

MEETING SUMMARY

WESTERN OREGON STATE FORESTS HCP STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, November 8, 2022, 9:00 am – 11:00 am

By Webinar and Teleconference Only

PARTICIPANTS

Steering Committee: Mike Wilson (ODF), Craig Rowland (USFWS), Joe Zisa (USFWS), Kim Kratz (NOAA Fisheries), Kate Wells (NOAA Fisheries), Kevin Blakely (ODFW), Bill Ryan (DSL), Leah Feldon (DEQ), Bernadette Graham-Hudson (ODFW)

Technical Consultants: Melissa Klungle and Jordan Mayor (ICF)

Facilitation Team: Sylvia Ciborowski and Ellen Palmquist (Kearns & West), Cindy Kolomechuk (ODF)

WELCOME AND AGENDA REVIEW

Sylvia Ciborowski, Kearns & West, reviewed the agenda which included: 1) Welcome and Agenda Review, 2) Agency Updates and Stakeholder Engagement, 3) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Process Update, 4) Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Finalization, 5) Steering Committee (SC) Direction to Scoping Team (ST), and 6) Approach Going Forward, Next Steps, and Summary.

Mike Wilson opened the meeting by thanking everyone for continuing to be part of the process.

AGENCY UPDATES AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

SC members provided the following updates relevant to the Western Oregon HCP process:

- **ODF:** 1) Mike Wilson introduced the Policy Deputy for State Forests, Ron Zilli, who will be participating on the HCP ST. 2) The next Board of Forestry (BOF) meeting will take place on November 16. During the September 7 BOF meeting, Board members asked several questions about the differences between alternatives 3 and 5 in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). ODF will share additional information during the November 16 meeting. Mike noted that the Services have also been involved in pulling together information for the BOF to help answer their questions. ODF has invited Kim Kratz and Joe Zisa to attend the BOF meeting in case any questions related to the NEPA process come up. The Marbled Murrelet Management Plan is also on the agenda for the November 16 BOF meeting. 3) ODF is providing additional information to the Services to support Biological Opinion (BiOp) development. 4) The Forest Management Plan (FMP) timeline has been extended to allow additional time for modeling. ODF anticipates bringing modeled outcomes to the BOF in August 2023.

- **DSL:** DSL is supporting the HCP and FMP processes for the Elliott State Forest. Jan 21, 2024 is the deadline for the Elliott State Research Authority (Oregon State University) to begin managing the Elliott State Research Forest. The HCP is scheduled to go out for public review on November 18 and the project team is on track to meet the July 1 deadline. The State Land Board will also need to ensure that financial obligations for Common School Lands are met before decoupling the land. DSL will need to verify that the plan Oregon State University presents is financially viable. DSL is hoping that the FMP will be adopted in 2023.
 - **Question:** Is the State Land Board going to decouple all Common School Lands or just land for the Elliott State Forest?
 - **Bill Ryan:** The State Land Board would only decouple land for the Elliott State Forest.
- **ODFW:** 1) Bernadette Graham-Hudson introduced herself as the Wildlife Division Administrator at ODFW. Kevin Blakely is retiring in February 2023, and Bernadette will take over his role on the SC starting in November. Bernadette was previously the West Region Manager for ODFW and has worked in the Willamette. 2) State agencies are submitting endangered species management plans for murrelets to ODFW in January 2023. ODFW is working with the Commission to determine how review will work and plans to include a staff review as part of the six-month process. If there are changes that need to be made to the plans, ODFW will have time to work with agencies on modifications.
- **DEQ:** Leah Feldon is serving as the Interim Director for DEQ. The Commission is in the process of recruiting a new permanent Director and anticipates filling the position in January 2023.
- **USFWS:** Joe Zisa recently returned comments on the Draft Final HCP to ODF.
- **ICF:** ICF is involved in the Private Forest HCP process and is working with ODF to develop the HCP based on the Private Forests Accord and new rules from the Oregon Private Forests Practices Act. Legislation dictated that a draft be submitted to the Services by the end of 2022 and the group anticipates meeting this deadline.
 - **Comment:** Ongoing work is needed before the Services will recognize the need to trigger the start of NEPA.

Stakeholder Engagement Updates

Sylvia Ciborowski shared the following stakeholder engagement update:

- ODF will hold a meeting open to the public in February 2023 to share an update on the HCP and FMP. The meeting will primarily focus on the FMP and will also include an update on the HCP and NEPA processes.

NEPA PROCESS UPDATE

Kate Wells, NOAA Fisheries, shared that the agency is working with ICF to review response to public comments and incorporate edits to the Final EIS. Kate noted that this is an iterative process that has involved a lot of work and collaboration.

HCP FINALIZATION

Melissa Klungle, ICF, shared that ODF is continuing to work with the ST to address final topics in the HCP. These topics include:

Recreation Compliance

During the last ST meeting, ODF shared the intent to bring existing trails into compliance with the HCP (any new trails will be in compliance). To do this, ODF plans to conduct a trail inventory and assessment. A one time inventory will take place during the first five years of implementation and ODF will identify areas where additional work may be needed if there is degradation to habitat. A yearly assessment could include a review of up to 50% of the trail network in any given year to see if there's anything about the trail that could be contributing to degradation of habitat. ODF would then make plans to bring these sections of trails into compliance with the HCP. ODF has alignment on this topic with the ST.

Road and Trail Miles

ODF is working with the Services to ensure that data for development of roads and trails over the permit term is presented in a way that allows the agencies to complete their BiOps. ODF is reviewing road and trail miles to ensure that numbers used in the BiOps are appropriately reflected in the HCP. ODF is continuing to have small group meetings with the Services to finalize approaches for tracking and monitoring development of road and trail miles and will bring any updates to the ST for awareness.

Permit/Land Transfer

There are some discrepancies with how land transfer is described between Chapter 1 and Chapter 8 of the HCP. ODF is working to make sure that the language is in line with the agency's intent. If land is swapped or sold it would no longer be covered by the permit. While any new land acquired by ODF would be covered under their permit, Updated language will be shared with the ST at the next meeting for alignment.

Finalization of the HCP

ODF is working with the Services to support the development of the BiOps and finalize the HCP. The timeline to finalize the HCP will be pushed out to allow for more time to work through responses to comments with the Services and comments from USFWS on the HCP. It's important to note that all substantive changes have been incorporated and are in the version of the HCP with the NEPA Team. ODF will continue to work closely with the NEPA Team to ensure they have the latest information.

Discussion

Question: Is ODF considering land exchanges as well as land acquisitions? This language may need to be reviewed to ensure alignment between NOAA Fisheries and ODF.

- **ODF:** When developing the plan area, ODF does acquisitions and land exchanges. ODF would complete an assessment to make sure the land transfer is equitable and that the biological value of the land is equal to or better than the land exchanged. This language will be shared with NOAA Fisheries for review.

Comment: It's important for NOAA Fisheries to be able to monitor the distribution and timing of road construction at a relatively granular scale. This provides certainty with respect to NOAA Fisheries' evaluation of roads and impacts.

STEERING COMMITTEE DIRECTION TO SCOPING TEAM

Sylvia Ciborowski asked the SC if they had any direction for the ST. The SC did not provide any specific direction.

APPROACH GOING FORWARD, NEXT STEPS, AND SUMMARY

Sylvia Ciborowski shared that 2023 Steering Committee meetings will take place on fourth Tuesdays from 12-2pm. The next Steering Committee meeting will take place on January 24.