTICE  
Deputy State Director for Resource Planning,  
Use and Protection  
Bureau of Land Management  
Oregon/Washington

/s/ Calvin Joyner  
CALVIN JOYNER  
Director, Natural Resources  
Forest Service  
Region 6

Authenticated by  
Mary O'Leary  
Management Assistant

3 Attachments

- 1 – [Final Conservation Assessment Format](#) (23pp)
- 2 – [Draft Conservation Strategy Format](#) (32pp)
- 3 – [Peer Review Process for Conservation Assessments/Strategies](#) (1p)

BLM Distribution  
WO-230 (204LS)  
OR-931 (Michael Haske, Barbara Hill, Rob Huff,  
Joan SeEVERS)

cc:  
R-6  
Kathy Anderson, Alan Christensen, Russ Holmes,  
Carol Hughes, Sarah Madsen, Elaine Rybak