

April 2, 2025

Testimony

The **Private Forest Accord** provides significant new protections for fish and stream-dwelling frogs and salamanders, for cold clean water, and for the people who rely on these resources.

- The **Private Forest Accord** takes Oregon out of years of gridlock about how private industrial forestlands are managed and brings Oregon closer to the protections that have been standard practice in Washington and California for years.
- The **Private Forest Accord** overhauls the existing Oregon Forest Practices Act to better protect wild salmon streams on more than 10 million acres of private Oregon forestlands.
 - It expands streamside protections for harvesting trees near streams, overhauls forest road standards and requires a comprehensive inventory process, holds road-stream crossings to new standards for flow and fish passage that reflect a changing climate, and establishes a 50-year fund with investments of \$15 million per year from the state and industry for projects that increase wildfire resiliency, support beaver conservation, establish conservation easements and more. The most important thing to know is that the Private Forest Accord is not guaranteed.
- Baked into the agreement is a hard deadline – if the state fails to get federal approval for the PFA HCP by December 31, 2027, all of the changes roll back
 - 1• Full funding for natural resource agencies to ensure successful implementation of the PFA and a federally approvable HCP is critical in the 2025-2027 biennium.
 - Underfunding these programs in the next biennium puts the viability of the PFA and a federally approved HCP at risk.

What we need right now are two things:

- (1) Getting an approved federal plan – which is on track
 - The state is preparing to submit a final version to the federal agencies at the end of June; then it will go through federal review as part of the NEPA process (DEIS, FEIS); and then – Incidental Take Permit approved for ODF and the state
- (2) Making sure that critical programs that are essential to getting federal approval are funded in the next state budget (2025-2027 biennium)
 - The PFA Mitigation Grant program – which just successfully kicked off its first-ever round of funding, is at risk and not guaranteed funding in the next state budget cycle.
 - This is based on an annual commitment from landowners and the state to a 50-year fund to improve habitat and protect water quality
 - The commitment established under the PFA is for the state to invest \$10M annually in addition to a contribution from industry (\$2.5M annually until the HCP is finalized, then goes to \$5M/year) to support the Mitigation Program
 - Contingent upon \$10M annually from the state – which needs to be built into the base budget as a core component of the program
 - The Adaptive Management Program – which is effectively responsible for assessing whether the rules are working or not to meet key objectives (are we seeing more wood in streams, are we limiting streams from getting too warm – are we supporting healthy riparian forest habitat) – is also at risk
 - And a grant program specifically designed for small forestland owners tackling some of the most expensive types of projects – upgrading or replacing culverts and stream crossings – is also at risk (SFISH program).

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