

# MEETING SUMMARY

## WESTERN OREGON STATE FORESTS HCP SCOPING TEAM

Tuesday, July 7, 2020, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

By Webinar/Video Conference

### ATTENDEES

**Participants:** Rich Szlemp (USFWS), Rod Krahmer (ODFW), Ryan Singleton (DSL), Jim Muck (NOAA Fisheries), Tere O'Rourke (NOAA Fisheries), Mike Wilson (ODF), Julie Firman (ODFW), Brian Pew (ODF), Josh Seeds (DEQ), Nick Palazzotto (ODF)

**Technical Consultant and Guests:** David Zippin (ICF), Melissa Klungle (ICF), Aaron Gabbe (ICF), Corey Grinnell (ODF), Randy Smith (ODF), Tod Haren (ODF)

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

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Deb Nudelman, Kearns & West, welcomed members.

Deb reviewed the agenda, which included: 1) Agency updates and report out on the Steering Committee (SC), 2) HCA modifications, 3) Timber Harvest Modeling update, 4) Effects Analysis Framework, 5) HCP Related Messaging for Open to the Public Meeting and BOF Meeting, 6) Confirm Topics for Steering Committee Update, 7) Approach going forward, next steps and summary

Deb reminded members that a meeting open to the public is scheduled for July 13, and a Board of Forestry meeting will be held on July 22. Today will be important to share messages that the ODF team intends to share with the public and the Board, and make sure ST is aligned in those messages.

### AGENCY UPDATES AND REPORT OUT ON STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

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

**Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF):** Oregon legislative session passed legislation that codified the grand bargain to set the stage for development of an HCP for private forests. There is an expected 18-month process to engage stakeholders in discussing conservation strategies. The process will be managed by the Governor's Office, and ODF Private Forests Division will

provide support. ODF would be involved in regulation and implementation of the HCP after it is developed. We anticipate stakeholders may be looking at the Western Oregon HCP conservation strategies as they consider developing strategies for the private forests HCP.

**NOAA Fisheries:** The agency's NEPA team has been meeting and will want to ensure that the potential NEPA process and public process are integrated as we move forward.

**Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW):** The agency expects to work from home until the end of August.

Deb provided an update on the Steering Committee meeting that was held on June 26, 2020. The topics included: the final draft of the Riparian Conservation areas (RCAs), wood recruitment modeling, on timber harvest modeling, and public presentation of the Habitat Conservation Areas (HCAs) and RCAs.

The SC wanted to communicate that they are impressed with the ST level of work, the group's dedication, and the collaborative nature and constructive progress that is being made. The SC was supportive of the pathway forward. The SC also discussed how to present information at the upcoming meeting open to the public and BOF meeting. The SC supported presenting the HCAs and timber harvest levels as ranges and presenting the RCAs as specific numbers when presenting information to the public and BOF. The SC also provided final agreement on the proposed Temperature Protection Zone (TPZ).

## **HABITAT CONSERVATION AREAS (HCA) MODIFICATIONS**

Brian Pew (ODF) noted that today the team will present the refinements to the HCAs as well as review process and next steps. He noted:

- ODF has received a large variety of feedback on the HCAs from ST members, and field officers. Recreation staff also provided their comments on how HCA designations could impact recreation. DSL also provided feedback.
- ODF took all of that feedback and made a second revision to the HCA boundaries. T

Mike Wilson (ODF) reviewed the process and habitat summaries and Data Viewer. Model results are available today, and the intent is to update the model and make refinements to the HCAs and prescriptions one more time for a third run, which will take place in late July. Mike's comments included:

- Review of Districts and Biologists Review Process: The Districts reviewed the HCAs. They prioritized what to remove from the HCAs in high, medium and low categories. They also proposed some additions to the HCAs. Then, staff biologists screened the removals and responded with their feedback on designating lands as low, medium or high priorities for HCA inclusion. Biologists also suggested some additions to the HCAs. ODF staff then reviewed all of these removal and addition suggestions and incorporated those suggestions that would likely lead to best meeting the biological goals and objectives for the species.

- Reviewed the amount of acreage across the permit area that is incorporated into HCAs and RCAs by District.

Aaron Gabbe (ICF) and Nick Palazzotto (ODF) then provided an orientation to the Data Viewer and provided more details on changes to the HCAs between drafts 1 and 2:

- The intent today is to orient ST members to the Data Viewer and how to navigate it, so that ST members can take a deeper dive on their own after today's meeting.
- The team is still revising the summary statistics for the HCAs, and those will be available later today.
- Reviewed the Data Viewer:
  - We are currently in draft 2 of the HCA. Members can use the base layer function to see drafts 1 and 2 of the HCAs. There is also a third layer option ("HCA draft changes") that shows the changes between drafts 1 and 2, including what acres were kept, removed, and added.
  - Resources tab of the Data Viewer: The Data Viewer includes modeled habitat layers. Can turn these layers on to show how the HCAs overlay on modeled habitat for the species. There are also layers that can be turned on and off to show other data related to the species (for example, owl sites, critical habitat for species, etc.)
  - Summary statistics for HCA drafts 1 and 2 are available on SharePoint.
- As a reminder, in drawing the HCAs it was important to provide for both North-South connectivity along the eastern and western parts of the forest, and also to make key East-West connections throughout the forest.
  - Looking at the changes between draft 1 and 2 shows that connectivity remains across the landscape.
  - In draft 1 of the HCAs, here were three main points of East-West connectivity. In the draft 2 of the HCAs, many of the changes made were to provide for connectivity of species. There were many options to provide for East-West connectivity, and staff biologists provided suggestions for where to draw HCAs in a way that provides good East-West connectivity.
- Characterized the HCA changes relative to forest conditions (age class, habitat suitability, etc.).
- Reviewed summary statistics for HCA draft 2, including the amount of acreage of highly suitable, suitable, and marginally suitable, and unsuitable habitat within HCAs. The information is broken down by District, so that ST members can see the acreage changes between HCA drafts 1 and 2 by District.

- ST members should reach out to Aaron Gabbe or Melissa Klungle if they need help interpreting the spreadsheets or for help in navigating the Data Viewer.

### **HCA Summary Tables:**

Nick provided an introduction to the HCA summary tables. He requested that ST members provide feedback on the summary tables, focusing on three things: 1) comments on take, 2) identifying geographic areas of specific concern, and 3) landscape function (does this set of HCAs build a functional landscape for the species?)

Nick reviewed the overall summary table and noted that under HCA draft 2, almost all highly suitable habitat within the permit area is within HCAs and the majority of suitable habitat within the permit area is within HCAs. The information broken up by District is helpful in understanding what percentage of habitat is within HCAs across the Districts.

Nick then shared a table that shows age class information. The table shows age class, stand type, and production ground of acres within HCA boundaries for both draft 1 and 2 of HCAs which helps show how much management will occur within HCAs.

- Nick clarified how ODF defines production ground, marginal ground, and no harvest areas. Nick will send more information related to that. He clarified that acres that are labeled as “production ground” does not mean that they will be harvested and confirmed that trees over 120 years old inside the HCAs would not be harvested.
- Another table shows acreage within and outside of HCP broken out by age class, stand type, and production ground.

Nick reviewed table (which still needs further review from field staff) showing frequency of silvicultural actions. He noted there is a broad array of silvicultural tools available. The table shows the relative frequency that they would be applied inside and outside of HCAs depending on age class, and by stand type.

### **Next Steps:**

David Zippin (ICF) and Cindy Kolomechuk (ODF) provided a proposed approach for moving forward:

- ST members are asked to review the data, DataViewer, and HCAs and provide feedback by July 14. The feedback should focus on the following questions:
  - 1) From your perspective, whether you think these changes would make it more difficult to meet the BGOs in the HCP and fully offset expected impacts of take.
  - 2) Are there areas of the HCAs that seem less critical to include as HCAs to meet BGOs or offset impacts of take, where ODF might have some flexibility to be able to meet its regulatory standard and meet BGOs?

- ODF will then consider ST feedback between July 14-21. ODF proposes scheduling a small group meeting on July 21 with Rich, Rod, and Brian to walk through any additional refinements. After that, these refined HCAS will be put into the Timber Harvest Model.
  - ST members can make spatial comments directly in the Data Viewer. Overarching comments that are not geography-specific can be put into a Word file and sent to ODF. The main interest is in hearing overall comments on HCAs and how they relate to meeting the BGOs.

**Discussion:**

ST members discussed the HCA modifications and proposed approach moving forward and provided the following questions and comments:

- Did the modifications take into account timber harvest objectives?
  - The emphasis in drawing the HCAs was on how to meet the conservation objectives, and staff also looked at the HCAs from the perspective of operations. The process also considered access, asking questions around whether some lands are difficult to access for timber harvest purposes.
- Clarifications on how to access the data files.
- Some members had concerns about not being able to make comments within the proposed timeline. Members discussed ways to support one another in providing comments efficiently, and technical issues related to accessing the information.
- ICF or ODF offered to walk through the information, if helpful. ODF will also send the spreadsheet files when they are available, rather than links to SharePoint.
- Members noted that further information on silvicultural activities that will take place within and outside of HCAs, as well as information on pace and scale, will assist in determining the efficacy of the approach in meeting the Biological Goals and Objectives.

**TIMBER HARVEST MODELING UPDATE**

Brian Pew (ODF) provided an overview on timber harvest modeling:

- As a reminder, the first model run was informative, but not accurate, and was considered a calibration run.
- The next version of the model is working much better and providing more accurate results. The results came late last week and are still undergoing field review, but ODF is providing preliminary results to the ST today. He noted that it is important to understand the rules and constraints within the model. The outputs of the model have a lot of interesting reporting, including details on forest management.

- At the July 13 meeting open to the public, ODF plans to review the timber harvest model results generally.

Mike reviewed the timber harvest model and outputs:

- Model's rules and linkages workbook: This workbook helps track how the model functions. It is divided into general and specific levels and includes some appendices tabs around prescriptions and other details. Mike reviewed some of the tabs in the workbook:
  - General model information tab: Shows the inventory, type of model, periods of time, general model goals, spatial data, and other information.
  - General model rules tab: Includes harvest rules, such as administrative rules that limit harvest. Also includes information on the relative impact of these rules on model outputs.
  - Policy model rules tab: Provides information on the high-level model scenario rules, including economic rules like discount rates, harvest objectives, operations rules, among others. This tab also shows the relative impact of these policy rules on the model outputs.
  - Model scenario rules tab: Lists the HCP strategies, including strategies in the HCAs, forest health strategies such as stand type conversions, and others. These HCP strategies are incorporated as model rules in the model.
  - There are also tables that lay out Reforestation prescriptions, yield table prescriptions, log merchandizing,
  - Age regulation tab: Shows the regulation on percentage of tree stand age class outside of HCAs.
  - Silviculture Actions tab: shows the silvicultural prescriptions that the model uses inside of HCAs.
  - There are also tabs showing the riparian strategies, conservation strategies, and HCA strategies.

### **Discussion:**

ST members discussed the model rules information and provided the following questions and comments:

- Clarification that the model does not do a lot of forest management inside of HCAs. For this model run, the intent was to have general silvicultural prescriptions rather than specific or well-defined prescriptions. The prescriptions come out of the current prescription that ODF uses.

- Suggestion to have a future discussion with the ST on the age structure landscape numbers that go into the model.
- Was the model set up to optimize the habitat suitability index over time? Does the model show that habitat suitability increases over time within the HCAs? It is important to see that habitat is improving over time. The intent of any silvicultural activities within HCAs should be to improve habitat.
  - The model includes a model objective to have habitat stay the same or get better over time. The intent is to hold habitat steady or improve.

### **Model Outputs:**

Tod Haren (ODF) reviewed the model outputs:

- These results came back late last week, so the team is still working through them and they may be refined.
- The workbook provides a high-level report, and then reports broken out by district, as well as some additional tabs.
- The overall reports tab shows various charts and graphs, including:
  - Total annual harvest by harvest type (regenerative and thinning) over time
  - Annual harvest acres over time by harvest type
  - Annual delivered value (pond value) over time by harvest type
  - Annual harvest costs over time, broken down by road management, hauling, and logging costs
  - Annual net harvest revenue over time
  - Harvest volume per acre over time, by harvest type
  - Harvest value per acre by harvest type over time
  - Pond value of logs over time by harvest type
  - Logging costs per MBF over time by harvest type
  - Stump to mill breakdown
  - Average stumpage over time
  - Annual free-to-grow cost over time
  - Harvest acres in HCAs over time, by harvest type

- Harvest in designated Swiss Needle Cast stands, and harvest in designated hardwood stands, both inside and outside of the HCAs over time
- Shared a tab showing the same model outputs by District.
- Another tab shows information on harvest volume by unit (by District), harvest volume by geographic region. The 5% rule applies.
- Other tabs include:
  - Unit size
  - Harvest VPA
  - Age at Harvest
  - Pond Value
- ODF will be looking closer into some of the model outputs and correct any errors. Note that this model run used the draft 1 of HCA designations, so will need to be updated to incorporate the revised HCA designations.

Tod noted that stand age distribution is not included in the workbook but is reported separately in an age class distribution graphic. It shows age class distribution over time within HCAs and outside of HCAs. By the end of the permit term, much of the forest within HCAs is expected to be in older age classes.

**Discussion:**

ST members discussed the model outputs and provided the following questions and comments:

- Will there be changes made to the model if the model isn't performing as desired? Will revising the model potentially change the HCA boundaries, or initiate the need to revisit the HCA boundaries?
  - ODF is considering pace and scale within the HCAs. For example, there are some desired rehabilitation treatments in swiss needle cast forests are not being reflected in the model.
- How will the harvest volume compare to the current ongoing ODF operations and revised draft FMP?
  - The harvest volume under HCP modeling is less than what ODF does under current ODF operations. Greg is modeling harvest under the revised FMP now and should have those results in a couple weeks. It is likely that the third harvest run will include further constraints on harvest.

**Discussion:**

ST members discussed and provided the following questions and comments:



- ST members made reflections on the projected age class distribution, and on the amount of harvest expected early on versus later in the permit term. The model shows that there will be more harvest expected early on, and less later in the permit term.
- Clarifications about how the model treats different age classes of stands, and what age of stands are harvestable.

## **HCP RELATED MESSAGING FOR MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND BOF MEETING**

Deb reminded members that a meeting open to the public will be held July 13, followed by the BOF in July 22. The intent is also to have joint stakeholder meetings in early August, followed by meeting open to public on Sep 16.

Brian stated a desire to message to the public the riparian strategy and the HCAs. The plan is to present the package of the riparian strategy. Because work is needed on the HCAs, the HCAs will be presented as ranges. It will be made clear that the HCAs are a work in progress and that the final HCAs may fall within that range or outside of it. ODF would also like to present average harvest volumes for the 70-year permit term.

- Brian presented a table showing the proposed HCA ranges, conservation ranges, and harvest ranges to present to the public. The information is split up by geographic area.

Deb noted that the SC was supportive of presenting the HCAs as a range to the public and BOF.

Cindy invited ST members to participate in the July 13 and July 22 meetings, to hear directly from stakeholders and the public and decision makers.

### **Discussion:**

Members discussed messaging to the public and Board of Forestry and made the following comments:

- It should be made clear that economics are an important element of the HCP, because if ODF cannot afford to implement the HCP then it cannot move forward. Even though the title is “habitat conservation,” it should be clear that the economics are important too.

## **EFFECTS ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK**

Melissa presented the effects analysis:

- Reviewed updates to frequency table.
- Provided updates on the covered activities, noting that herbicide and fertilizer use are covered, and illegal ORV use is not covered.

- Provided the overall structure of the Effects Analysis Chapter. It includes: sources and types of take, impacts of the taking on salmon and steelhead, beneficial and net effects on salmon and steelhead, effects on critical habitat, and cumulative effects on salmon and steelhead.
- Presented an approach to providing an overview on how effects will be distributed across the permit area, using an Effects analysis summary table.

## **Discussion**

Members discussed the effects analysis framework and made the following comments:

- Jim Muck (NOAA Fisheries) suggested a follow-up conversation with ICF on the action of pesticide application.
- Climate change should be included in the effects analysis.

## **APPROACH GOING FORWARD, NEXT STEPS, AND SUMMARY**

ODF staff and Deb thanked members for their participation.

Deb noted that Kearns & West will send the ST an email with all upcoming dates for meetings open to the public, meetings with stakeholders. and Board of Forestry meetings.

Cindy reminded members to strive to provide input on the DataViewer and HCAs by July 14, or before July 21 as possible.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

The following action items were identified throughout the meeting:

- ST members: Email Aaron Gabbe or anyone on ICF team for access to DataViewer if needed.
- ST members: Reach out to Aaron Gabbe or Melissa if you need help interpreting the spreadsheets or for help in navigating the DataViewer.
- ST members: Provide feedback on the DataViewer and HCAs to ODF by July 14.
- ODF: set up a small group meeting to discuss ST feedback on HCAs.
- ST members: Confirm to Mike after today's meeting that you are able to get into Data Viewer. Mike will forward the access information to ST members via email again.
- KW: Send ST an email with all public and stakeholder meeting upcoming dates..

- ICF/Jim Muck (NOAA Fisheries): Have a follow-up conversation on the action of pesticide application.