

# MEETING SUMMARY

## WESTERN OREGON STATE FORESTS HCP SCOPING TEAM

Tuesday, August 6, 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)

**Technical Consultant:** Troy Rahmig (ICF)

**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) Seek Alignment on Revised Biological Goals and Objectives, 4) Update on Terrestrial and Aquatic Modeling, 5) Review Scoping Team Comments on Chapters 1 and 3, and 6) Review of HCP Development Schedule and Timeline.

Sylvia Ciborowski (Kearns & West) reminded members that the June 4, 2019 Scoping Team Meeting Summary is final and on the website. Members received an email last week with the July 12 Biological Goals & Objectives Workshop Summary and were asked to provide any comments or edits.

Cindy Kolomechuk (ODF), reviewed the purpose of the meeting and reflected on the past month of meetings and what is ahead.

### AGENCY UPDATES

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

**NOAA Fisheries:** There have been recent conversations on the Siuslaw National Forest Coast Range forest management and riparian strategies. An Elliott State Forest meeting was held

recently, and many tools from the Elliott HCP would be appropriate for the Western Oregon HCP.

NOAA released a stock assessment recently, but there is likely nothing in the assessment that affects the species under the Western Oregon HCP. Many public comments have been made on killer whales and fish stocks.

**ODF:** There will be no HCP update at the September Board of Forestry meeting. There will be an HCP update at the November Board of Forestry meeting, however, no decision is being made at that meeting. The April Board of Forestry meeting will include a weighing of Forest Management Plan (FMP) options, and it is expected that the Board will make a decision at that meeting.

ODF is considering working with EcoNorthwest to expand the Business Case Analysis that was originally developed in 2018, to expand the type of analysis to other types of benefits.

**ICF:** The technical team has kicked off timber harvest modeling and will begin working on modeling scenarios to look at where harvesting can and cannot occur. The modeling exercise models habitat values on the landscape; and will do a timber harvest planning exercise to help estimate what the quality and quantity of habitat will be for the species in the future. More information will be available for a future ST meeting and there will be an opportunity for ST discussion. The timber harvest modeling will help fill in some of the blanks in the goals and objectives.

Members briefly discussed what the modeling will show, and the impact of policy decisions. The ST had the following comments and questions:

- Recommend that the project team incorporate expertise at the district level; the current plan has made a lot of successes in developing complex forests, and the districts have a good, specific picture of where they would recommend more conservation and production. It is important to work with the districts to consider what makes sense biologically. Models are more useful when you parameterize the initial characteristics appropriately. The model must incorporate what is already known to make it as useful as possible. Harvest models tend to underestimate the conservation values. We will need to have several check-ins with the districts at appropriate times. ODF noted that district staff are integrated into the process. There will be several meetings and discussions with district staff to incorporate all known information.
- Climate change is integral to forest modeling.
- Interest in learning more about the parameters of the model including what is triggering the decision to harvest and where, and what the geographic basis of the model is (i.e., at district level or another basis).
- Does the model separate out regenerative harvest versus thinning?
- Is the existing FMP being used as a basis for the model, or something different? ICF noted that the analysis will consider scenarios under current FMP practices, revised

FMP, and the HCP option. The analysis will show the relative differences between the three scenarios.

**ODF:** ODF suggested a field trip to the Tillamook and Forest Grove forests, particularly for NOAA Fisheries to understand how the agency implements the FMP, what the upland strategies are, and how they contribute to riparian management and wood recruitment. ODF is considering a full Scoping Team field trip in September if possible, with a focus on ensuring that aquatic ST members can attend. The group will aim to schedule the field trip during today's meeting. The ST members are comfortable with a field trip in September or October, and discussed October 9 as the preferred date.

Members suggested developing a short list of issues and topics that they want to understand when it comes to how ODF manages forests to use during the field trip. They suggested including hydrologic connectivity in the list.

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

A meeting open to the public was held on June 12. The meeting provided updates on HCP technical topics, reviewed the HCP Mission, Vision and Goals, and reviewed the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

The next meeting open to the public is scheduled for October 15 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm, likely in Salem. The meeting will include updates on HCP technical topics, including content from chapter 1, 2 and 3, and potentially the Biological Goals and Objectives if they are ready for public review.

## **BIOLOGICAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Troy Rahmig (ICF) explained that the project team revised the biological goals and objectives based on ST input from the July BGO workshops. He showed the group the working draft of the BGOs and noted that today's meeting is intended to be an opportunity for ST members to provide additional thoughts or comments on the BGOs, and seek general alignment on the BGOs from the ST. ICF is in the process of drafting the Conservation Strategy chapter, and it is important that the BGOs be good enough for now, for incorporation into the chapter so that it is on the right path. The project team is also interested in presenting the BGOs to the SC for their impressions at the August 29 SC meeting.

Deb reminded members that they are in the heart of the work to collaboratively build out the HCP. It is important that members provide forthright feedback at this time so that ICF and ODF are on the right path in developing the HCP and don't encounter major surprises down the road. Members will have a couple more opportunities to review the BGOs in context of the conservation strategy, but it is important to know that members are comfortable enough with the BGOs at this point and that major substantive comments are brought up early on.

## **Discussion**

Members discussed and made the following comments on the BGOs:

- When will be the right time to fill in the XXs and blanks in the BGOs?
  - Troy noted that the modeling will help to inform the blanks, and the ST can have a discussion on that during the September and October meetings. ICF will likely work internally with ODF to develop a proposal for how to meet the overall objectives for the species, and then bring it to ST for discussion.
  - Members said they are comfortable with ODF and ICF coming forward with a proposal as long as the ST has the opportunity to collaboratively discuss the pros and cons and make appropriate changes.
  - Troy stated there may be an iterative step or interim conversations to present the modeling results and how they play out on the landscape prior to developing a specific proposal for ST discussion.
  - ODF noted that the model is still being calibrated and will not be available until September.
  - Members were interested in discussing the development plan and timeline for filling in the blanks with the BGOs and developing the conservation strategy.
  - The XXs for stream length and acreage is an emergent property and must be viewed through the lens of the protected species. The BGOs are a coarse reflection of what the species really needs; but there is concern because what one species needs may be different than what another species needs. The real desire is to protect species, which means increasing the freshwater capacity.
- At a future meeting, the ST would like to have information about how the models were developed and how they work. They stated that it might be useful to have a harvest model primer at the next ST meeting.
- At a future meeting, ODF will present the silviculture strategies which will help the group to see the whole picture of the forest.
- Mark Meleason requested a meeting to discuss Objective 1.1 with ICF.
- Discussion on Objective 2.1:
  - Riparian habitat may need to be defined as it might not be the same as the buffer area.
- Discussion on Objective 2.2:
  - Recommend including language to explain what the development of younger forest stands is intended to accomplish.
  - Suggested indicating what percentage of stands is implicated.

- There will be stands adjacent to non-fish bearing streams that are older than 43-59 years. This should be reflected in the objective.
- Discussion on Objectives 2.1 and 3.1:
  - The model will need to identify the locations where the species are likely to persist.
  - ICF replied that the species habitat modeling will help identify those locations and the harvest model can be used to model harvest restrictions in those areas.
- Troy noted that the benefit of having the BGOs is to provide a general guidepost. As we move forward, we can continue to reflect on whether the conservation actions are meeting the objectives. The conservation strategy chapter will include many details on what underlies the objectives.
- Members acknowledged that models are imperfect but are a necessary tool to help determine the details for the HCP.
- There was interest in discussing the role that wood plays in the conservation of species and providing input on the modeling for wood recruitment.
- Hope that all alder stands will not be replaced by conifer, as long as the alder stands do not negatively affect salmonids or other fish. It is important to look at where it is most appropriate to do forest conversation along the streams.

Deb asked members whether the biological goals and objectives are good enough to share with the Steering Committee and interested stakeholders.

- Nick Palazzotto noted he submitted edits to a few phrases that need work.
- Several members said that more wordsmithing and refining is needed before presenting the objectives to stakeholders, and the objectives are not yet defined enough. The SC and stakeholders should know that the BGOs are in a very draft stage at this point. There is interest in having the public review the BGOs in their preliminary stage, so that stakeholders have an opportunity to provide input while the BGOs are still being refined.
- Members generally agreed that the goals are sufficient for public review as they are but the objectives are still too ill-defined. Members support sharing the goals and a list of topics covered by the objectives, as well as a summary of how the modeling will be used to define the objectives. The public should know that the BGOs are not yet approved or affirmed by the agencies.
- Members agreed to a check-in meeting to continue to refine the BGOs, and to determine whether they are sufficient for sharing with the SC prior to the August 29 SC meeting. They developed the following schedule:
  - Members provide edits by August 16.

- Phone call week of August 19 to resolve any remaining conflicts with the BGOs, prior to getting them to the SC (potentially two calls: terrestrial and aquatic).

## **SCOPING TEAM COMMENTS ON CHAPTERS 1 AND 3 OF HCP**

Troy explained that Chapters 1 and 3 were provided several weeks ago to the ST for review. Today, the team will review a few key comments, and set context for updating the chapters moving forward.

Troy reviewed the key comments made on Chapter 1 and 3, and members discussed:

- Chapter 1:
  - ST member noted that the sections that mention other federal policies and regulations are not necessary. ICF suggest including the NEPA section so that readers have an introduction to the link between the HCP and NEPA. Other ST members agree that leaving in the NEPA section is useful.
  - Outcome: Remove sections that discuss federal policies and regulations but leave in the NEPA section.
- Chapter 3: Several comments were made, including:
  - Road Miles Table (Table 3-3): There was a ST member question about the anticipated high increase in road miles. The number raises concern because it looks so high.
    - Troy clarified that the number is based on past road miles and projection moving forward.
    - ODF members noted that two factors will play into the actual number of road miles: how much conservation habitat is within roadless area, and decommissioned roads.
    - The best management practices deployed will factor into this.
    - Outcome: Review data to make sure the number is accurate and includes all factors, and include footnotes to provide better context around the anticipated increase in road miles. Might consider presenting the data as “estimate of roads per square mile,” rather than an absolute/overall number.
  - Permit term: Question about whether the permit term is 50 or 70 years.
    - Troy noted that the permit term is between 50 and 70 years. Once the modeling is complete we will better understand the conservation value over time and have a better idea of the permit term.

- Will the model predict harvest value per decade? ODF clarified that it is not expected that harvest levels will increase decade-by-decade; but conservation benefits are expected to increase over time.
- It will be helpful to have detailed assumptions on what will happen over the next 20 years, and then we can extrapolate out for the following decades.
- Covered activities: There was a comment regarding the discrepancy in how the language describes whether unlisted activities will be covered. There was also a question around whether herbicides/chemical application is covered.
  - NOAA Fisheries has done a lot of work on which chemicals are and are not acceptable. They can help ODF determine which to include and which to do a further effects analysis on.
  - Outcome: Revise language to clarify how to treat activities that are not listed. Keep herbicides/chemical application as a coverage activity, and further discuss with ST.

Members discussed how and whether to present draft chapters to the SC and made the following comments:

- The SC will likely not look at chapters 1, 2 and 3, but will want to see the conservation strategy.

Deb asked members whether they are comfortable with chapters 1 and 3 moving forward.

- There was a minor comment on how to treat wetlands in chapter 3.
- All members are okay with chapters 1 and 3 moving forward.

ICF will revise chapters 1 and 3 with the minor comments. The ST will see chapters 1 and 3 again when they are part of the administrative draft. They will not see chapters 1 and 3 before that, unless there are substantive changes or issues that the project team needs to review with the ST.

## **HCP DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE AND TIMELINE**

Troy reviewed the HCP development schedule.

Chapter 2 (Environmental Setting and Existing Conditions) is currently being reviewed internally by ODF and revised by ICF. ST member should expect Chapter 2 for their review in late August.

Chapter 4 (Conservation Strategy) and Chapter 5 (Effects Analysis) will go to ODF for internal review in September. It will come to the ST as chapters in November, although the ST will be talking through the inputs into Chapters 4 and 5 prior to November.

Members commented that Chapter 4 and 5 are coming quickly. The ST may need to meet more often in October and November to get through the conversations. The project team will work to schedule extra meetings in October and November.

## **CONFIRM TOPICS FOR SC UPDATE**

The project team will relay discussion from today's ST meeting to the SC.

A member suggested having a discussion with the SC on how to have a conversation on alignment between the technical piece of the Elliott State Forest HCP and the Western Oregon HCP. They explained wanting to avoid misalignment between the conservation strategies on the two adjacent forests and that there needs to be a common conversation somewhere. At this point, there is a lack of information and coordination between the two efforts. At the same time, there will be a divergence in the strategies on the two forests because they are different in their diversity and in their purposes.

## **NEXT STEPS AND SUMMARY**

Cindy thanked members for their time and participation.

The next ST meeting is scheduled for September 3, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Salem.

A SC meeting is scheduled for August 29. Members are encouraged to brief their SC counterparts prior to August 29.

The Project Team will send out scheduling information for the forest field trip.

The next meeting open to the public is scheduled for October 15.

Feedback on BGOs is due to Troy by August 16.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

The following action items were identified throughout the meeting:

- Project Team – Schedule forest field trip (tentatively October 9).
- ODF – Develop short list of issues and what members want to understand when it comes to how ODF manages forest, to use during the field trip into the forest. Include hydrologic connectivity in the list.
- Project Team – Incorporate topics into future ST meeting agendas:
  - Provide information about how the models were developed; provide harvest model primer (September meeting).

- Present ODF silviculture strategies.
  - Public review of biological goals and objectives (September meeting).
- ICF/Mark Meleason – meet to discuss Objective 1.1.
- KW – Check-in with absent ST members on their comfort level with BGOs.
- ST Members – Provide edits to BGOs to ICF by August 16.
- ST Members and All – Participate in phone call week of August 19 to resolve any remaining conflicts with the BGOs.
- Project Team – Schedule additional ST meetings in October and November.
- Project Team – Consider discussion with SC on bridging the Elliott HCP and Western Oregon State Forests HCP.
- Project Team – Work to reschedule March 3, 2020 ST meeting.

## RECORD OF AGREEMENTS AND GUIDANCE

Updated 5/14/2019

This record tracks agreements, guidance, advice, and levels of support of key milestones and elements of the Western Oregon HCP. It includes major outcomes and guidance provided by the HCP Steering Committee, HCP Scoping Team, and Board of Forestry.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Group/ Body</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Relevant Milestone/ HCP Chapter</b>
November 8, 2018	Board of Forestry	Unanimously voted to move forward with Western Oregon HCP Phase 2: Strategy Development and Stakeholder Engagement	Phase 1 Completion
February 7, 2019	Steering Committee	Expressed support for the Western Oregon HCP Phase 2 Scope of Work and Work Plan	Phase 2 Beginning
February 13, 2019	Scoping Team	Provided support for the proposed covered species list	Covered Species List (Chapter 1)
February 13, 2019	Scoping Team	Agreed that the current data on the covered species is sufficient to move forward with developing an HCP, and there is not a need to collect additional data at this time. Expressed support for ICF's approach to identifying best available data for each species.	Approach to Gathering Best Available Data
April 2, 2019	Scoping Team	Provided support for the covered species list presented by ICF, including an agreement to drop Lower Columbia steelhead. They also recommend not including Southern DPS red tree vole but revisiting that species when more information is available in fall 2019.	Covered Species List (Chapter 1)
April 22, 2019	ODF and DSL	Decided to include Common School Forest (CSF) lands in the Western Oregon HCP Permit Area.	Plan Area and Permit Area (Chapter 1)
May 2, 2019	Steering Committee	Adopted Western Oregon HCP Operating Principles by consensus.	Process
May 2, 2019	Steering Committee	Adopted the Western Oregon HCP Mission, Vision, and Goals by consensus	Mission, Vision and Goals (Chapter 1)
May 2, 2019	Steering Committee	Expressed alignment with Plan Area and Permit Area (with direction to ST to review inclusion of Santiam Forest area)	Plan Area and Permit Area (Chapter 1)
May 2, 2019	Steering Committee	Provided consensus support for the proposed covered species list	Covered Species List (Chapter 1)