



Photo: Jason Ransom, NPS

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**Wildlife managers are seeking a partnership with forest landowners for the recovery of fishers in Washington State.**

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## **Voluntary agreements protect fishers and forest landowners**

**T**HE FISHER, A MEMBER OF THE WEASEL FAMILY that all but disappeared from Pacific Northwest forests during the last century, is making a comeback in Washington State. In 2008, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and federal wildlife managers worked together to reestablish the species in Olympic National Park. Since winter 2015, additional reintroductions of the species have also taken place in the Cascade Mountain Range.

In a separate action, the Northern District Court of California recently overturned the 2016 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) decision not to list the fisher as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). The result is that the fisher is once again a candidate for listing under ESA, and the USFWS is required to re-evaluate the proposed listing rule by September 2019.

Regardless of the federal agency's decision, wildlife managers continue seeking help from forest landowners to work as partners in the recovery of fishers in Washington State. To promote this partnership, WDFW administers a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) for fisher, enrolling non-federal landowners interested in fisher conservation.

### **How a CCAA works**

A CCAA is a voluntary agreement whereby landowners agree to help promote conservation of a species that may later become listed under the ESA. In return, landowners can receive assurances against additional land-use restrictions should that species ever become listed for protection under federal law.

Fishers also benefit from this type of agreement because conservation measures outlined in a CCAA are designed to encourage landowners to support fisher reintroduction and recovery efforts.

### **Requirements under a CCAA**

While most reintroduced fishers have stayed within the national parks and national forests where they were released, wildlife managers want to provide protection for any that may move onto non-federal lands. As part of a CCAA, landowners agree to conservation measures such as:

- Work with WDFW wildlife managers to monitor fishers and their dens in the event a den site is found on their property.
- Avoid harming or disturbing fishers and their young associated with active denning sites (March to September).
- Report den sites and sick, injured, or dead fishers on their property.

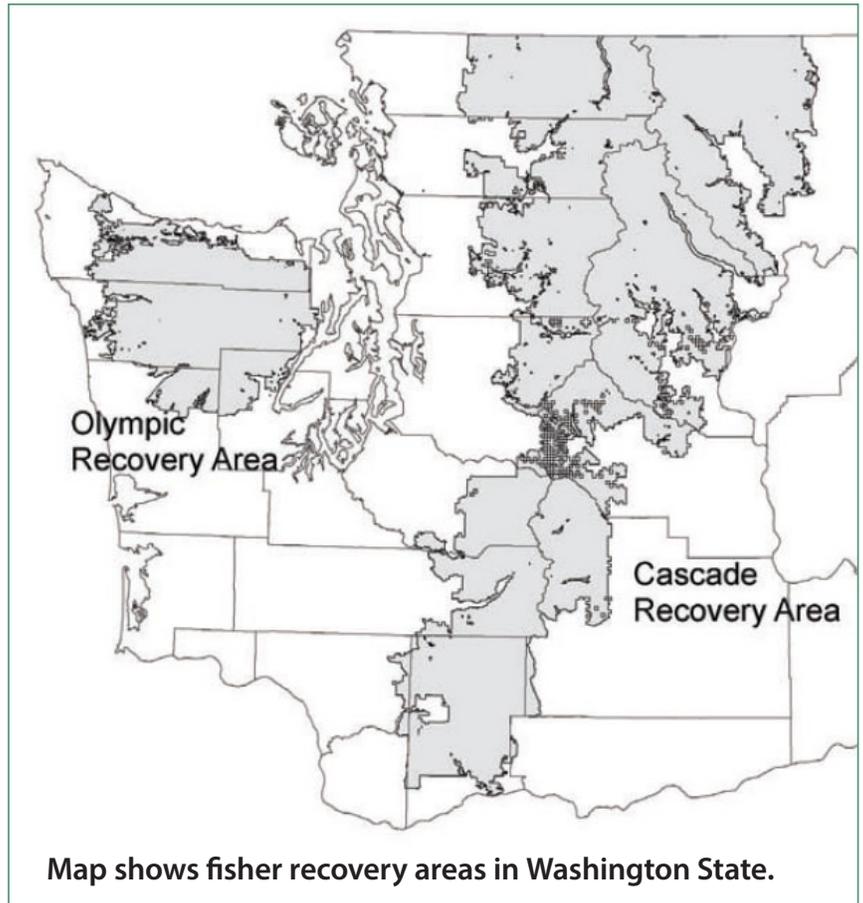
Landowners can enter into a CCAA only until such time as fishers are listed under the federal ESA. For more information about enrolling in the program, please contact: Gary Bell at 360-902-2412, or Gary.Bell@dfw.wa.gov

### Bringing back the fisher

The fisher (*Pekania pennanti*) is one of the larger members of the weasel family and is found only in North America's boreal and temperate forests. Through excessive trapping and habitat loss, fishers were eliminated from Washington State by the mid-1900s.

In 1998, the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission listed the fisher as endangered in the state.

Recovery of the species is now well under way. From 2008-10, WDFW worked with the National Park Service and other partners to reestablish the species, relocating a total of 90 fishers from central British Columbia to Olympic National Park. Beginning in winter 2015, additional releases of 73 fishers have been conducted on federal land in the South Cascades, and 26 fishers



Map shows fisher recovery areas in Washington State.

have been released in the North Cascades, with more planned in the next few years.

Since the 1940s, wildlife managers in 27 states and provinces have translocated fishers 30 times to reestablish local populations within the fisher's historical range. Twenty-two (73%) of these translocations are known to have been successful and two others are still being evaluated.



J. Hoder photo