

MEETING SUMMARY

WESTERN OREGON STATE FORESTS HCP SCOPING TEAM

Tuesday, May 4, 2021, 9:00 am – 11:00 am

By Webinar/Video Conference

ATTENDEES

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

Technical Consultant and Guests: Troy Rahmig (ICF)

Facilitation Team: Sylvia Ciborowski (Kearns & West), Ellen Palmquist (Kearns & West), Cindy Kolomechuk (ODF)

WELCOME AND AGENDA REVIEW

Sylvia Ciborowski, Kearns & West, welcomed Scoping Team (ST) members.

Sylvia reviewed the agenda, which included: 1) Agency and Stakeholder Engagement Updates, 2) Report Out on 4/27 Steering Committee Meeting, 3) Updates on the NEPA Process, 4) HCP Update, 5) Updates on FMPs/IPs, and 6) Approach Going Forward, Next Steps, and Summary.

AGENCY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT UPDATES

Members provided the following updates relevant to the Western Oregon State Forests HCP and FMP processes:

- **ODFW:** The process for the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to consider whether an uplisting of Marbled Murrelet is needed, is moving forward.
- **USFWS:** No updates.
- **Department of State Lands (DSL):** No updates.
- **NOAA Fisheries:** The agency will have less capacity until leadership positions in the Willamette and Lacy branches are filled.
- **Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF):** 1) Nick Palazzotto is joining the Barred Owl Management Strategy Coordination Team and has started working on scenarios for

management on the West Coast. 2) The Oregon Board of Forestry has three new members and one remaining vacancy; Jim Kelly is the new Chair.

- **Kearns and West:** 1) Kickoff for Forest Management Plan is scheduled for Thursday, May 6. The meeting will include information about the NEPA process and the FMP and IP development process. 2) Kearns & West is continuing to conduct stakeholder interviews and will provide a summary to the group in the future.

REPORT OUT ON 4/27 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Troy Rahmig, ICF, recapped the Steering Committee meeting, noting this was the first SC meeting since the HCP draft was posted on the website and the NEPA Scoping Period had closed. During the meeting, timelines for the NEPA process and FMP process were revisited and areas of alignment were highlighted. Troy provided an overview of the Administrative Draft, including appendices and any changes that were made. Troy reminded the committee that the Draft and a document that describes key changes between the October and March Drafts are available on the ODF website. Mike Wilson, ODF, provided a high-level overview of the FMP process and anticipated engagement from the Scoping Team.

Members of the Steering Committee provided information on what they've been hearing from the public, including questions from stakeholders about how to engage with the NEPA process, how to move different alternatives through the NEPA process, the Private Forest Accord, and Elliott State Forest HCP.

UPDATES ON THE NEPA PROCESS

Tere O'Rourke, NOAA Fisheries, provided a brief timeline update on the NEPA Scoping process. After starting in early March and receiving a two-week extension, the process concluded around the end of April. The team received 44 comments ranging from strong support to strong opposition.

With the completion of Scoping, the process will move further into the Draft EIS phase. This phase started in January when the ICF team started working with NOAA Fisheries to think about topics and gather information. Alternatives development will begin in May, and from June through September the team will work through analysis. The Draft EIS is anticipated to come out in December 2021/January 2022. This will be followed by a Public Review and Comment period. Tere stressed the importance of communicating to the public that the NEPA process is ongoing.

Following the release of the Public Draft EIS and Public Review and Comment period, the Final EIS will be developed, a decision will be made, and there will be an issuance or not of an Incidental Take Permit.

HCP UPDATE

Troy Rahmig, ICF, and Mike Wilson, ODF, provided updates on the HCP and reviewed a plan for receiving public input on the Draft. There is an internal process in place with ICF and ODF to track comments and feedback from the public outside of the NEPA Scoping period. They noted that there has not been substantial feedback from the public at this point and asked the Scoping Team to funnel any questions they receive back to ODF to ensure they can be tracked. Troy and Mike will bring any relevant questions to the group, including any potential changes to the public draft.

Cindy Kolomechuk, ODF, and Mike Wilson, ODF, informed the team that the questions they've received have focused on developing alternatives, including what the NEPA process entails and how people are being engaged. They have been receiving substantial internal feedback from within ODF and intend to address this at the upcoming Information Sharing Workshop on May 11. Cindy reminded the Scoping Team that the Key Elements document and the Executive Summary are available on the website or by email request.

Discussion:

The ST discussed and provided the following comments and questions:

- A member asked if notes from the Information Sharing Workshop would be shared with the Scoping Team. ODF responded that these workshops are intended to be internal and to provide an open forum for discussion. If any clarifying language comes out of the workshops, it will be brought to the Scoping Team so there is full transparency.
- Troy Rahmig, ICF, noted that the May 6 Meeting Open to the Public will be a transition point. He anticipates that questions will be primarily related to the NEPA process.
- There will be a public Draft HCP and a public Draft EIS released at the same time for the same comment period. Responses to all comments will be provided. The public can send ODF a comment on the HCP at any time, but the team is not planning on another revision until the public draft is released. If anyone wants their comment considered in the NEPA process, it needs to be submitted after the Public Draft EIS is released as part of the formal NEPA comment process.
- Rich Szlemp, USFWS, asked what might trigger changes to the HCP and if there is any possibility it would change significantly. ODF responded that the Board could direct ODF to change direction in response to stakeholder input. If they did this it would be with the knowledge that it would be a significant setback and the decision would be made on the record. If something comes out of the EIS that is substantially different, this could result in the need to change the HCP. However, the team feels that the outcomes of the comparative analysis are good from a habitat and harvest standpoint and they do not anticipate changes. There could also be a new batch of circumstances, for example new survey data, that require changing HCA boundaries to reduce conflicts post NEPA.

UPDATES ON THE COMPANION FMP & IPs

Mike Wilson, ODF, provided updates on the FMP & IPs. He noted:

- The Board was presented with a draft FMP in April 2020. This effort was paused to prioritize HCP development. This effort will be used as a starting point.
- The project team has been assembled and the project has been initiated. The work plan will be presented to the Board on June 9. Drafting the FMP will begin in June and continue into March of 2022. This summer will involve data preparation followed by modeling and analysis in the fall. Modeling and analysis will conclude in fall 2022 and will be followed by a refinement of implementation plans. A Draft FMP is anticipated to be complete by June 2023. This will be refined before entering into rulemaking to finalize the FMP.
- The project team structure:



- Sylvia Ciborowski, Kearns & West, provided information on the FMP Engagement Plan. Stakeholder interviews have started and will conclude in May 2021. The Engagement Plan will have a similar format to the HCP, with broad meetings open to the public to provide process updates on the FMP followed up with more focused conversations with specific stakeholder groups. Stakeholders have voiced appreciation for having meetings with like-minded groups and groups with different perspectives. This approach will be used for FMP engagement. Kearns & West will also facilitate internal workshops. The first Information Sharing Workshop is scheduled for May 11.

Discussion

The ST discussed and provided the following comments and questions:

- A member asked how fish and wildlife concerns and interests would be communicated up the organizational chart. ODF staff responded that Nick Palazzotto, ODF, will be a key coordinator with Partner Agencies and will funnel feedback to the Core Project Team

and Leadership Group. The Core Project Team will make sure to address areas of disagreement with the Leadership Group.

- Mike Wilson, ODF, noted that they have decided to institute ID teams. This will allow different disciplines to work together on a subset of sales to identify best management practices.

APPROACH GOING FORWARD, NEXT STEPS, AND SUMMARY

The next ST meeting is scheduled for June 1. ST members should keep that meeting on their calendars.

Future meetings will alternate between HCP and FMP topics. The next meeting will be focused on the FMP and geared towards conversation with state partner agencies, but all ST members are invited to participate.

Sylvia thanked members for their participation, reviewed upcoming meetings, and reminded members to let her know if there are topics they want to discuss in the future.

Cindy thanked members and reminded them that reach out if they need anything when talking to stakeholders.

ACTION ITEMS

No action items were identified during the meeting.