

Western Oregon State Forests Habitat Conservation Plan Meeting Open to the Public Tuesday, October 15, 2019 – Portland, OR

Meeting Summary

Introduction and Overview

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) is considering a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for forest lands in western Oregon. As part of the stakeholder engagement process for the effort, ODF held a meeting open to the public on October 15, 2019 in Portland, Oregon. The meeting was also livestreamed for accessibility by additional audience members.

The livestream is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9mfhpi1pME>

Purpose of Meeting

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Learn about and discuss the final draft of the Mission, Vision and Goals that will help guide the direction and future of the HCP.
- Learn about and discuss the Western Oregon HCP Conceptual Biological Goals and Objectives.
- Learn about upcoming topics including: Conservation Actions, Impact Mechanisms, Effects Analysis, and Timber Modeling.

Number of Attendees

7 individuals attended the meeting open to the public and an additional 6 people joined via livestream. Those in attendance represented industry, government agencies, and tribes.

Notification Methods

ODF invited agencies, interested parties, stakeholders, members of the Steering Committee (a policy level HCP working group), members of the Scoping Team (a technical level HCP working group), and the general public to the meeting.

Notification methods included:

- Email distributions to interested parties
- Posts on ODF social media including Facebook and Twitter
- Meeting notice via FlashAlert to media in areas that would be potentially covered in the HCP (including Portland media)
- Post on the ODF news site
- Post on the Western Oregon HCP project webpage
- Post on the State of Oregon Transparency Website

Format

The meeting open to the public included a two-hour meeting and a question and answer discussion period. The meeting was followed by an informal, one-hour meet-n-greet for participants to ask questions one-on-one and meet other stakeholders and agency partners engaged in the process.

Participants were encouraged to sign in as they arrived and create a name tag. They had the option to fill out a public input card to provide additional feedback and comments.

Online participants were able to submit questions via email to be addressed during the meeting.

Meeting Summary

Introductions

Liz Dent, ODF, welcomed meeting attendees. Liz mentioned that a lot has been accomplished in the development of a Western Oregon State Forests HCP, and ODF understands the importance and value of public engagement. She expressed her appreciation for those in attendance and looked forward to hearing participants' feedback.

Liz explained that ODF is leading the Western Oregon HCP process. ODF has worked on HCPs in the past and they are working closely with sister agencies and partners based on the lessons learned from their previous HCP experiences.

A project team with a variety of expertise is working alongside ODF to develop the HCP. The project team includes ODF, ICF, Oregon Consensus, and Kearns & West.

Liz explained that Cindy Kolomechuk is ODF's lead on this project. ICF is providing technical support to write and develop the HCP. Kearns & West is leading the public engagement and facilitation, which includes helping to build alignment around the process. Oregon Consensus is providing a neutral forum for parties to reach agreement on contentious public issues.

After introducing the project team, Liz asked participants to introduce themselves and provide brief introductions.

Following the participant introductions, Deb Nudelman, Kearns & West, introduced herself as part of the facilitation team and reviewed the meeting agenda. She mentioned that this is the third meeting open to the public. The intent of the meeting is to share more information about the HCP process and to provide updates on HCP development. The agenda covers three main topics: 1) provide updates on the HCP process and review upcoming topics, 2) review and seek input on the Western Oregon HCP conceptual Biological Goals and Objectives, and 3) introduce upcoming topics for the Western Oregon HCP. Deb explained that ODF has a strong interest in hearing stakeholders' questions, interests, and concerns and learning about the topics that participants are most interested in discussing.

Sylvia Ciborowski, Kearns & West, reviewed the public engagement efforts and the process for reviewing work products. By the time the first administrative draft of the HCP is developed, the public will have had the chance to provide input on different pieces of the HCP. Sylvia explained that the process for reviewing work products is iterative: as a general frame, the Scoping Team (ST) develops the technical components of the HCP. Those components then go to the Steering Committee (SC) for their policy direction. Once approved by both the ST and SC, the components are presented to the public, stakeholders, and Board of Forestry for input and feedback. The planning team then incorporates the feedback and the public is presented with the updated draft to see how their input was considered.

Presentation: Updates and Upcoming Topics for the Western Oregon HCP

Cindy Kolomechuk, ODF, presented the final draft of the Mission, Vision, and Goals. She explained that this is the foundational element of the HCP that provides guidance for what the agencies want to achieve with the HCP. The draft Mission, Vision and Goals were presented at a previous meeting open to public and have gone through the public input process. Today's draft is the final draft, that may still be modified as HCP development continues, and we learn more.

Public Input and Q&A Summary

The public was invited to ask questions about the Western Oregon HCP Mission, Vision, and Goals. Comments, questions, and responses included:

- Was there a discussion about splitting up Goal 6?
 - A: While adaptive management was initially included in a separate goal, the SC preferred to include it within Goal 6 because it speaks to key pieces of adaptive management.

Western Oregon HCP Conceptual Biological Goals and Objectives

Troy Rahmig, ICF, presented the conceptual Biological Goals and Objectives (BGOs) for the HCP. He explained that the BGOs are the “Part 1” of the conservation strategy and “Part 2” will consist of developing conservation actions that support those BGOs. The public will be able to comment on those actions at a future meeting. Collectively, the “Conservation Strategy” is made up of BGOs and conservation actions.

ICF and ODF developed draft BGOs for all covered species in the HCP. The ST refined the BGOs over the course of two meetings and three workshops. The BGOs then went to the SC for review. The SC approved the BGO's, and the project team met with industry and conservation stakeholders to get their feedback.

The main topics presented include:

- Draft HCP Development Timeline

- Conservation Strategy
- Biological Goals
- Biological Objectives
- Key Terminology
- Review the BGO's Table
- Conservation Action

Troy explained that the input received today will go to the ST and SC for consideration.

Public Input and Q&A Summary

A discussion and question and answer period followed the presentation. The main topics that were brought up during the discussion period included:

- The metrics for current conditions
- The incorporation of climate change into the HCP

Comments, questions, and responses included:

- Q: Regarding Objective 1.4, why does it propose waiting to enhance or maintain fish passage until there is routine maintenance or construction work? Waiting to accomplish the goal seems like it will be delaying important work.
 - A: Currently, there are not many large barriers that need immediate attention, so it is reasonable to wait for routine maintenance or construction to make the enhancements. Objective 1.2 references conserving, maintaining, and enhancing overall stream channel complexity through target stream projects, so actions will be taken to achieve the goal outside of routine maintenance and construction.
- Q: Does ODF have the metrics for current conditions? For example, the number of acres of habitat that is known to be occupied by a species. This information is important when determining the tradeoffs and completing an effective analysis.
 - A: That information is known for some species. For others, a habitat modeling analysis will be used to determine the location and quality of existing habitat as well as the quantity and quality of expected habitat at the end of the HCP process. As ODF obtains more information, they may need reconsider certain conservation actions. It will be an iterative process.
- Q: Regarding Goal 7, please describe the difference between the three objectives.
 - A: Objective 7.1 is referring to the sites that are known to be currently occupied by the species. Objective 7.2 is referring to the areas that have not been surveyed and would require identifying additional occupied sites. Objective 7.3 is referring to the need to determine additional areas that could be occupied by the species.
- Comment: While Lamprey is not a listed species, it would be helpful to include language to help facilitate lamprey passage to keep it from being listed.

- Q: How does the HCP incorporate climate change into the actions? Does the HCP plan for changes in species' ranges because of climate change?
 - A: The requirement of the HCP is to define species ranges to the best of our ability, and some are more predictable than others. We are using species habitat modeling to determine what the current ranges are and how they will change by the end of the permit term. We will define the changes that we can credibly predict.

Upcoming Topics for the Western Oregon HCP

Troy Rahmig, ICF, presented on next steps and upcoming HCP topics. The main highlights from his presentation include:

- Conservation Actions
- Impact Mechanisms
- Policy Level Timber Harvest Modeling
- Effects Analysis

Public Input and Q&A Summary

Comments, questions, and responses included:

- Q: Who is doing the timber harvest modeling and is it consistent with the modeling that ODF staff currently does?
 - A: Greg Latta from the University of Idaho and ODF technical staff will be doing the modeling. The modeling will be similar to ODF's modeling, and it will include the same data inputs and base information. ICF will also contribute their guidance. Regarding projections, there will also be some analysis done for the Forest Management Plan (FMP). ODF is working to make the analysis consistent to help the Board of Forestry make a decision on whether to keep pursuing the HCP.
- Q: When will the Timber Harvest Modeling be available?
 - A: Potentially early next year. In addition to pursuing an HCP, ODF is working with the Board of Forestry to revise the Forest Management Plan for take avoidance. The effects analysis for the HCP will be available in mid-2020.
- Q: If you are going to complete the Timber Harvest Modeling by the end of the first quarter, what is the timeline for completing the conservation strategy?
 - The modeling will be available in early 2020. The baseline information is complete, so once the Timber Harvest Modeling is done at the policy level, we can do the affects analysis within the HCP.
- Q: Has the timeline changed from the last time it was presented at a public meeting?
 - A: The Board of Forestry is expected to make a decision on whether to move the HCP into the NEPA process in September. That decision was originally expected

for July. This adjustment had to do with the Board's schedule, not the HCP process. The HCP development timeline has not been affected.

- Q: Are the terms “conserve,” “maintain” and “protect” consistent with most or other HCPs?
 - A: Yes. However, sometimes slightly different words are used, such as “protect” instead of “conserve.” The SC and ST had a lot of discussion on which terms are more appropriate, and the intent is to also be consistent with wording in other ODF policy documents.

- Q: Regarding the term “maintain”, what scope or scale is the habitat value in that context? Is it referring to a harvest unit or across the entire permit area?
 - A: The conservation strategy is referring to what the habitat quality or degradation means for a species across the distribution and how that might influence decisions at the harvest unit level.

Next Steps:

Deb Nudelman, Kearns & West, concluded the meeting and thanked participants for their feedback and engagement. The next meeting open to the public will likely be held in early 2020.