



**Annual Compliance Report
for the Yamhill County Habitat Conservation Plan
for Fender's Blue Butterfly and Kincaid's Lupine**



October 2025

Yamhill County Habitat Conservation Plan

2025 Annual Compliance Report

Background

Yamhill County (County) maintains the right-of-way easements along County roads for the purposes of public safety and optimum travel conditions. Some of the road maintenance activities have the potential to affect Fender's blue butterfly (*Icaricia icarioides fenderi*), Kincaid's lupine (*Lupinus oreganus*), and their habitat as defined under the Endangered Species Act (ESA, 16 U.S.C.5131-1344, 87 Stat. 887). In March 2014, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) issued an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) TE10049B-0 pursuant to Section 10 (a)(1)(B) of the ESA. The ITP includes County Road and right-of-way maintenance activities. The ITP is conditional upon implementation of the Yamhill County Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP; Cardno ENTRIX 2013). The HCP provides measures to minimize the adverse effect from these essential services on Fender's blue butterfly and Kincaid's lupine.

This report records actions completed during the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025 (July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025) under the 30-year ITP issued to Yamhill County for Fender's blue butterfly on March 14, 2014 (TE10049B-0). As part of HCP implementation, the County is required to submit an annual report to USFWS documenting the following:

- A description of conservation measures initiated, continued, or completed during the previous year, and a description of conservation measures projected to be implemented during the upcoming year.
- A summary of findings, results, and conclusions of monitoring activities, and a projection of monitoring needs for subsequent years.
- A tabulation and description of funds expended during the previous year, and a projection of funds to be expended during the upcoming year.
- Other recommendations if any, such as minor modifications or amendments to the HCP document.

Conservation measures during FY 2024-2025, and projected for FY 2025-2026

Following is a description of conservation measures initiated, continued, or completed during FY 2024-2025, and a description of conservation measures projected to be implemented during FY 2025-2026:

- In 2024, Yamhill County and the Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District established a shared position titled *Native and Invasive Plant Specialist* to support the implementation of roadside vegetation management and habitat restoration initiatives described in the HCP. This position replaces the former seasonal intern model, providing a long-term and sustainable framework for monitoring, data acquisition, and adaptive management. The continuity offered by a permanent staff member enhances data integrity and institutional knowledge, eliminating the need for recurring annual training on HCP monitoring protocols and field methodologies. The *Native and Invasive Plant Specialist* is familiar with established monitoring sites and historical data trends, which improves the accuracy and consistency of ongoing assessments. When performing duties under County responsibility, the position operates under the supervision of the Vegetation Management Supervisor.
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- The County adhered to the measures described in the HCP for maintenance in the existing Threatened and Endangered Species Special Maintenance Zones (T&E SMZ) and in the newly created T&E SMZs around the seven Kincaid's lupine locations that were identified as being occupied by Fenders blue butterflies (during the butterfly dispersal survey). This will be continued in FY 2025-2026.
- The County adhered to the requirements of the HCP in non-occupied sites by refraining from adverse management activities such as application of broad-spectrum and broadleaf specific herbicides or spring/early summer mowing and brush cutting that would have harmed the lupines. This will be continued in FY 2025-2026.
- The County again contracted with Dr. Paul Hammond to perform Fender's blue butterfly surveys at sites not covered by USFWS funding within Yamhill County during June of 2025. Surveys followed USFWS protocols established for Fender's blue butterfly and the HCP monitoring plan was followed. This will be continued in FY 2025-2026.
- The County will conduct a field visit with species experts and members of the Habitat Conservation Plan Implementation Committee (HCPIC) in May or June of 2026. This visit will continue to be used by the County to help formulate its habitat restoration plans in the T&E SMZs and Deer Creek Park as described in the HCP and ITP.
- The County continues to clear Himalayan blackberries at Deer Creek Park and other HCP areas, which allowed for vigorous lupine growth observed at some sites by Dr. Hammond. During next fiscal year, the County will cut back blackberries, scotch broom and trees in the right-of-way that shade lupines. The County has also continued to mow HCP sites between August 1 and April 14 and will continue to spray tall oat grass in the T&E SMZs in order to expose Kincaid's lupines to more sunlight. These management practices will continue in accordance with SMZ work plans and as recommended by Dr. Hammond.
- The County added more signage for lupines.
- This Annual Report will be reviewed by the HCPIC, and their comments will be integrated within it.

Findings, results, and conclusions of monitoring activities during FY 2024-2025 and projected for FY 2025-2026

Cool, cloudy, and rainy weather conditions during May and June once again delayed the Fender's blue butterfly flight season by approximately two weeks. As a result, butterfly numbers appeared lower in north-facing and lower-elevation sites but remained near normal in south-facing and higher-elevation areas. Based on Dr. Hammond's surveys conducted in May and June 2025, results indicate both notable successes and areas requiring continued management attention. The County's efforts to reduce dense stands of brush and small trees, combined with targeted applications of a grass-specific herbicide to control exotic tall oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), proved effective in improving habitat conditions and promoting an increase in Kincaid's lupine populations. However, additional vegetation removal and management are still needed to allow Kincaid's lupine to fully establish across all sites. Dr. Hammond recommended expanding these treatments to other areas where lupine growth remains suppressed, and the County plans to continue implementing these management actions in the upcoming year

The Deer Creek Park site exhibited a very low number of Fender's blue butterflies during this year's survey. This decline does not appear to be related to any change in the County's management practices; in fact, the Kincaid's lupine population at the site has continued to expand. The County will

follow Dr. Hammond’s recommendations to increase chemical and mechanical control of encroaching vegetation and invasive weeds to maintain and enhance habitat conditions that support continued lupine growth and future butterfly recovery.

A continued decline in Fender’s blue butterfly populations was observed at the Moores and Gopher Valley sites, where adverse weather conditions at lower elevations are suspected to be contributing factors. In contrast, monitoring data from other areas of Yamhill County, such as the Oak Ridge site, indicate signs of population recovery. These patterns highlight the importance of continued habitat management and long-term monitoring to evaluate population responses to site conditions and inform adaptive management strategies in future years.

Dr. Hammond noted that the sites along Moores Valley Road and Old Moores Valley Road appear to experience a cooler microclimate in the spring, resulting in Kincaid’s lupine growth being approximately two weeks behind that of sites on Oak Ridge Road, located roughly 1.5 miles away. While lupine populations at these sites are performing well, Fender’s blue butterfly remains highly sensitive to variabilities in weather conditions with population fluctuations, which may contribute to observed variations in butterfly numbers across these locations.

Dr. Hammond’s 2025 survey is attached.

Funds expended during FY 2024-2025, and projected for FY 2025-2026

Below is a tabulation of funds spent during FY 2024-25 by the County on HCP activities.

Expenses	Cost
County Personnel (Vegetation Manager) and Materials for Maintenance	\$26,000
Dr. Hammond survey (\$6000)	\$6,500
Reserve for Future Obligations	\$10,000
Total HCP Expenses	\$42,500

The County Public Works Department expended over \$26,000 from the road fund in the 2024-25 fiscal year for labor (including mowing, brush-cutting, tree removal, weed spraying, etc.), equipment, and material costs in improving habitat environments.

It is estimated that \$26,000 will be expended during FY 2025-26 on continued restoration and mitigation, as required by the HCP, section 7.10. Most of the FY 2025-26 expenditure will be to continue developing and implementing restoration and mitigation plans, which include utilizing the expertise of Dr. Paul Hammond once again to survey lupines and butterflies in the Deer Creek Park mitigation site, and in other sites in accordance with the HCP’s species status monitoring requirements. The County will continue to implement his suggestions for mowing, cutting, and spraying to improve the roadside habitat, and release more and invigorated lupine populations for butterfly egg laying.

Yamhill County Public Works, under Director Mark Lago, continues to enhance its vegetation management capabilities with equipment such as the recently acquired sprayer truck, used throughout the County for invasive and target species control. In 2025, the department has expanded

its efforts under the supervision of Vegetation Management Supervisor Nick Wilkinson, with support from Technician Tracy Womack. These efforts are conducted in partnership with the Yamhill Soil & Water Conservation District through a shared *Native and Invasive Plant Specialist* position, providing more consistent and efficient management across County and District projects. The department also continues its collaboration with Parks Manager Travis Pease, including management of the Deer Creek Park Mitigation site, to support habitat restoration and species conservation objectives.

Other recommendations

The County is currently coordinating with the Fish and Wildlife Service to explore the potential removal or reduction of two sites from the Habitat Conservation Plan's Species Management Zones (SMZs) on County right-of-way: Meadow Lake Road and Hill Road North. Both sites support limited Kincaid's lupine populations, and Meadow Lake Road in particular presents significant safety hazards due to overgrown brush and grass that cannot be mowed or brushcut from April through August. These conditions create elevated risks for motorists, pedestrians, and County staff conducting roadside monitoring.

Hill Road North, a gravel roadway, contained only a single documented lupine plant during the 2025 survey, and historical herbicide applications by an adjacent landowner appear to have further reduced the population. Following review of this summer's survey results, Dr. Hammond supports the removal of these sites from the SMZ program, noting that the action would have minimal impact on HCP objectives. The FWS has acknowledged the request and will review the HCP to determine acceptability before the next restriction period.
