

**Meeting notes for Forest Management Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan Informational Meeting
April 12, 2019 – Salem, OR**

In attendance

Members of the public: Amy Patrick and Ken McCall (Oregon Hunters Association); Joe Monks and Lee Adkins (NW Hardwoods), Barrett Brown (State Forests Advisory Committee), Bob Rees (Northwest Guides and Anglers Association), Doug Cooper and Dave Ivanoff (Hampton Lumber), Seth Barnes (OFIC), Leanne Thompson (Clatsop County Commissioner)

Staff and consultants: State Forests Division Chief Liz Dent, Habitat Conservation Plan Project Manager Cindy Kolomechuk, Troy Rahmig (ICF), Brett Brownscombe (Oregon Consensus)

Liz Dent thanked everyone for attending and explained the two land bases managed by ODF's State Forests Division: Board of Forestry and Common School Forest Land. She explained that the Forest Management Plan revision, per Board of Forestry (BOF) direction, is intended to increase conservation and financial outcomes. She explained that the goal of a Habitat Conservation Plan would be to obtain an Incidental Take Permit, which would reduce bird survey costs and provide more certainty to manage BoF lands.

She said the HCP and FMP both have the potential to provide for conservation while also increasing financial outcomes, or at a minimum providing more financial certainty.

Kolomechuk explained that our current FMP was designed to be a companion to a Habitat Conservation Planning process that took place from 1999-2008 but the HCP never came to fruition. Quite a bit of current acreage is occupied by threatened and endangered species and more species that occur on ODF-managed lands are likely to be listed in the future., An HCP and associated Incidental Take Permits would increase operational certainty while ensuring that habitat for these species would persist on the landscape. ODF is taking a phased approach to the HCP process. During Phase 1, ODF worked with Oregon Consensus and Kearns & West to build a governance structure for the HCP, including a steering committee and a scoping team with representatives from state and federal agencies to encourage a collaborative approach. A business case analysis was also completed during Phase 1, and while built on many assumptions, was compelling enough for the BOF to direct staff to continue to Phase 2: Strategy Development and Stakeholder Engagement.

Our stakeholder engagement process will allow opportunity to provide feedback on work products as well as share and explain information.

Kolomechuk walked through the phases of the project. Dent said an FMP would need to be revised if the HCP process results in an Incidental Take Permits from the USFWS and NOAA Fisheries. Kolomechuk said a USFWS \$750,000 grant has substantially helped support Phase 1 of the HCP, and that ODF is currently working towards another grant application for Phase 2.

Dent explained the previous approach to building an FMP – working with the Board of Forestry on each step as well as county commissioners and other stakeholders. Ultimately, seeing each piece on its own made it difficult to translate into application on the ground.

A question came up regarding when potential harvest levels in a revised FMP would be shared. Dent said a draft revised FMP would be taken to the public and stakeholders, and then the agency would hire

a contractor to determine if the draft revised FMP would improve financial and conservation outcomes compared to the current FMP. Opportunities for public engagement on the draft revised FMP will come in winter of 2019, with analysis in spring 2020. Ultimately the Board of Forestry will need to decide whether to move forward with an incidental take or take avoidance approach to managing state forestlands.

A concern was expressed about whether conservation strategies as part of the HCP would end up driving the FMP project. How would the conservation strategy be nailed down until the FMP is nailed down? Troy Rahmig explained that the FMP is not the starting point for determining the HCP conservation strategies. Rather, the Scoping Team can take a more holistic approach to evaluating species needs and protections at a landscape level, rather than for individual species.

Will stakeholder input guide conservation strategies? Kolomechuk said this is a regulatory planning document that will require compromises with the federal services. Outside facilitators will facilitate this process with the goal of reaching a mutually agreeable outcome. Our ability to incorporate feedback on specific conservation strategies may be limited due to the regulatory nature of this planning document. We are committed to requesting feedback, bringing it to the Scoping Team for consideration, and explaining why it was or was not incorporated.

Troy Rahmig of ICF explained the process timeline for the HCP. By the time we're through Conservation Strategy, Effects Analysis, and Monitoring and Adaptive Management, we would be close to a draft. We will not enter the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process without a solid draft.

Dent said that by building the HCP very deliberately, we have a foundation to work with when we move into conversations with the federal services. Kolomechuk said the scoping team has not gotten into specific questions such as buffers, marbled murrelet and owl strategies, etc.

Our goal is to minimize points of disconnect by bringing people along throughout the process.

A concern was expressed that the Scoping Team and Steering Committee do not seem to have forest economics or silvicultural expertise. What happens if the opportunity cost is too high?

Rahmig said the HCP has to meet the practicability standards and economics are part of that. Most people on the committees are from the regulatory agencies that would have to approve the associated take permits. When project goes through the NEPA analysis, economic impacts have to be considered. We must constantly remind ourselves that under federal ESA our job is to avoid, minimize and mitigate take.

Question: Will costs to communities be considered? If we start with what state forests is doing now, skeptical. Troy explained that this is included in the NEPA analysis.

There were questions regarding relative impact of ODF activities on species as a whole. A statement was made that ODF's relatively small land base may not have huge global impact, but to local communities impact is profound. ODF was asked to consider impacts to communities. The project team acknowledged this request.

Dent said we had been working with services on HCP negotiations for Elliott State Forest when ODF was still managing the Elliott. While the HCP was never completed, the agencies now understand each

other's perspective. Dent said ODF takes pride in how we manage state forests, and this is an opportunity to do our work better. Long-term certainty is the best possible outcome.

Rahmig went on to describe the geographic coverage, permit term, covered activities and covered species under the HCP.

A question was asked about how negotiating an HCP on private land differs from public. Rahmig said it depends on the land. The biggest difference is that private land HCP negotiations tend to have less of a public process. Rahmig added that HCPs in past often had many more species listed, but more recent plans tend to be much more thoughtful and conservative about the number of listed species.

A question was asked regarding the removal of species from the HCP and whether or not this would reduce the number of agencies that have to consent to the plan? Rahmig said likely not. Only two categories and they are broad: fish/aquatic and land species.

Brownscombe introduced Oregon Consensus, a program within PSU Hatfield School of Government. The program is called out under state statute for handling dispute resolution. Oregon Consensus brings some independence from the agency and adds capacity for outreach, gathering feedback on different interests. He outlined stakeholder assessment interviews. Kearns & West is on team as mediators and facilitators, bringing skills that agencies do not always have. A kick-off meeting was held on March 23 and more public meetings will be held.

Oregon Hunters Association said that their organization hasn't had enough capacity to engage in conversations like this in past. They asked for specific checkpoints in advance for when public engagement would be taking place. Kolomechuk explained that there is a tiered approach with consistent email updates on progress, larger public meeting for informational updates, and a forum for stakeholders to engage in review and feedback on work products. Dent went on to explain that we are sensitive to stakeholder engagement fatigue, and will consider this as we develop and implement the FMP and HCP stakeholder engagement processes.