

MEETING SUMMARY

WESTERN OREGON STATE FORESTS HCP SCOPING TEAM

Tuesday, April 28, 2020, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

By Webinar/Video Conference

ATTENDEES

Participants: Nick Palazzotto (ODF), Rich Szlemp (USFWS), Rod Krahmer (ODFW), Jim Muck (NOAA Fisheries), Tere O'Rourke (NOAA Fisheries), Ryan Singleton (DSL), Brian Pew (ODF), Mile Wilson (ODF)

Technical Consultant and Guests: Troy Rahmig (ICF), Aaron Gabbe (ICF), Randy Smith (ODF), Corey Grinnell (ODF)

Facilitation Team: Cindy Kolomechuk (ODF), Sylvia Ciborowski (Kearns & West), Deb Nudelman (Kearns & West)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Deb Nudelman (Kearns & West) welcomed members. Meeting participants introduced themselves.

Deb reviewed the agenda, which included: 1) Agency, stakeholder engagement, and model meeting updates, 2) Review modeling process, 3) Data Viewer tutorial, 4) Review draft Habitat Conservation Areas (HCAs), 5) Management activities inside HCAs, 6) Terrestrial species effects analysis overview, 7) Monitoring introduction, 8) Confirm topics for Steering Committee (SC) update, and 9) Approach going forward, next steps, and summary.

Deb noted that a key topic for today's meeting is to discuss and seek alignment around the management activities inside the HCAs, as the technical team will be moving into modeling shortly after today's meeting.

AGENCY UPDATES

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

Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF): 1) ODF staff met last week with Rich Szlemp, Rod Krahmer, and Julie Firman to walk through the HCAs in detail to help cue up their review. ODF also met with Ryan Singleton to talk about how the HCAs are overlapping with Common School Fund (CSF) lands. 2) Northern Spotted Owl surveys are underway and marbled murrelet

surveys will begin shortly. 3) The agency provided an update on the Coho litigation. The judge stayed the case until later in October due to the COVID-19 crisis, emergency management work that ODF is currently doing, and the HCP development work.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS): An agency announcement regarding fisher species should be coming out very soon.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW): The court has accepted our request to delay the marbled murrelet reclassification. The timeline will be shifted; it is likely the topic will be discussed at the November Commission meeting.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Troy Rahmig, ICF, explained that a stakeholder meeting was held on April 8 to provide an update on modeling, including timber harvest modeling, habitat suitability modeling, and aquatic-related modeling. Diverse stakeholders were invited, and nearly 40 people participated. Stakeholders asked a lot of good questions on the modeling methods and assumptions. Many provided follow-up questions after the meeting that were answered by ODF staff via email. Stakeholders expressed the desire to receive more details on the modeling and the assumptions going into the modeling. The project team is considering the best way to engage stakeholders as more detail becomes available.

The goal is to have another meeting open to the public in late June or early July. This will be a time to update stakeholders on conservation strategies and to receive feedback prior to the Board of Forestry (BOF) meeting on July 22.

REVIEW MODELING PROCESS

Troy presented an overview of the modeling process. He mentioned the team is currently conducting the forest inventory modeling. The next step is to run the conservation strategies through the forest inventory model.

Troy reviewed the HCP modeling timeline. Key topics of the presentation include:

- The ST has been discussing the HCAs and the silvicultural prescriptions that could occur within HCAs and the Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs). Shortly after today's meeting, the conservation strategies, HCAs, and RCAs will be put into the forest inventory model to understand how these constraints actually play out on the landscape.
- The forest inventory modeling exercise will elucidate harvest expectations, will show how habitat may change for the terrestrial species, and will demonstrate the changes to habitat value over time. Another expected outcome of the modeling is to make statements about where harvest interacts with terrestrial species occurrences and what the level of effect may be.

- By mid-May, Greg Latta, Research Assistant Professor of Forest Economics at University of Idaho, will likely have the first run of the forest inventory modeling completed. The model will then go through internal review with ODF staff to make sure it is running appropriately and to identify anything that needs to be tweaked and fixed. The team can likely bring a summary of the initial results to the ST after that first run. The ST can then provide input that would go into the refined modeling at ST meetings.
- After this first run and initial review, a refined model run will be conducted. Results are expected for early June. The hope is that the results of the second iteration will be sufficient, but some adjustments may be needed.
- By end of July, it is important to have solid enough results from the forest inventory modeling to include in the Administrative draft of the HCP.

DATA VIEWER TUTORIAL

Troy provided a tutorial of the Western Oregon Forest Data Viewer. The Data Viewer will be used to look at the HCAs and for model comparisons. The intent today is to provide a primer to help ST members be able to use the Data Viewer on their own in order to dive more deeply into the geographies and filters that are of interest to them. The project team will send a link to the Data Viewer to ST as well as a user's guide after today's meeting.

Troy reviewed the following basics of the Data Viewer:

- There are various base layer options available that can be turned on and off. A legend accompanies each base layer when it is turned on.
- Users are able to zoom into particular districts using the "navigation" feature.
- There are various features under the "resources" menu. The menu includes many layers of information that is organized by species. For each species, various layers of information can be turned on and off (i.e., occurrence data, species distribution, etc.).
- The "model comparisons" tab includes the ODF suitability models for each of the species, as well as other published models that have been used to inform the HCP modeling process.
- The "forest characteristics" tab allows you to see layers that show a desired future, stand level inventory age class, and canopy height.
- The "habitat growth models" shows how the terrestrial species habitat models change over time.

ST members were encouraged to explore the Data Viewer and consider if anything is missing. Members were asked to note if they have trouble using the tool or if there are additional ideas to make the Data Viewer better. The intent is to add to the Data Viewer as more information is learned over time.

The ST provided the following questions:

- Is there any way within canopy height and tree class to make your own breaks?
 - No, the breaks are built in; the data cannot be manipulated. However, if there is interest in doing some analysis in the tool, it can be built in. Right now, the tool is a viewer and does not allow for manipulation by the user.

REVIEW DRAFT HCAs

Troy explained the project team will be plugging the HCAs into the forest inventory model shortly after today's meeting. Adjustments to the HCAs won't be able to be made until after the first model run, so it is important to receive key comments and suggested edits to the HCAs today.

Nick Palazzotto, ODF, presented the draft HCAs using the Data Viewer. Key topics of the presentation included:

- Reviewed the conceptual HCA acreages within each District.
- Summaries of the HCAs are being developed to clarify and explain what the HCAs are comprised of.
- Described how HCAs were developed for North Coast forests. In the North Coast, ODF is the primary public landowner so ODF developed HCAs with the intent to build a functional landscape. First, northern spotted owl data was used to consider what a functional landscape could look like. The intent was to create large patches that would support multiple owls as well as the flow of owls between patches. Next, areas that do not have owl data but have marbled murrelet data were included. The final step in building the HCAs involved determining if the HCAs were sufficient for the remaining terrestrial species.
- Additional conservation actions are anticipated for outside of the HCAs as needed to support the overall landscape function and meet Greatest Permanent Value (GPV) goals.

Nick then described the HCAs by District. Key topics of the presentation are as follows:

- Astoria District HCAs:
 - The Astoria District currently has only two active owl sites. However, there is history of owl occurrence, and the HCAs incorporate that historic data. The District is fairly fragmented, and a lot of old forest does not currently exist.
 - Connectivity between forests is important. The draft HCAs are drawn to create this connectivity for movement of owls.

- Showed how stand level inventory age, class data, and Marbled Murrelet Management Areas (MMAs) are incorporated into the HCAs.
- There is a need to consider barred owl management.
- Showed red tree vole occurrence data.
- Tillamook District HCAs:
 - There is a burn in middle of the District and historic importance for northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet.
 - Existing occurrence and habitat data are used to create large functional patches that are reasonably well connected.
 - There are scattered patches in the southern part of the District that are mostly federally owned lands. HCAs are drawn with the desire for northern spotted owls and red tree voles to flow from those federal patches up north to ODF managed lands.
 - The north end of the District has three current owl sites which are incorporated into the HCAs.
- West Oregon District HCAs:
 - Existing conditions and ownership are important in this District and different than the northern forest. There are some federal ownership lands in this area, but not much. The forest in this District is relatively young, however, the older areas are quite old which provides good large patches for marbled murrelet that don't exist in other parts of the landscape. There are five northern spotted owl sites in this District.
 - The HCAs were drawn in this District by incorporating existing remaining old forest and land currently occupied by marbled murrelet. The intent was to make the existing large patches more functional. This strategy will be beneficial to northern spotted owls, marbled murrelets, and red tree voles.
- Western Lane District:
 - Land in this district is largely surrounded by federally owned lands. There is some old forest, lots of red tree vole, and some northern spotted owl and marbled murrelets.
 - The HCA boundaries were mainly driven by northern spotted owl occupancy. Most of the older stands are incorporated into the HCAs.
- North Cascades District:

- Santiam State Forest: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has ownership over the lands in the southern and northern parts of the District, the Forest Service has ownership over the lands to the east, and the Silver Falls State Park is in the northeast corner. There are few active northern spotted owl sites and some older stands.
- The HCAs were drawn in this District by considering the flow across the landscape. Primarily looked at active northern spotted owl sites, historic sites, and stand age to draw the HCAs.
- The HCAs were also drawn with the intent to promote forest conditions to support Oregon slender salamander populations, since that species is ubiquitous on the landscape. Thus, retention and recruitment of large downed wood will be an important conservation strategy in this area to support Oregon slender salamander.
- The Crab Tree Block of this forest is an isolated large block that is surrounded primarily by industrial lands. There is not a lot of occurrence or habitat available and no HCA is drawn here.
- Coos District:
 - Reviewed occurrence data on CSF lands.
 - In the northwest, there is a scattered tract near the coast which is in the defined coastal marten population area.
- Southwest District:
 - There are some lands here in the known historic range of coastal marten. The team still needs to incorporate information about current presence of coastal marten in the area.
 - This District is made up of many scattered tracts, as well as many known northern spotted owl sites.
 - The Glendale block of this District have areas that include owl habitat or that have known owls are included in HCAs. There is a mix of habitats in the area.

Discussion

ST members discussed the HCAs and provided the following questions and comments:

- Clarification that the Data Viewer includes the Linnell et al. (2017) RTV model that looks at ODF, BLM and Forest Service lands.
- Suggestion to summarize each HCA among several variables such as size, age class, distribution, suitable/not suitable habitat statistics, etc. Troy noted that this is a next step.

- Suggestion to hold a small group meeting to discuss specifics of the HCAs and to ask questions about how HCAs were drawn more specifically. Troy and Cindy noted that a small group meeting is possible. It would likely be best to hold a small group meeting or workshop the week of May 11, after the first set of model results are available. After today's meeting, the HCP project team will send out information about preferred deadlines to submit edits and comments on the Data Viewer and HCAs, and scheduling for a small group meeting/workshop.
- How do the HCAs relate to things outside of the HCAs? For example, is it possible for there to be old growth forest that is not inside of HCAs because it is not occupied, but would still be of value as future habitat? Additionally, what kind of management can be done to benefit owls that are outside of designated HCAs? ODF staff noted that a conservation action speaks to smaller patches outside of HCAs. ST members expressed interest in discussing the size of those smaller patches, and how to treat those areas if they contain old growth forest.

Troy reviewed next steps and explained that the project team will send instructions for the Data Viewer. ST members were encouraged to review the HCAs and let the team know if there are aspects of the Data Viewer that could be improved functionality.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES INSIDE HCAS

Nick framed the discussion on management activities inside HCAs. He presented a table that divided management inside HCAs from management outside of HCAs as well as showed age class. Several biologists and foresters have reviewed the proposal for management activities inside HCAs. The project team has been considering what kinds of management activities might be appropriate in various stand types (i.e., healthy conifer forests, hardwood areas in northern area, hardwood areas in southern area).

It is important to consider how much management needs to occur within an HCA, depending on the various attributes of that HCA (i.e., stand type, age class, etc.).

Nick then reviewed the prescriptions being considered for HCAs within the various stand types across age classes, including conifer stands, swiss needle cast conifer stands, hardwood stands in northwest areas, hardwood stands in southern areas, and outside of HCAs.

Discussion

ST members discussed the management activities inside HCAs and provided the following questions and comments:

- Reaffirmed that the intent of management actions inside of HCAs is to improve quantity and quality of habitat for the covered species, not for commercial purposes.
- Question about conversion of hardwoods. ODF clarified that the intent is to balance areas of the forest that contain densely packed hardwoods that are not beneficial to the species.

- Recognize that once modeling results are available, the group can better discuss how the management activities affect the forest over time.
- Note that the FPA has requirements around manual release. After a clear cut, might consider more natural regeneration rather than manual release to avoid oversaturating the clear-cut area with Douglas Fir seedlings. Under the FPA, will also need to meet free to grow minimums.
- Suggest breaking out management timeframes as 60-90 years rather than 60-80 years.
- Question about how the model will be programmed to meet biological goals and objectives rather than production or harvest related objectives. ODF responded that the Forest Vegetation Simulator (FVS) is the growth model of choice and is density independent. The prescription produces trees of a certain density. FVS as a growth model has a lot of flexibility built into it; it aims to grow stands forward and creates outputs that describe structure over time given certain silvicultural prescriptions.
 - ST members noted that it will be important to have a clear process to ensure that decisions are made with the intent to meet those species-driven objectives. For example, there may be policy guidelines that outline how to make determinations on what kind of activities are permissible within HCAs.

Deb asked members to indicate their general level of alignment with the proposed management activities and use of these silvicultural tools.

- Members were overall comfortable with the proposed suite of management activities as a starting point, and reiterated that the intent of the activities is to support the species.
- Other topics that will be important to discuss or be clear on include:
 - Framework for decision making to ensure that decisions around management activities are made with species objectives in mind.
 - Develop definitions/details of the silvicultural strategies.
 - Clearly define the sideboards for the management activities.
 - Define terms carefully so that everyone understands them clearly, including stakeholders.
 - Fuels reductions strategies.
 - Suggest that the ST define high-level objectives for HCAs, and then talk about how the proposed treatments can help achieve those objectives.
 - Troy added that the technical team is working on a summary for all HCAs, which will help connect the dots between existing conditions, desired future conditions, and how the prescriptions can help achieve those. The

first model run will help us better understand which tools the model selects to achieve better habitat conditions within the HCAs. We can have more a more informed conversation with the ST after the first model run, either at a regularly scheduled ST meeting or through a small group meeting.

- Another suggestion was to show example scenarios of growing out habitat with and without treatments, to demonstrate how habitat can grow out over time under various management scenarios.

TERRESTRIAL SPECIES EFFECTS ANALYSIS

Troy provided an overview of the terrestrial species effects analysis. Key topics of his presentation include:

- The effects analysis will be its own chapter in the HCP.
- An effects analysis will be completed for each species covered under the HCP. The effects analysis will include how the covered activities might affect covered species, the impact of take, and the net impact. The effects analysis involves the assessment of how harvest activities interact with species for both known occurrences and in modeled habitat. The effects analysis approach might be different for each species.
- There will be a spatial element to the effects analysis and there can be a temporal element. It will be important to consider when we estimate the effects on species and whether to look at effects at a point in time or through some other time period.
- Reviewed effects analysis approach for each species:
 - Northern Spotted Owl:
 - The effects analysis will be centered on known nest locations. After the harvest modeling is conducted, we can understand what has happened to any stands associated with nest locations and make assessments about how habitat is changing over time.
 - The effects analysis would report out any incidences of take of northern spotted owl modeled under the harvest modeling.
 - In places with no nest sites, the effects analysis will then look at places where there is potential northern spotted owl habitat. The effects analysis can show us any harvest impacts on highly suitable and suitable modeled habitat. A question is whether to consider effects only on known nest locations, or on highly suitable, suitable, and not-suitable modeled habitat as well.
 - Marbled Murrelets:

- The effects analysis will need to rely on modeled habitat to understand the effects on marbled murrelets because of the limited occurrence data.
 - We are assuming that the effects in highly suitable and suitable modeled habitat rise to the level of take and the effects in marginal or unsuitable modeled habitat do not rise to the level of take.
 - Red Tree Vole:
 - We are assuming that the removal of habitat in stands with previous occurrence observations is considered take. The analysis on red tree vole will look at habitat models.
 - We are assuming that effects in highly suitable and suitable modeled habitat rise to the level of take. But effects in marginal or unsuitable modeled habitat do not rise to the level of take.
 - Oregon Slender Salamander:
 - This species is unique as the removal of high-quality habitat might not translate to take for Oregon slender salamander. We will be able to track changes in habitat quality over time but harvesting Oregon slender salamander habitat does not necessarily mean that Oregon slender salamander won't persist in those areas.
 - Propose that the HCP acknowledges that mortality could occur in all modeled habitat types, but that habitat could persist post-harvest with conservation actions (e.g., downed wood targets).
 - The effects analysis approach for Oregon slender salamander is still in development and are open to ideas.
- As we go through the first iteration of forest inventory modeling, we will be able to summarize the effects to covered species in terms of acres of habitat, effects on known occurrences, etc. After, the project team will bring to the ST to review and discuss.

Discussion:

ST members discussed the effects analysis approach for the species covered under the HCP and provided the following comments and questions:

- Northern Spotted Owl: ST members noted the need to review and consider the proposed approach further. There was interest in understanding what the habitat designation is in activity centers.
 - ST members were encouraged to provide feedback on the effects analysis for any of the species and to follow-up with the project team in between ST meetings.

- The project team will send the presentation slides and the small group meeting summary to the ST to aid in their review.
- Oregon Slender Salamander:
 - Question about how effects would be quantified. Troy responded that there are several options, but it is difficult to quantify effects on an acreage basis because the species is so mobile.
 - Suggestion to look into the work of Dede Olson at the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station Forest Sciences Lab which has recommendations for habitat needs of the species.
 - Suggest adaptive management during HCP implementation if effects are difficult to quantify at this time.
 - The HCP team will continue to explore options for how to quantify effects for Oregon slender salamander.

Troy reviewed next steps to developing the effects analysis. These include:

- The project team will distribute the presentation slides and the small group meeting summary to the ST to aid in their review of the effects analysis.
- ST members were encouraged to provide feedback on the effects analysis for any of the species.
- The goal is to schedule a small group before the May terrestrial ST meeting to refine the effects analysis and to be able to summarize the assessment after the first model run. The project team will reach out to members to schedule the small group meeting.

MONITORING INTRODUCTION

Troy introduced monitoring. He explained that a summary will be sent out with the project team's thoughts on monitoring prior to next ST meeting so the ST is prepared to discuss.

The biological goals and objectives for terrestrial species does not include anything about the response of species populations. The objectives speak to increases/improvements in habitat, not increases in numbers of populations. This means that reporting out on the HCP will include whether habitat quantity and quality has increased over time. There will be a monitoring effort to make sure we are achieving the biological goals and objectives.

Additionally, there can also be an aspect of monitoring related to species monitoring. For example, northern spotted owl sites could continue to be monitored to track how the species are behaving over time, if they are being productive, and to identify where there might be new northern spotted owl populations popping up on the landscape. One of the values of the HCP is

that ODF does not do pre-timber activity surveys, but instead spends its resources on monitoring to understand the benefits of the conservation strategy.

The project team has been contemplating what monitoring could look like for the species. This will be summarized into a document and circulated to the ST prior to the next ST meeting in order to have a robust discussion and to receive early feedback from ST members.

CONFIRM TOPICS FOR STEERING COMMITTEE UPDATE

The April 30 SC meeting has been cancelled and the time is instead being used to have small group meetings with the agencies.

The next SC meeting is scheduled for May 28.

APPROACH GOING FORWARD, NEXT STEPS, AND SUMMARY

Cindy and Troy thanked members for their participation at the ST meetings and at the meetings in-between ST meetings as well as expressed appreciation for the work members are doing in-between the meetings to develop the HCP.

The next ST meetings are on May 5 and May 26.

Deb mentioned there may be focus group meetings with stakeholders over the coming months. The next meeting open to public is expected for late June or early July.

ACTION ITEMS

The following action items were identified throughout the meeting:

- Project team: Send a link to the Data Viewer and instructions to the ST to aid in their review of the HCAs.
- ST: Review the HCAs using the Data Viewer, consider if anything is missing, note if they have trouble using the tool, and let the team know if there are aspects that could be improved functionality.
- Project team: Schedule focused group meeting with ST members to review and discuss the HCAs as well as distribute a proposed path forward and deadlines.
- Project Team: Distribute presentation slides and small group meeting summary to the ST to aid in their review of the effects analysis.
- ST members: Review the approach for the effects analysis and provide feedback.
- Project team: Schedule a small group meeting with ST members to refine the effects analysis before the May terrestrial ST meeting.

- Project team: Summarize proposed approach for monitoring and circulate to the ST prior to the next ST meeting.