WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
Natural Resources

PETER GOLDMARK
Commissioner of Public Lands

July 21, 2011

TO: Forest Practices Board

FROM: Sherri Felix, Policy Analyst
Forest Practices Division

SUBJECT: Request to Begin Rule Making to Amend WAC 222-16-080 Critical habitat (state) of Threatened and Endangered Species

At your upcoming August 9, 2011 meeting, staff will request your approval to begin a rule making process addressing the bald eagle, peregrine falcon and Western pond turtle with the enclosed draft rule language.

On April 8, 2011, the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted an amendment to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) bald eagle protection rules in WAC 232-12-292. Their rule making removed the WDFW requirement for a bald eagle management plan for land-use activities containing or adjacent to an eagle nest or communal roost site unless the bald eagle is relisted as state threatened or endangered at a later date. The bald eagle is no longer federally or state listed as threatened or endangered. However, the species is still protected under two federal laws, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Act.

The peregrine falcon has also been federally and state down-listed from threatened and endangered; however, it is protected at the federal level under the Migratory Bird Act.

The common and scientific name for the Western pond turtle has been changed. It is now referred to as the Pacific pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata)*.

Accordingly, staff recommends the following amendments to WAC 222-16-080, Critical habitat (state) of threatened and endangered species:

- Remove the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus* leucocephalus), including the reference to bald eagle management plans;
- Remove the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus)*; and
- Correct the common and scientific name of the Western pond turtle to Pacific pond turtle, *Actinemys marmorata*.

To begin this rule making, staff will request your approval to conduct 30-day review by the counties, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and by practice the tribes, and to file a CR-101 *Preproposal Statement of Inquiry* with the Office of the Code Reviser. Requirements for the 30-day review and the CR-101 come from two separate laws, the Forest Practices Act and Administrative Procedure Act, respectively. While we usually request the Board's approval to fulfill them in two separate Board meetings, in this case, staff recommends both of these processes take place prior to your November 8, 2011 meeting. This will allow the Board to adopt rules in February, rather than May 2012.

Staff looks forward to discussing this potential rule making at your August 9 meeting. Should you have any questions in the meantime, please contact Marc Engel at 360-902-1390 or marc.engel@dnr.wa.gov .

SF/
Attachment

Forest Practices Board
Bald Eagle Rule Making
August 2011

WAC 222-16-080 Critical habitats (state) of threatened and endangered species.

(1) Critical habitats (state) of threatened or endangered species and specific forest practices designated as Class IV-Special are as follows:

(a) ~~Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) - harvesting, road construction, aerial application of pesticides, or site preparation within 0.5 mile of a known active nest site, documented by the department of fish and wildlife, between the dates of January 1 and August 15 or 0.25 mile at other times of the year; and within 0.25 mile of a communal roosting site. Communal roosting sites shall not include refuse or garbage dumping sites.~~

~~(b)~~ Gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) - harvesting, road construction, or site preparation within 1 mile of a known active den site, documented by the department of fish and wildlife, between the dates of March 15 and July 30 or 0.25 mile from the den site at other times of the year.

(~~c~~b) Grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*) - harvesting, road construction, aerial application of pesticides, or site preparation within 1 mile of a known active den site, documented by the department of fish and wildlife, between the dates of October 1 and May 30 or 0.25 mile at other times of the year.

(~~d~~c) Mountain (woodland) caribou (*Rangifera tarandus*) - harvesting, road construction, aerial application of pesticides, or site preparation within 0.25 mile of a known active breeding area, documented by the department of fish and wildlife.

(~~e~~d) Oregon silverspot butterfly (*Speyeria zerene hippolyta*) - harvesting, road construction, aerial or ground application of pesticides, or site preparation within 0.25 mile of an individual occurrence, documented by the department of fish and wildlife.

~~(f) Peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) - harvesting, road construction, aerial application of pesticides, or site preparation within 0.5 mile of a known active nest site, documented by the department of fish and wildlife, between the dates of March 1 and July 30; or harvesting, road construction, or aerial application of pesticides within 0.25 mile of the nest site at other times of the year.~~

(~~g~~e) Sandhill crane (*Grus canadensis*) - harvesting, road construction, aerial application of pesticides, or site preparation within 0.25 mile of a known active nesting area, documented by the department of fish and wildlife.

(~~h~~f) Northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*).

(i) **Within a SOSEA boundary** (see maps in WAC 222-16-086), except as indicated in (h)(ii) of this subsection, harvesting, road construction, or aerial application of pesticides on suitable spotted owl habitat within a median home range circle that is centered within the SOSEA or on adjacent federal lands.

(ii) **Within the Entiat SOSEA**, harvesting, road construction, or aerial application of pesticides within the areas indicated for demographic support (see WAC 222-16-086(2)) on suitable spotted owl habitat located within a median home range circle that is centered within the demographic support area.

(iii) **Outside of a SOSEA**, harvesting, road construction, or aerial application of pesticides, between March 1 and August 31 on the seventy acres of highest quality suitable spotted owl habitat surrounding a northern spotted owl site center located outside a SOSEA. The highest quality suitable habitat shall be determined by the department in cooperation with the department of fish and wildlife. Consideration shall be given to habitat quality, proximity to the activity center and contiguity.

(iv) **Small parcel northern spotted owl exemption.** Forest practices proposed on the lands owned or controlled by a landowner whose forest land ownership within the SOSEA is less than or equal to 500 acres and where the forest practice is not within 0.7 mile of a northern spotted owl site center shall not be considered to be on lands designated as critical habitat (state) for northern spotted owls.

(~~i~~g) ~~Western~~ Pacific pond turtle (~~*Clemmys*~~ *Actinemys* *marmorata*) - harvesting, road construction, aerial application of pesticides, or site preparation within 0.25 mile of a known individual occurrence, documented by the department of wildlife.

(~~j~~h) Marbled murrelet *(Brachyramphus marmoratus)*.

(i) Harvesting, other than removal of down trees outside of the critical nesting season, or road construction within an occupied marbled murrelet site.

(ii) Harvesting, other than removal of down trees outside of the critical nesting season, or road construction within suitable marbled murrelet habitat within a marbled murrelet detection area.

(iii) Harvesting, other than removal of down trees outside of the critical nesting season, or road construction within suitable marbled murrelet habitat containing 7 platforms per acre outside a marbled murrelet detection area.

(iv) Harvesting, other than removal of down trees outside of the critical nesting season, or road construction outside a marbled murrelet detection area within a marbled murrelet special landscape and within suitable marbled murrelet habitat with 5 or more platforms per acre.

(v) Harvesting within a 300 foot managed buffer zone adjacent to an occupied marbled murrelet site that results in less than a residual stand stem density of 75 trees per acre greater than 6 inches in dbh; provided that 25 of which shall be greater than 12 inches dbh including 5 trees greater than 20 inches in dbh, where they exist. The primary consideration for the design of managed buffer zone widths and leave tree retention patterns shall be to mediate edge effects. The width of the buffer zone may be reduced in some areas to a minimum of 200 feet and extended to a maximum of 400 feet as long as the average of 300 feet is maintained.

(vi) Except that the following shall not be critical habitat (state):

(A) Where a landowner owns less than 500 acres of forest land within 50 miles of saltwater and the land does not contain an occupied marbled murrelet site; or

(B) Where a protocol survey (see WAC 222-12-090(14)) has been conducted and no murrelets were detected. The landowner is then relieved from further survey requirements. However, if an occupied marbled murrelet site is established, this exemption is void.

(2) The following critical habitats (federal) designated by the United States Secretary of the Interior or Commerce, or specific forest practices within those habitats, have been determined to have the potential for a substantial impact on the environment and therefore are designated as critical habitats (state) of threatened or endangered species.

(3) For the purpose of identifying forest practices which have the potential for a substantial impact on the environment with regard to threatened or endangered species newly listed by the Washington fish and wildlife commission and/or the United States Secretary of the Interior or Commerce, the department shall after consultation with the department of fish and wildlife, prepare and submit to the board a proposed list of critical habitats (state) of threatened or endangered species. This list shall be submitted to the board within 30 days of the listing of the species. The department shall, at a minimum, consider potential impacts of forest practices on habitats essential to meeting the life requisites for each species listed as threatened or endangered. Those critical habitats (state) adopted by the board shall be added to the list in subsection (1) of this section. See WAC 222-16-050 (1)(b).

(4) For the purpose of identifying any areas and/or forest practices within critical habitats (federal) designated by the United States Secretary of the Interior or Commerce which have the potential for a substantial impact on the environment, the department shall, after consultation with the department of fish and wildlife, submit to the board a proposed list of any forest practices and/or areas proposed for inclusion in Class IV - Special forest practices. The department shall submit the list to the board within 30 days of the date the United States Secretary of the Interior or Commerce publishes a final rule designating critical habitat (federal) in the Federal Register. Those critical habitats included by the board in Class IV - Special shall be added to the list in subsection (2) of this section. See WAC 222-16-050 (1)(b).

(5) (a) ~~Except for bald eagles under subsection (1)(a) of this section, the~~ The critical habitats (state) of threatened and endangered species and specific forest practices designated in subsections (1) and (2) of this section are intended to be interim. These interim designations shall expire for a given species on the earliest of:

(i) The effective date of a regulatory system for wildlife protection referred to in (b) of this subsection or of substantive rules on the species.

(ii) The delisting of a threatened or endangered species by the Washington fish and wildlife commission and by the United States Secretary of Interior or Commerce.

(b) The board shall examine current wildlife protection and department authority to protect wildlife and develop and recommend a regulatory system, including baseline rules for wildlife protection. To the extent possible, this system shall:

(i) Use the best science and management advice available;

(ii) Use a landscape approach to wildlife protection;

(iii) Be designed to avoid the potential for substantial impact to the environment;

(iv) Protect known populations of threatened and endangered species of wildlife from negative effects of forest practices consistent with RCW 76.09.010; and

(v) Consider and be consistent with recovery plans adopted by the department of fish and wildlife pursuant to RCW 77.12.020(6) or habitat conservation plans or 16 U.S.C. 1533(d) rule changes of the Endangered Species Act.

(6) Regardless of any other provision in this section, forest practices applications shall not be classified as Class IV-Special based on critical habitat (state) (WAC 222-16-080 and 222-16-050 (1)(b)) for a species, if the forest practices are consistent with one or more of the following:

(a) Documents addressing the needs of the affected species provided such documents have received environmental review with an opportunity for public comment under the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 U.S.C. section 4321 et seq.:

(i) A habitat conservation plan and incidental take permit; or an incidental take statement covering such species approved by the Secretary of the Interior or Commerce pursuant to 16 U.S.C. § 1536 (b) or 1539 (a); or

(ii) An "unlisted species agreement" covering such species approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or National Marine Fisheries Service; or

(iii) Other conservation agreement entered into with a federal agency pursuant to its statutory authority for fish and wildlife protection that addresses the needs of the affected species; or

(iv) A rule adopted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service for the conservation of an affected species pursuant to 16 U.S.C. section 1533(d); or

(b) Documents addressing the needs of the affected species so long as they have been reviewed under the State Environmental Policy Act;

(i) A landscape management plan; or

(ii) Another cooperative or conservation agreement entered into with a state resource agency pursuant to its statutory authority for fish and wildlife protection;

(c) A special wildlife management plan (SWMP) developed by the landowner and approved by the department in consultation with the department of fish and wildlife;

(d) ~~A bald eagle management plan approved under WAC 232-12-292;~~

(~~e~~d) A landowner option plan (LOP) for northern spotted owls developed pursuant to WAC 222-16-100(1);

(~~f~~e) A cooperative habitat enhancement agreement (CHEA) developed pursuant to WAC 222-16-105; or

(~~g~~f) A take avoidance plan issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service prior to March 20, 2000.

(~~h~~g) Surveys demonstrating the absence of northern spotted owls at a northern spotted owl site center have been reviewed and approved by the department of fish and wildlife and all three of the following criteria have been met:

(i) The site has been evaluated by the spotted owl conservation advisory group, and

(ii) As part of the spotted owl conservation advisory group's evaluation, the department's representative has consulted with the department of fish and wildlife, and

(iii) The spotted owl conservation advisory group has reached consensus that the site need not be maintained while the board completes its evaluation of rules affecting the northern spotted owl. The spotted owl conservation advisory group shall communicate its findings to the department in writing within sixty days of the department of fish and wildlife's approval of surveys demonstrating the absence of northern spotted owls.

In those situations where one of the options above has been used, forest practices applications may still be classified as Class IV-Special based upon the presence of one or more of the factors listed in WAC 222-16-050(1), other than critical habitat (state) for the species covered by the existing plan or evaluations.

(7) The department, in consultation with the department of fish and wildlife, shall review each SOSEA to determine whether the goals for that SOSEA are being met through approved plans, permits, statements, letters, or agreements referred to in subsection (6) of this section. Based on the consultation, the department shall recommend to the board the suspension, deletion, modification or reestablishment of the applicable SOSEA from the rules. The department shall conduct a review for a particular SOSEA upon approval of a landowner option plan, a petition from a landowner in the SOSEA, or under its own initiative.

(8) The department, in consultation with the department of fish and wildlife, shall report annually to the board on the status of the northern spotted owl to determine whether circumstances exist that substantially interfere with meeting the goals of the SOSEAs.