

Chapter 6. Goals and Objectives

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6. Goals and Objectives

The Endangered Species Act Section 10 (ESA Section 10) defines criteria for issuing an Incidental Take Permit. The primary biological criterion is that the resulting incidental take “will not appreciably reduce the likelihood of survival and recovery of the species in the wild.” The City of Portland (City) has developed specific Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Goals, HCP Objectives, and Measurable Habitat Objectives with this desired result in mind.

6.1 HCP Goals

Consistent with the conservation planning approach described in Chapter 2, the City has developed a set of goals for the HCP. These goals provide “broad, guiding principles” as recommended in federal guidance for HCPs. The goals help explain the City’s rationale for the conservation measures described in Chapter 7.

The City’s overall biological goal of the HCP is to improve habitat conditions and thereby increase sustainability of populations of the four primary covered species (fall Chinook, spring Chinook, winter steelhead, and coho) in the greater Sandy River Basin to offset losses caused by the continued operation of the Bull Run water supply.

The four primary covered species are anadromous fish that travel thousands of miles during their life cycles. These fish are subject to a variety of factors and threats that determine population outcomes. The majority of these factors are out of the City’s jurisdiction and control, making it impossible for the City to commit to numerical population targets. For this reason, the City is focusing on improving habitat in the Bull Run River as well as in the larger Sandy River Basin. The measures in Chapter 7 are designed to conserve and improve habitat conditions in a manner supported by current scientific literature and with reasonable certainty that the measures will result in increased sustainability for the covered species.

The City’s more specific HCP goals are the following:

- Minimize and mitigate, to the maximum extent practicable, the impacts of incidental take on all covered species, but particularly the four primary covered fish species (fall Chinook, spring Chinook, winter steelhead, and coho)
- Provide habitat improvements in the Bull Run River where the City’s historical impacts have occurred
- Implement habitat improvements as early as possible during the term of the HCP to help turn the trajectory of the currently decreasing fish population trends in the Sandy River Basin
- Provide benefits for additional non-covered species (e.g., amphibians) potentially affected by covered activities
- Improve conditions in the Bull Run River to the degree practicable given the City’s primary mission to provide water supply to the Portland metropolitan area

- Provide habitat improvements for the covered species that are proportional and commensurate with water system impacts
- Clarify the quality and quantity of water needed to meet ESA requirements so that the City can plan more effectively for water supply to meet customer needs
- Define the City’s financial obligation for ESA and Clean Water Act (CWA) compliance so that the City can plan for and manage the resulting impacts to ratepayers
- Achieve reasonable certainty about the City’s ESA and CWA regulatory obligations for the term of the HCP and meet all related legal requirements
- Implement the HCP in a manner consistent with City of Portland policy (e.g., City Council Resolutions 37715 [1998] and 35894 [2000])
- Select habitat conservation measures that are feasible, can be implemented, and are compatible with ongoing operation of the water system to meet customer needs
- Provide reasonable flexibility to adapt to changing conditions, new information, and improved scientific understanding
- Work in cooperation with all the public and private entities involved in recovering Sandy River fish populations, particularly the organizations involved in the Sandy River Basin Partners
- Leverage the opportunities to use City investments to foster larger-scale improvements in habitat conditions across the Sandy River Basin
- Implement scientifically sound strategies that provide a meaningful contribution to recovery of the four primary covered fish species

The City’s HCP Goals for fall Chinook, spring Chinook, winter steelhead, and coho are based on a common framework: improve the habitat for the species in the Bull Run River to the maximum extent practicable, and improve additional “offsite” habitat in the larger Sandy River Basin to further mitigate the species-specific impacts of the City’s water system. This approach reflects the economic and operational constraints associated with continuing to operate a water system for a major metropolitan area while sharing the river with these fish species.

HCP Goals for chum salmon and eulachon—covered species—and for the other species addressed in the HCP are based primarily on impacts that may occur incidental to covered activities, including as part of implementing the conservation measures. These goals are defined using currently available information about the foreseeable impacts.

6.2 HCP Objectives

The City's conservation approach, as described in Chapter 2, led to the development of two layers of habitat-based objectives for this HCP. The first layer is comprised of HCP Objectives described in this chapter. These HCP Objectives apply the HCP Goals to the Bull Run Watershed and to the geographic areas envisioned for the offsite Sandy River Basin measures in Chapter 7. The HCP Objectives were used to develop the habitat conservation measures presented in Chapter 7. The HCP Objectives are the following:

Bull Run Watershed

- Provide instream flows in the lower Bull Run River to improve existing conditions for the four primary covered fish species
- Provide water temperature conditions in the lower Bull Run River that are equivalent to natural pre-water-system conditions and in compliance with the Sandy River Basin Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and water quality management plan
- Improve instream habitat conditions in the lower Bull Run River
- Protect riparian forest conditions on City land along the lower Bull Run River
- Ensure access for fish into lower Bull Run River tributaries
- Avoid or minimize periodic temporary disturbance of habitat (for species covered or addressed in the HCP) that might otherwise result from routine operation, maintenance, repair of water supply facilities, or incidental land management
- Avoid or minimize periodic temporary disturbance of habitat (for species covered or addressed in the HCP) that might otherwise result from implementation of the HCP habitat conservation measures
- Protect instream flows in the Little Sandy River

Sandy River Basin

- Protect and improve instream and riparian habitat conditions for the primary covered fish species at targeted locations in the larger Sandy River Basin, particularly locations affected by covered activities or locations where benefits would offset impacts that are expected to continue to occur in the Bull Run River
- Provide habitat improvements offsite to specifically benefit spring Chinook spawning because of the constraints limiting spawning in the lower Bull Run River
- Provide habitat benefits offsite to specifically benefit fall Chinook, a species for which the Sandy River Basin population is particularly important to the Lower Columbia Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU)
- Avoid or minimize periodic temporary disturbance of habitat (for species both covered or addressed in the HCP) that might otherwise result from implementation of the HCP habitat conservation measures

- Choose locations and project types for offsite conservation measures based on the best available current information about habitat conditions, role in productivity of the four primary covered species, and the habitat factors limiting productivity
- Focus on private lands where incentives and requirements for habitat protection by the landowner are otherwise limited
- Prioritize projects that provide the most benefit per dollar paid by the City's ratepayers
- Assist the Sandy River Basin Partners with implementation of the Sandy River Basin Restoration Strategy

6.3 Measurable Habitat Objectives

The City has also identified Measurable Habitat Objectives. These Measurable Habitat Objectives—at least one for each HCP habitat conservation measure—are included in the HCP's second layer of objectives and are presented in Chapter 9. These objectives were used to define the amount and types of habitat targeted for improvement. They also help focus the monitoring and adaptive management programs.