

MEETING SUMMARY

WESTERN OREGON STATE FORESTS HCP SCOPING TEAM MEETING

Tuesday, March 2, 2021, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

By Webinar/Video Conference

ATTENDEES

Participants: Rich Szlemp (USFWS), Jim Muck (NOAA Fisheries), Tere O'Rourke (NOAA Fisheries), Jeff Young (NOAA Fisheries), Mike Wilson (ODF), Nick Palazzotto (ODF), Sarah Dyrdaahl (ODF), Julie Firman (ODFW), Rod Krahmer (ODFW), Ryan Singleton (DSL), Josh Seeds (DEQ)

Technical Consultant and Guests: Troy Rahmig (ICF), Aaron Gabbe (ICF), Melissa Klungle (ICF)

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

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Sylvia Ciborowski, Kearns & West, welcomed Scoping Team (ST) members. She explained the purpose to the meeting is to review the HCP process and timeline, review updates to the HCP, and discuss any topics of interest from the ST's review of the draft HCP chapters. Sylvia noted this is a critical period in HCP development and emphasized the importance of receiving ST comments soon so they can be incorporated into the draft.

Sylvia reviewed the agenda, which included: 1) Agency updates, 2) Check-in on HCP process and timeline, 3) Review HCP key elements document, 4) Chapter by chapter comment summary and discussion, 5) Review and discuss the HCP, 6) Confirm topics for Steering Committee (SC) update, and 7) Approach going forward, next steps, and summary.

AGENCY UPDATES

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

- **NOAA Fisheries:** The Notice of Intent (NOI) has been submitted and will be posted to the Federal Register on March 8, 2021. The public scoping meeting is scheduled for

March 31, 2021. NOAA Fisheries held a tribal consultation to discuss the HCP and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and six tribes participated.

- **Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF):** 1) There is a Board of Forestry (BOF) meeting tomorrow, March 3, 2021 to discuss the Santiam forest restoration efforts. 2) ODF and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) met to discuss the aquatic inventories program and the monitoring strategy for the HCP.

CHECK IN ON HCP PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Troy Rahmig, ICF, reviewed the HCP process and timeline. He reviewed the HCP chapter review schedule and noted that the team is currently revising the HCP based on ST comments. All ST comments have been combined into one document. As ICF/ODF continue to develop and update the draft HCP, they may reach out to ST members to discuss or clarify any questions. The goal is to have an administrative draft of the HCP available on the ODF website by the end of March/early April, as we move into the NEPA process. There are a series of small group discussions in the coming weeks to further refine and update the HCP.

REVIEW HCP KEY ELEMENTS DOCUMENT

Troy reviewed the HCP key elements document that was provided to the ST and SC. This document summarizes the key aspects of the HCP and aims to include enough detail that is meaningful and informative but is not overwhelming. The document is categorized by key strategies or topics in the HCP and includes the HCP's relationship to the Clean Water Act. This document is intended to help the ST and SC talk about the HCP with stakeholders and provide a summary of highlights to ensure consistent messaging.

ST members discussed the HCP key elements document and provided the following comments:

- Suggestion to update the document to address key concerns and questions raised by industry representatives. Consider adding information related to forest management objectives including the certainty of activities, the benefits of the HCP relative to take avoidance, how the HCP can bring a sustainable timber yield overtime, etc.
 - ODF/ICF: Update the key elements document to include information on the certainty of forest management objectives

CHAPTER BY CHAPTER COMMENT SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Troy walked through the HCP chapter by chapter and framed discussion. Key edits and updates to the HCP chapters included the following:

- Chapter 1:
 - Clarified comments and streamlined the chapter including connecting topics and themes across the chapters.
 - Added regulations influencing the HCP.
- Chapter 2 and 3:
 - Added detailed clarifications.
 - Refined discussion on species distribution models.
- Chapter 4:
 - Added description on the commitments within the Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs) and Habitat Conservation Areas (HCAs).
 - Added new RCA figures showing headwall protection.
 - Continuing to work on methodology describing how the HCAs were mapped.
 - Resolving conflicting language for operational restrictions.
 - Added clarity about the expectations during the permit term and at the end of the permit term.
- Chapter 5:
 - Added justification on the way that effects were analyzed and the conclusions that were made.
 - Clarified the HCP commitments in the habitat graphs.
 - Explained the limitations to modeling for Oregon slender salamander and clarified the expectations, assumptions, and monitoring for the species during the permit term.
 - Changed terminology in critical habitat sections from “adverse modifications” to “adverse effects.”
- Chapter 6:
 - Reorganized the chapter to be linked to the biological objectives.
 - Provided narratives around the table and graphs to better explain the monitoring approach and how it connects to the biological objectives set in the HCP.
 - Differentiated between compliance and effectiveness monitoring.

- Clarified the timing of terrestrial monitoring commitments.
- Chapter 7:
 - Revised changed circumstances to include a temporary deferment of harvest in certain locations by trading harvest in those areas for harvest in other areas.
 - Updated fire section to reflect 2020 totals.
 - Provided detail on aquatic invasive species.
- Chapter 8:
 - Updated roles and responsibilities section.
 - Updated stay ahead language.
- Chapter 9:
 - Updated strategic aquatic conservation action.
 - Updated revenue tables with actual totals, rather than estimates, where available.
- Chapter 10:
 - Added minor clarifications.

ST comments on each chapter of the HCP have been combined and incorporated into one document. Members noted that it would be helpful to have the document with combined comments with the ST to reference as needed. ICF/ODF will circulate the document with ST combined comments on the HCP.

A revised, clean version of the HCP will be available at the end of March or early April. There will be specific sections of the HCP that will be reviewed and discussed with the ST.

Troy reviewed the following key issues and topics in the HCP and explained the approach to address these issues. The ST discussed these key topics and provided the following comments:

Terrestrial habitat commitments and graphs:

- ODF/ICF is considering developing a bar graph in chapter 4 to visually show the habitat commitments and how much habitat is expected to grow inside and outside HCAs. The graph will likely include ten-year increments.
 - Suggestion to show the delta indicating the amount of habitat available today and the amount of habitat expected in the future.
 - Suggestion to show the conservation target as a range on the graph. It will be a challenge to predict the exact amount of habitat.

- ODF/ICF will add graphs to chapter 4 and 5 to clarify the habitat commitments and targets.

Seasonal operation restrictions:

- The operational period for in-water work has been expanded to be from the middle of July through August. This change intends to maximize the operational window with minimal impacts to fish and marbled murrelet.
 - Members suggested beginning the operational period on July 22 instead of July 15. It was noted that the last two weeks of July are critical for some species.
 - There was agreement with the timing restriction of when work can occur during the day.
- It was clarified that there would have to be some unique circumstances for an enhancement project to be scheduled within the operationally restricted period. If there is an issue or urgent project, ODF likely would make adjustments to that schedule.
 - ODF/ICF will add language that explains how ODF seeks to avoid conflict in the planning process and clarify that if there is an issue or urgent project, in-water work may be allowed.
 - Suggestion to encourage deferment of projects that are not time sensitive to outside of work windows, when there is a choice.
- ODF/ICF will craft clarifying language for seasonal operation restrictions and explain the planning steps, the expectations, and process for in-water work.

Monitoring chapter

- The monitoring chapter will be updated to be centered around objectives.
- Provided an update on the timing for survey work for monitoring of terrestrial species. The intent is to make sure there is enough time on the front end to set up the monitoring process. ODF is working to confirm that this timeline is feasible.
- Discussed the cost of monitoring:
 - Reviewed the table that summarized the monitoring costs.
 - The project team is considering creating line items for different types of monitoring that may be needed later in the permit term.
 - Suggestion to monitor slides and debris flow tracks to evaluate the wood recruitment strategy.
- ODF will include language on evaluating the effectiveness of the road management program in debris flow tracks in chapter 6 and will include a cost estimate in table 9-3.

Changed circumstances response

- The changed circumstances section has been updated to include a series of different circumstances that could arise, a process to evaluate events that would affect the ability to deliver the conservation strategy as written, and clarity around ODF's responsibilities. ODF/ICF also developed responses to the various circumstances.
 - Suggestion to keep conservation ahead of the impacts. For example, if there is a nearby disturbance, it would be important to temporarily stop harvest for a period of time to retain habitat, and perhaps move that planned harvest to somewhere else in the permit area.
- ODF/ICF will reorganize the changed circumstances section and will include updates to the changed circumstances response.

REVIEW AND DISCUSS HCP

ST members discussed the HCP and any topics of interest. Members provided the following questions and comments from the chapter review:

- How will 120-year-old stands be addressed in the HCP?
 - The HCAs are being finalized and the habitat is in the process of being summarized. 120-year-old trees are included in existing HCAs or expanded HCAs and will be reflected in the overall habitat summary. ODF will review the accounting and habitat summary with United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and ODFW.
 - A member expressed interest in including specific commitments around 120-year-old trees.
- The ST discussed how the HCP will address landslide prone areas and noted the concerns from conservation stakeholders.
 - ODF geotechnical engineers have completed a document describing the on-the-ground approach to landslides. This information will be incorporated into chapter 4 of the HCP.
 - ODF worked with TerrainWorks to identify landslide prone areas that had the potential to deliver to fish-bearing streams and buffered those channels and fish-bearing streams. ODF will use both the model and a unit-by-unit analysis when managing for landslides.
 - A member noted that it is important to look at fish-bearing streams but also to evaluate other (non-fish bearing) streams in the permit area.

- Suggestion to develop a gap analysis to identify where there are landslide prone areas and to clarify which areas are buffered and which are not.
- Recommendation to clearly state what ODF is already doing to identify and manage for landslides as well as develop a summary of the buffers for landslide prone areas.
- ODF can develop a summary of stream miles, 120' buffers on fish bearing streams, and 35' buffers on non-fish perennial streams.
 - It would be helpful to include an explanation noting why these buffers were determined and is believed to be sufficient.
 - It will also be important to highlight the role and function of the HCAs and RCAs, inoperable areas, and the use of horizontal distance.

CONFIRM TOPICS FOR STEERING COMMITTEE UPDATE

The next SC meeting is scheduled for March 4, 2021. The meeting will include an overview of the HCP key elements and will confirm the draft HCP is ready to move into NEPA. ST members were encouraged to send the project team any topics they would like covered during the meeting.

APPROACH GOING FORWARD, NEXT STEPS, AND SUMMARY

Sylvia thanked members for their participation and reviewed upcoming meetings.

A follow-up conservation stakeholder meeting is scheduled for March 10 from 3 – 5pm. ST members were invited to listen into the meeting.

Cindy provided closing remarks. She thanked the ST for their thoughtful feedback and review of the HCP. She noted that there is still work to be done as we move into the NEPA process and there will be additional opportunities to refine the administrative draft of the HCP.

ACTION ITEMS

The following action items were identified throughout the meeting:

- ODF/ICF: Update the key elements document.
- ICF/ODF: Circulate the document with ST combined comments on the HCP.