

(o) Any other state agency that is required to manage, allocate or protect natural resources, either as the primary responsibility of the agency or in conjunction with the primary responsibilities of the agency.

(4) In addition to the report specified under subsection (1) of this section, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board shall report regularly during the interim on the implementation of the Oregon Plan to the appropriate legislative committee. [Formerly 541.420; 2017 c.14 §6]

Note: 541.972 was enacted into law by the Legislative Assembly but was not added to or made a part of ORS chapter 541 or any series therein by legislative action. See Preface to Oregon Revised Statutes for further explanation.

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENTS

541.973 Stewardship agreements; contents; procedures for adoption; rules.

(1) As used in this section, "stewardship agreement" means an agreement voluntarily entered into and signed by a landowner, or representative of the landowner, and the State Department of Agriculture or the State Board of Forestry that sets forth the terms under which the landowner will self-regulate to meet and exceed applicable regulatory requirements and achieve conservation, restoration and improvement of fish and wildlife habitat or water quality.

(2) The State Department of Agriculture and the State Board of Forestry may, individually or jointly, enter into stewardship agreements with landowners.

(3) The purposes of a stewardship agreement are to provide:

(a) An incentive for landowners to provide for conservation, restoration and improvement of fish and wildlife habitat or water quality;

(b) A mechanism to coordinate, facilitate and memorialize a landowner's compliance with the requirements of state and federal regulatory schemes; and

(c) A mechanism to combine or coordinate multiple incentive programs among agencies and levels of government to:

(A) Improve the delivery of financial and technical assistance to landowners engaged in conservation activities;

(B) Reduce redundancy among programs;

(C) Simplify application procedures;

(D) Leverage the investment of federal funds;

(E) Make more efficient use of technical assistance funds;

(F) Provide greater incentives for landowners;

(G) Foster partnerships and improve cooperation with nongovernmental organizations;

(H) Provide greater environmental benefits;

(I) Tailor and more effectively target conservation programs administered by federal, state and local governments to the unique conservation needs of, and opportunities presented by, individual parcels of eligible land; and

(J) Give landowners an increased level of regulatory certainty.

(4) The State Board of Forestry and the State Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, shall adopt by rule procedures and criteria for stewardship agreements. The procedures and criteria shall include, but need not be limited to:

(a) The certification of a land management plan which shall, at a minimum, include:

(A) A comprehensive description and inventory of the subject property, its features and uses; and

(B) A prescription for the protection of resources that exceeds land management practices, standards and activities otherwise required by law and that is designed to achieve conservation, restoration and improvement of fish and wildlife habitat or water quality.

(b) A requirement that each landowner subject to a stewardship agreement demonstrate a clear capability to carry out the provisions of the land management plan and have a past record of good compliance with applicable laws and regulations regarding land use and management.

(5) Each government agency that is a party to a stewardship agreement shall conduct periodic audits on lands subject to the stewardship agreement to determine whether the land management plan is being implemented and whether the agreement should be continued, revised or discontinued.

(6) Stewardship agreements may provide benefits to landowners that include, but are not limited to:

(a) Expedited permit processing;

(b) Regulatory certainty;

(c) Priority consideration for cost-share assistance or other financial incentives and technical assistance; and

(d) Government certification that certain land management practices have been implemented.

(7) Within a stewardship agreement and on a case-by-case basis, the State Department