MEETING SUMMARY

WESTERN OREGON STATE FORESTS HCP SCOPING TEAM

Tuesday, December 3, 2019, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

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

ATTENDEES

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

Technical Consultant and Guests: Troy Rahmig (ICF), Melissa Klungle (ICF) – *by phone*, Randy Smith (ODF), Mike Wilson (ODF), Gordon Reeves (OSU)

Facilitation Team: Cindy Kolomechuk (ODF), Sylvia Ciborowski (Kearns & West)**,** Michelle Bardini (Kearns & West)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Sylvia Ciborowski (Kearns & West) welcomed members. Meeting participants introduced themselves.

Sylvia reviewed the agenda, which includes: 1) Agency updates from Scoping Team (ST) members, 2) TerrainWorks Modeling Presentation, 3) Review Riparian Buffer Strategy and Identify Future Work, 4) Conservation Strategy Timeline, 5) Review Revised HCP 2020 Schedule, 6) Confirm topics for Steering Committee (SC) update, and 7) Approach going forward, next steps and summary.

Cindy Kolomechuk (ODF) reflected on the past ST meeting. At the last meeting, ST members reviewed Chapter 2 of the HCP and received updates on Chapter 1 and 3, learned about the beginnings of the riparian buffer strategy, and reviewed stakeholder feedback to the Biological Goals and Objectives (BGOs). Cindy mentioned the BGOs have been updated to incorporate the feedback received. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) had a final revision that the ST will review and discuss at the end of the meeting

AGENCY UPDATES

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

Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF): 1) ODF plans to appeal the Linn County case ruling. 2) ODF has several meetings with Board of Forestry (BOF) members scheduled through next spring to talk about the HCP.

ODFW: The Fish and Wildlife Commission is making a decision this week on whether to list murrelet as a covered species in response to a litigation. More information is to come.

TERRAINWORKS MODELING PRESENTATION: DOWNSCALING CLIMATE MODELS FOR AQUATIC BUFFERS

Gordon (Gordie) Reeves, Oregon State University (OSU), presented on TerrainWorks Modeling and downscaling climate models for aquatic buffers to better understand how and where to respond to climate change.

Key points of the presentation included:

- The impacts of climate change will vary because there is variation in the landscape.
- Presented modeling of water temperatures in the southern portion of the Pacific Northwest that showed a lot of variation in water temperatures based on location.
- Influence of riparian vegetation on water temperature: Climate change effects on water temperature can be offset through shading and prioritizing warm water areas for restoration.
- In coastal areas, there will likely be an increase in precipitation in the winter due to climate change, resulting in higher flow levels in winter and lower flow levels in summer. There is a need to displace high flows into channels to offset climate change effects. The movement of water into channels will likely create additional habitat for juvenile fish.
- More landslides are expected to occur as a result of high flows and increased precipitation.
    - Wood causes a landslide to behave differently; wood slows the landslides and piles up when it hits the flat ground. Having wood along those channels is critical to change the nature of the landscape.
    - Suggest focusing on quality of landslides rather than quantity; landslides can be positive and be building blocks for future good habitat. Recommended focusing on the ecological processes and responding to them in a way that benefits habitat and the environment.

- Highlighted the ecological importance of non-fish bearing streams and noted these areas are biological hot spots for amphibians as these streams provide valuable nutrients, increase the productivity of these area, and are important sources of wood. These streams have highest delivery of wood to the channels largely due to angle of entry.

- Presented example of how to get 80% of the potential wood delivery and explained 80% potential wood delivery can be reached in multiple ways by modifying buffers between fish bearing streams and non-fish bearing streams. There are multiple ways to configure buffers to meet the same objective.

    - Not all non-fish bearing streams have the same potential to deliver wood. We are able to determine how big the buffers need to be to get to a certain wood delivery goal.

    - The Pacific Northwest doesn't have a non-fish bearing stream network that is big enough for the desired wood delivery. There will need to be a combination of modifying buffers between fish bearing streams and non-fish bearing streams.

- Strategies and management actions do not need to be uniform across the landscape. There is potential to modify buffers based on landscape to get optimal wood delivery/recruitment.

- There is no "magic number" to how much wood is needed for habitat. It is important to implement a strategy, observe its effectiveness over time, and then make modifications. This modeling and information seek to inform ways to set up a productive landscape and environment for fish and wildlife regarding wood, landslides, and riparian areas.

- Encouraged the ST to use a term other than "riparian reserves" as management will need to be done in some of these areas to make the landscape as productive as possible.

- Uses of the modeling and information presented include climate change vulnerability assessments, modeling, monitoring, restoration prioritization, and collaborations.

- The HCP should recover diversity as a way to respond to climate change. Fish need diversity as they move into an uncertain future and they need a landscape that allows diversity to occur.

REVIEW RIPARIAN BUFFER STRATEGY AND IDENTIFY FUTURE WORK

Troy Rahmig (ICF) reviewed the riparian buffer strategy and approach and asked ST members to identify future work or additional information needed to develop the riparian buffer strategy. He explained we will need to consider how to use the TerrainWorks modeling as we develop the strategy and how to consider the high winter flows, low summer flows, areas vulnerable to stream temperature changes, areas for wood delivery and recruitment, etc. The TerrainWorks information and draft buffers are helpful tools to begin to build the strategy. The next step is to

look at the draft buffers, think about these buffers from an operational/management point of view, and ensure the buffers are capturing and incorporating the information in the TerrainWorks data.

The goal is to develop a basic and flexible riparian strategy that can be adjusted to meet the needs of specific areas. While strategies and management actions can be modified by area, we are striving for some consistency. We also will be creating ways to prioritize where, how, and when there are management actions on the landscape. Future work includes determining what information will be needed to prioritize an area or modify operations in an area.

Troy also noted the need to develop a more focused proposal for what will happen inside the riparian buffer. The interest is to develop standardized buffers while continuing to collect more data and information about the landscape to inform what modifications should be made.

ST members provided the following comments:

- There is a need to reconnect the floodplains through wood and open channels and to incorporate regional plans to meet those objectives.
- Consider alternative names to “riparian buffer” as management will be done in these areas.
- Riparian areas will need different strategies and will need to be managed in different ways. If the strategy for an area is to grow big tress, is there some simple criteria for how many big trees we need in a certain area? How far from the channel should big trees be grown? How will we determine how many trees are needed per stream mile?
    - The ODF-ICF team noted that it will be important to make an examination and initial determination, and then observe the effects over time and adjust management actions accordingly. Big trees should be distributed across the riparian area, not just next to the channel.
- Suggest thinning areas as needed and either taking wood out or dropping wood depending on the area. Recommend starting with a prescriptive activity and making exceptions when needed.
- Consider utilizing riparian plantation stands.
- Suggest hardwood management in buffers.
- It is important to be very specific and have a clear objective as part of the mitigation effort.
- It would be helpful to understand the percentage of wood delivery we might expect from this proposal. It’s beneficial to know where we are now and where we want to be. Strategic targets will inform where to make modifications.

    - Suggest conducting an analysis to understand the amount of wood the current proposal would get.

Troy then reviewed the updates made to the riparian buffer strategy proposal. Definitions for "Type F," "Type N," and "aquatic and transition zones" were added to enhance clarity and public understanding. Graphs of horizontal and slope distance were added to visually express the information. Additionally, three figures were included to illustrate the separate buffer strategies. These figures include: 1) Aquatic zone designation and riparian buffers on Type F streams, 2) Comparisons of stream buffers, and 3) Riparian buffer strategy.

ST members provided the following questions and comments on the draft riparian strategy and figures:

- Suggest adding a buffer for seasonal others in figure 2 and clarifying what happens if there is not high energy and debris flow. Need to create a figure of what seasonal others look like and how many are on the landscape.
- Update figure 3 to be small type N perennial.
- Update the equipment exclusion buffer in figure 3 to current standards.
- Suggest creating a figure 4 for small perennial Type N for degree flow and without degree flow.
- Suggest overlaying strategies to understand how much overlap is on the landscape and to understand the impact on the landscape from a harvest perspective.

Troy explained there have been discussions as to how tree height and the buffer spans across the landscape and what it looks like across the permit area. Troy asked the ST for input on where the buffer falls in respect to tree height. Strategically, how do we supplement buffers with other projects? Is there another way to approach this?

The ST provided the following comments and questions:

- What would be the distance needed to capture most of the wood from a landslide?
- When we make estimates, it's important to be close to what we currently have and build forward to prepare for the future. Transition zones help capture or mitigate what we may not be taking into account.
- Will the buffer be wider than what is presented in the strategy for specific locations where salamanders occur?
    - We know little about salamanders in the areas as sampling has not been completed. They are likely ubiquitous at the watershed level.
    - It is important to consider salamanders relationship and behavior towards fish. Suggest increasing the buffer for small perennial Type N, accordingly.

Cindy explained at the next ST meeting in January, the ST will look at the proposed riparian strategy and buffers, do an analysis on the wood delivery, and review how much we are capturing in the riparian buffer and can make modifications if needed. We will look at wood delivery from head water streams, get an idea of where we are currently, and approach the ST with options regarding how to move targets around. ST members agreed with the proposed approach.

Summary:

A summary of ST key discussion points, ideas, and next steps for the riparian strategy is as follows:

Additional analysis potential includes:

- Riparian plantation stands:
    - To inform potential thinning prescriptions in buffers
    - Easily identified by inventory and Lidar
    - Do we need full TerrainWorks analysis?
- Wide valley channel reconnection
    - Opportunities due to increased precipitation
    - We currently buffer to valley walls
- Hardwood management in buffers

Next steps:

- Determine what percentage of wood we are delivering with the current proposal
    - Population scale: Different species for dependent vs independent
    - Determine what are the mitigation activities needed to meet BGOs
- ODF to bring proposal on management in the riparian buffer
    - Eventually need to overlay riparian terrestrial
    - Length of HDFT (the length of protection depends on how much we want)

Take-aways:

- One size doesn't fit all in terms of ability to produce wood and its effects
- Where do we grow trees? What distance from the channel?
    - Criteria: x big trees by x area stream mile
- No action does not equal no effect

Direction:

- Need a one size buffer for Type F including management actions
    - Customization may occur in geographic specific areas, likely in headwaters
- Need a percent of seasonal others (N) within 500' of fish bearing streams
- Develop reasoning for the existing proposal and why we propose modifications

DISCUSS CHANGES TO THE BIOLOGICAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Cindy reminded members that they near-finalized the BGOs at the last ST meeting. Since the last meeting, DEQ suggested changing objective 1.3 to read "current conditions and long-term trends" to explain how water quality is measured. She reminded members that the SC will be reviewing the BGOs on Friday and will seek to approve them.

Josh Seeds (DEQ) explained he suggested adding "current status" to the objective because evaluating water quality involves understanding both current conditions and the trends overtime. A trend shows whether conditions are improving or worsening over a period of time. It is important to collect information in two areas: 1) Are we meeting water quality standards and 2) what direction is the water quality parameter? To answer these questions, it is important to have data on the status and the trend.

ST members discussed the proposed change to the BGOs. Highlights of the conversation include:

- It was clarified that the change would both establish a baseline and would track how status changes overtime.
- The change is focused on water quality parameters but takes into consideration biological outcomes for fish.
    - Suggestion to add information about fish in the objective. Others were hesitant to include fish population in objective 1.3. as the goal is habitat-based and we need to be consistent. The objective does reference table xx and ties it back into habitat.
- Conversation around how "current status" measured.
- Suggestion to use the term "current conditions" instead of "current status."
    - The ST reached consensus and objective 1.3 was updated to be "current conditions and long-term trends."

ST members reached consensus and agreed to have this updated version of the BGOs go to the SC for review.

REVIEW REVISED HCP 2020 SCHEDULE

Troy explained there will be two ST meetings a month beginning January 2020 through April 2020. One meeting will be to discuss and develop the aquatic strategy and the other will be to discuss and develop the terrestrial strategy. The ST meetings will be scheduled for the first and fourth Tuesday of the month. ST members were asked to let the project team know if they are unavailable on the fourth Tuesday.

ICF will send an updated HCP schedule out to ST for review.

CONFIRM TOPICS FOR STEERING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Topics for the December 6 SC meeting will include:

- Updates on ST progress and HCP work products to date
- Review and seek SC approval on updated BGOs
- Update on conservation strategy development

APPROACH GOING FORWARD, NEXT STEPS AND SUMMARY

- The next ST meetings are scheduled for:
    - January 7, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at ODF (Building C, Clatsop Room), Salem.
    - January 28, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at USFWS, Portland.
- The next Steering Committee is scheduled for December 6 at ICF, Portland.

ACTION ITEMS

The following action items were identified throughout the meeting:

- ICF: Send updated HCP 2020 schedule for ST review.
- Project Team: Schedule additional ST meetings the 1st and 4th Tuesdays of the month.
- ST: Let project team know if they are unavailable to meet on 1st and 4th Tuesdays of the month.
- ICF: Updated BGOs to include the update to objective 1.3