

# MEETING SUMMARY

## WESTERN OREGON STATE FORESTS HCP SCOPING TEAM

Tuesday, November 5, 2019, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Oregon Department of Forestry, 2600 State St, Salem, OR

### ATTENDEES

**Participants:** Julie Firman (ODFW), Jim Muck (NOAA Fisheries), Ken Phippen (NOAA Fisheries), Nick Palazzotto (ODF), Mark Meleason (ODF), Rich Szlemp (USFWS), Brian Pew (ODF), Ryan Singleton (DSL), Josh Seeds (DEQ) – *by phone*

**Technical Consultant and Guests:** Troy Rahmig (ICF), Melissa Klungle (ICF) – *by phone*, Mike Wilson (ODF), Robbie Lefebvre (ODF)

**Facilitation Team:** Cindy Kolomechuk (ODF), Debra Nudelman (Kearns & West), Sylvia Ciborowski (Kearns & West)

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Deb Nudelman (Kearns & West) welcomed members. Meeting participants introduced themselves.

Deb reviewed the agenda, which includes: 1) Agency updates from Scoping Team (ST) members, 2) Update on stakeholder engagement, 3) Debrief October 9 Field Tour, 4) Present Forest Goals and Objectives, 5) Review Updates to the Biological Goals and Objectives (BGOs), 6) Terrestrial Habitat Model Update, 7) Overview of Riparian Strategy Approach, 8) Confirm topics for Steering Committee (SC) update, and 9) Approach going forward, next steps and summary.

Deb asked members for comments on the September 3, 2019 ST meeting summary. Members had no edits or changes.

Cindy Kolomechuk (ODF) reflected on the past ST meeting. At the last meeting, ST members had a brief overview of Chapter 2 and the terrestrial models. Today's meeting focuses on a high-level review of comments on the BGOs and on the process for developing the riparian strategy. The next ST meeting will include more detail on the BGOs and further discussion on the Chapter 2 edits and review.

## **AGENCY UPDATES**

Members provided the following updates relevant to the Western Oregon State Forests HCP process:

**Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF):** 1) The Linn County trial is ongoing. 2) There is interest in keeping the HCP development as a positive process, and the Board of Forestry will provide more direction to the ODF team as to how to do so at the Board of Forestry (BOF) meeting on November 6.

**NOAA Fisheries:** 1) November 21 is the end of the continuum resolution, which could affect federal agencies' employees ability to work. 2) Ken Phippen will be retiring in December. It is not clear yet if and/or how his position will be filled. Jim will continue to represent NOAA Fisheries on the Scoping Team. 3) NOAA Fisheries will likely accept the petition of Spring Chinook, which will be followed by a year of analysis that will explore whether there are two separate species.

**USFWS:** An announcement on the fisher species will appear in the Federal Register this week. It is expected that the red tree vole and marten announcements will be made in December.

## **WESTERN OREGON HCP STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT UPDATE**

Deb noted that a meeting open to the public was held on October 15 at Portland State University. The members of the public who attended were engaged and asked good questions. Additional recent stakeholder engagement meetings include:

- Update to the State Forests Advisory Committee (SFAC)
- Small group discussion with conservation groups
- Small group discussion with industry representatives

## **DEBRIEF OCTOBER 9 FIELD TOUR**

Cindy provided a description of the October 9 field tour, which included an overview of the history and use of the landscape; riparian strategies that ODF currently has for streams, roads and steep slopes; and ongoing research in the forests.

Cindy asked for reflections on the field tour. Members shared the following:

- Appreciated the level of planning and organization that went into the field tour and the commitment of staff to take the time to attend.
- Appreciated meeting the ODF local forestry staff and making a personal connection.
- Useful to see riparian zones from above.
- Look forward to a potential field trip to focus on terrestrial strategies.

## FOREST GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Brian Pew (ODF) provided context for the forest goals and objectives. The agency set up a process internally with forest field staff to try to develop goals, objectives, and actions for the forest (similar to the structure that was used to develop HCP biological goals and objectives for the species). The forest goals and objectives are meant to show how ODF would manage the forest. They also help set rules and context for developing timber objectives and strategies.

Robbie Lefebvre (ODF) walked through the forest goals and objectives document, and noted:

- The definitions used in the BGOs (conserve, maintain, enhance, restore) will be used in these goals and objectives.
- The statements are rooted in the requirements of Greatest Permanent Value (GPV). They reflect social, economic and environmental goals and objectives.
- Social goals: Provided context for some **social goals**:
  - Objective 1.2 includes a way to measure the objective (percent of land available for public use).
  - Objective 1.3: ODF's recreation program is getting increasingly more use, so it is important to foster and enhance recreation.
  - Objective 1.4: The right to clean air and water is a both a social and environmental goal.
- Environmental goals: Provided context for some **environmental goals**:
  - Objective 2.5: This will be more important in some stands than others.
  - Objective 2.3: This language is straight out of the GPV rule.
- Economic goals: Provided context for some **economic goals**:
  - Objective 3.1: This language comes from a BOF objective.

## Discussion

ST members discussed the forest goals and objectives and made the following comments and suggestions:

- Appreciate the definitions and suggest making the terms compatible throughout the HCP.

*Discussion on Goal 1 and its objectives:*

- Objective 1.1: Recommend clarifying what “other activities” means.
- Objective 1.2: It is important to be able to explain the benefits of forests to Oregonians. Many see recreation as a great benefit, including hunting, fishing, hiking, photography,

etc. It is important to capture the story of forest use. The BLM document explains uses well.

*Discussion on Goal 2 and its objectives:*

- Objective 2.3: Should focus on minimizing *the impacts* of extreme weather events (not on reducing the number of events).
- Objective 2.8: Why is the word “restore” used here, but not in other objectives under Goal 2?
  - ODF noted that this language is in the GPV rule. The term restore is appropriate in areas of the forest where restoration is part of the strategic plan but may not be appropriate in other contexts. The only time that the term “restore” is used in ODF rules is in aquatics. The forest goals and objectives apply to the forest broadly, not just to the covered species under the HCP. They will appear in the Forest Management Plan (FMP) as well.
- Objective 2.2: Maintaining carbon sequestration may not be very meaningful. Does it mean that you want to maintain the same number of trees on the landscape? “Maintaining” by itself does not seem like a very meaningful objective.
- Goal 2:
  - Concern about keeping “uncertainty in the face of climate change” in the goal language. Some may react negatively if it appears that the entire environmental goal is about climate change. Climate change is important but may be more suitable for the objectives. Additionally, certain forests may actually receive benefit from climate change. ODF may want to consider how climate change will affect its forests both positively and negatively.
  - ODF noted that climate change is in the goal language in response to the Governor’s direction that all policy decisions should include climate change as a central theme.
  - Important to consider if state forests are a source of flux or a sink for carbon?
  - Might consider putting the climate change reference into Objective 2.3.
- Objective 2.3: Important to clarify that fire resiliency is part of this.

*Discussion on Goal 3 and its objectives:*

- Objective 3.2: ODF is supposed to provide funding to local authorities, regardless of whether it is a forest objective. Suggest reframing the language to show that ODF desires to go beyond what it is mandated to do.

- Goal 3: Consider whether and how to reference the HCP permit area and permit term in the goal language.
- Objective 3.4: Consider updating Objective 1.1 to reference forest products and other activities so that it is parallel to Objective 3.4.
- Recreational activities provide a lot of indirect revenue to local counties. It is important to note that proceeds from timber revenue are not the only way that counties benefit from forest activities and forest use.
- Objective 3.2: Suggest changing “funding” to “revenue.”

## **BIOLOGICAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Troy provided a high-level overview of the process to develop the biological goals and objectives (BGOs). He also reviewed comments made by the public and stakeholders on the BGOs. His presentation highlighted:

- Overview of the process to develop the BGOs.
- The ODF/ICF team is still working on edits and comments and hopes to have recommended modifications for ST consideration prior to the November 20 ST meeting. The November 20 meeting will be an opportunity for further discussion on the BGOs.
- Overview of comments received:
  - Conservation groups generally agree with the approach to increase quantity and quality of habitat. There are questions about the specifics of how the approach would be implemented.
  - Appreciation for having definitions of key terms. There were comments and discussion on the definition of “maintain.” There is desire for a definition of “persist.”
  - There were questions about the habitat metrics for individual species and a desire for more clarification or detail on the metrics.
  - There were questions about whether ODF can influence water quantity and whether the agency should try to commit to enhancing it.

## **Discussion**

- Members reflected on the comments from stakeholders about water quantity and remembered that there were several reasons for including water quantity within the BGOs. They noted:

- Forest management practices can impact water quantity, particularly as it relates to stream temperature and aquatic habitat. There may be a need to increase awareness about this link.
- Question about what kind of analysis is underway to analyze the effect of forest management activities on water quantity. Fast growing, dense stands tend to have an impact on water quantity.
- Climate change considerations make the topic of water quantity especially important.
- There are many studies showing the link between water quantity and forest management practices. The questions are: how do we measure and monitor water quantity? How do forest practices impact water quantity? It can be very difficult to monitor sources of impacts. We may be able to include water quantity in the objectives and note that it will not be monitored. There may also be a proxy metric to use (example: Velma model).
- ICF added that the modeling may help us to come up with a sampling strategy that would be economically feasible to address the issue of difficult monitoring. ICF can look at the places that look like they would be subject to stressors of low flow and do focused analysis in those places.

#### Next Steps:

- ICF will send the ST a track changes version of the BGOs, with notes about recommended changes based on public input.

## **TERRESTRIAL HABITAT MODEL UPDATE**

- Troy provided an updated on terrestrial habitat modeling and noted that:
  - The ICF-ODF team has been refining the habitat models based on ST feedback and additional feedback from ODFW. They will do additional validation and calibration of the models to see how the outputs of the models relate to published models on the species.
  - There will also be expert review of the models. The ODF/ICF Team is considering a group of reviewers to review the methodology and adjust the models accordingly. Nick Palazzotto (ODF) added that the goal is to hear if reviewers think the best variables were chosen in the model. The reviewers would also provide specific suggestions on weights for the variables.
  - It will also be important to make sure that the variables from the terrestrial habitat modeling are integrated into the policy level timber-harvest modeling. This

integration would allow the group to see how habitat is expected to change over time.

- ODF staff provided an update on the status of timber harvest modeling.
- Members had questions about what the outputs of timber modeling will be (ex: what kind of values will be come out of the model?). ODF noted that the first model runs will be higher-level. Later runs will have the ability to provide much finer reports. The model will provide results of stand-based inventory and can show outcomes spatially on the landscape and over time.
  - Members suggested showing the model results based on EUs and over time. If not too onerous, it would also be helpful to show results at a more refined scale (e.g., by independent population). There will be a need to balance model results that are at the right scale.
  - Some populations only occur within a given area. It will be ideal to show habitat changes in the range where the population actually exists.
- Members noted that the modeling in NEPA will need to analyze timber harvest under both the no-action alternative and the proposed HCP alternative. There may also be a desire to analyze other alternatives.

## **OVERVIEW OF RIPARIAN STRATEGY APPROACH**

Troy provided a high-level overview of the process to develop the riparian strategy. He noted:

- The BGOs will act as the framework to develop the riparian strategy.
- There are three components to the riparian strategy: road network management, stream enhancement projects, and riparian buffers.
  - Road network management: Road network management includes efforts to maintain and enhance water quality through road system management (wet weather road use and drainage), proper location of new roads, and road decommissioning. There are also opportunities to improve fish passage through culvert replacement. The HCP will memorialize the road network management activities that ODF is currently doing that contribute to the riparian strategy.
    - Discussion:
      - The details of road management will be very important. The HCP should lay out the road management strategies needed to meet HCP goals.
      - Suggest differentiating which conservation actions are mandatory in every situation in the HCP. It would be useful to explain the best

management practices that people on the ground can select from to help implement the HCP. There are many best practices that are useful, but they are only appropriate on a case-by-case basis depending on the geography or specific area of the forest. The focus should be on whether the on-the-ground decision helps meet the outcome (rather than necessarily prescribing the techniques to use in any given situation). The BLM process used this approach.

- NOAA fish passage guidance and ODFW fish passage guidance have different nuances. Will need to look at that.
  - ODF already does a lot of the road network management actions. The HCP will help to capture what the agency is already implementing.
  - ODF has a roads manual that we can draw from to help develop the riparian strategy.
- Stream enhancement: Stream enhancement strategies include wood enhancement projects, riparian habitat management, and improved fish passage.
    - Discussion:
      - Suggestion to expand “wood enhancement projects” to include other ways to do in-stream habitat enhancement.
      - Suggest identifying how many projects will be implemented per basin.
      - There are many different strategies that we can enact to meet riparian goals. The question is how to “count” them in the HCP.
  - Riparian buffers: The riparian buffer strategy essentially seeks to answer: How big should the buffers be? Where will they be applied?
    - There is ODF data and TerrainWorks model outputs that will help inform the riparian buffer strategy. The team will do some extrapolation from the modeling where there is not coverage.
    - It will be important to memorialize the process that ODF uses to inform the buffer strategy.
    - The ST will engage in conversation on what should happen inside of riparian buffers to help enhance habitat.
    - TerrainWorks modeling:



- Troy reviewed the TerrainWorks model variables, which include: intrinsic potential data; stream size, orientation and topographic shading; areas with high landslide or debris flow potential; stream segments sensitive to thermal loading; stream segments at risk of limited summer flow; and key floodplain/off-channel areas.
- Troy reviewed a map of areas where TerrainWorks modeling has been completed. For areas that are not modeled, they can consider whether extrapolating the results to those areas is sufficient.
- Troy reviewed a list of considerations to help inform variation in buffer widths, including fish bearing versus salmon bearing streams; fish bearing versus non-fish bearing streams; stream size and orientation; location in the watershed; locations with high debris flow or landslide potential; and locations critical for covered species.
- Members commented on riparian buffers:
  - In any timber sale, site specific data is often needed to determine if riparian buffers should be implemented. It is difficult to make variable buffer decisions without site specific data; and we rarely get the site-specific data that we need to make those decisions. Troy noted that there will be some built-in decision points to allow for variable decisions within a standardized framework.
- The conversation on the riparian strategy will continue at future ST meetings.

#### Overall Discussion

- ODF feels that its current practices meet legal requirements. At the same time, the HCP provides a way to continue conservation into the future. As the group continues developing the riparian strategy, it is more likely that the strategy will look more like the one used in the Elliott forest.
- It will be important to consider how the riparian strategy can meet litigation challenges. The BLM example shows how to have a process and end product that is legally defensible.
- It may be useful to look at other examples of processes that have been successfully completed.

Next steps include calls with ODFW and NOAA Fisheries.

## **NEXT STEPS AND SUMMARY**

- The next ST meetings are scheduled for:
  - November 20, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Salem. This meeting will include a report out on the riparian strategy and on conversations with NOAA Fisheries and ODFW.
  - December 3, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Salem. The majority of the December meeting will focus on the riparian strategy.
- The next Steering Committee is scheduled for December 6

## **ACTION ITEMS**

The following action items were identified throughout the meeting:

BGOs:

- ICF – Email updated BGOs to ST.

Riparian Strategy:

- HCP Project Team – hold individual calls with ODFW and NOAA Fisheries ST members.