

## **The Feasibility of Reintroducing Fishers (*Martes pennanti*) in Washington.**

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Reintroduction efforts have been effective at reestablishing the fisher (*Martes pennanti*) throughout much of its historical range. In Washington, fishers are extremely rare or extirpated as a result of historical overtrapping, habitat loss and fragmentation, poisoning and predator control campaigns, and incidental captures in traps set for other species. The listing of the fisher as a state endangered species in 1998 has prompted an investigation into the feasibility of successfully reintroducing them in Washington. A fisher science team was assembled which designed and provided oversight for the feasibility study. The geographic scope of the study was limited to the Olympic Peninsula and the Cascade Range of Washington, where substantial areas of low-to mid-elevation, late-successional forest habitat still exist. A habitat suitability assessment was conducted in the two areas to determine if sufficient amounts of suitable habitat existed to support a reintroduced population. The results indicated that large amounts of habitat exist on the Olympic Peninsula and in two locations in the western Cascades. The largest and most contiguous area of habitat identified was on national park and national forest lands on the Olympic Peninsula. Additional, finer-scale analyses were conducted on this habitat. Population modeling, using the PATCH model, indicated that the Olympic Peninsula could support a reintroduced population. The feasibility study also includes an assessment of the potential prey base for fishers on the Olympic Peninsula, an evaluation of potential interspecific interactions, the suitability and availability of source populations, a review of fisher reintroductions, and identification of issues and concerns presented by stakeholders, permitting processes and legal requirements.