

# MEETING SUMMARY

## WESTERN OREGON STATE FORESTS HCP SCOPING TEAM

Wednesday, February 22, 2023, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

By Webinar/Video Conference

### ATTENDEES

**Participants:** Jeff Young (NOAA Fisheries), Joe Zisa (USFWS), Rod Krahmer (ODFW), Julie Firman (ODFW), Jiajia Lin (DEQ), Josh Seeds (DEQ), Nick Palazzotto (ODF), Ron Zilli (ODF)

**Technical Consultants and Guests:** 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, welcomed Scoping Team (ST) members and reviewed the agenda, which included: 1) Welcome and Agenda Review, 2) Agency and Stakeholder Engagement Updates, 3) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Process Update, 4) Monitoring, Reporting, and Implementation, 5) Reflection on Process and Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Content, 6) Report out to HCP Steering Committee (SC), and 7) Approach Going Forward, Next Steps, and Summary.

### AGENCY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT UPDATES

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

- **ODF:** 1) ODF scheduled interviews for the Aquatic and Riparian Specialist position. 2) ODF is hiring for an Information Unit Manager to support data management, inventory, and GIS. Applications are anticipated to be available by mid-March.
- **ODFW:** No updates.
- **DEQ:** No updates.
- **NOAA Fisheries:** No updates.
- **USFWS:** No updates.

## Board of Forestry Special Meeting

Nick Palazzotto, ODF, provide an update on the February 15 Special Board of Forestry (BOF) meeting. ODF needed to develop transition Implementation Plans (IPs) for fiscal years 2024 and 2025 while the agency finalizes the HCP and Forest Management Plan (FMP). The plans provide direction for implementation with Incidental Take Permits (ITPs) under the current FMP. Harvest modeling for the IPs was lower than anticipated (165-180 million board feet) and created concern with stakeholders and the public. During the BOF meeting, members discussed pursuing an alternative HCP and determined that this was not the course of action they would take. ODF anticipates having modeling results in late June to better understand what harvest volumes may be expected under the HCP. It is anticipated that modeled outputs will be shared with the BOF during the September meeting.

Cindy Kolomechuk noted that ODF is continuing to work with the Federal Services to provide accurate information on harvest levels for Biological Opinion (BiOps) development.

## Stakeholder Engagement Updates

Sylvia Ciborowski shared that ODF held a meeting open to the public on February 7. The meeting was well attended, with close to 100 participants from various interest groups. Many comments focused on financial impacts, climate change and carbon sequestration, and timber harvest. ODF plans to share modeled outcomes with the public in the summer along with the Draft FMP.

Cindy Kolomechuk, ODF, noted that ODF posted a [summary of key changes](#) for the HCP to the website. During the meeting open to the public, ODF received a request to share the Final HCP prior to the release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). ODF will wait to release the HCP with the Final EIS to be in line with the Administrative Procedures Act. Cindy explained that response to public comment will be included in the Final EIS. If ODF released the Final HCP ahead of the Final EIS, the public comment would not be available for context. ODF will share an updated summary of changes closer to the Final HCP.

## **NEPA PROCESS UPDATE**

Jeff Young, NOAA Fisheries, shared that the agency continues to work with USFWS and ICF on response to comments and is waiting on information on harvesting from ODF to complete the NEPA process.

## **MONITORING, REPORTING, AND IMPLEMENTATION**

Melissa Klungle, ICF, reminded ST members that they reviewed changes to Chapter 8 during their January meeting. ST members generally agreed to the changes and the language was sent out after the meeting for review. Melissa noted that ODF is currently working on edits to the annual reporting process with the Services. Once this revised language is available the team will share it with ST for review in advance of or during the next meeting.

## Discussion

*Sylvia Ciborowski asked ST members if they were ok moving forward with the updated language in Chapter 8. ST members were generally in alignment with moving forward with the language. NOAA Fisheries will have additional comments on annual reporting and permit area language and will follow-up with ODF.*

## REFLECTIONS ON PROCESS AND HCP CONTENTS

Sylvia Ciborowski asked ST members to reflect on the HCP and process to date and consider if there are any additional issues for discussion as the HCP moves into its final stages. Cindy Kolomechuk noted that ST members have spent a lot of time and effort over the past several years on the process. This is an opportunity to bring up any questions or remaining items to address as the HCP moves closer to finalization.

ST members provided the following reflections:

ODFW: A lot of hard work has gone into the HCP; impressed with the competence and diligence of all the agencies at the table. ODFW feels optimistic that the protocols proposed will achieve the biological goals and objectives and hopes lessons from the past are carried forward. This HCP was put together in a way that's different from previous attempts, including facilitation and technical consultants. ODF is in a strong position to move the HCP forward.

DEQ: Fully supportive of the HCP, especially as it relates to riparian and aquatic management. The plan is well put together and there has been an admirable effort to include input from lots of stakeholders and agencies. The HCP seem implementable and has good capacity for adaptation over time as more information is available. The HCP complements other processes and fits into the larger regulatory complex.

NOAA Fisheries: The aquatic conservation strategy was developed based on current science and NOAA Fisheries is confident in this. The process protection zones will play a big part in minimizing take and adverse effects on species. The process has been challenging at times. Enjoyed working with this group of people. There is lots of knowledge and diversity in knowledge on the ST that benefits the process.

ST members flagged the following remaining issues:

**Question:** How was fuels treatment addressed in the HCP? Will fuels treatment also be included in the FMP?

- **Nick Palazzotto:** Fuels treatment will be addressed in the FMP. The HCP allows for fuels reduction in HCAs in areas that are high risk with review and agreement from the Services and ODFW. ODF is continuing to work on a holistic approach to disturbance and disturbance prevention in the FMP.

Sylvia thanked everyone for their collaboration moving through the process. Cindy shared appreciation for the group's work and dedication moving forward. ODF will continue to adhere to the process and go through the ST and SC to seek alignment on anything issues that comes up.

## **REPORT OUT TO HCP STEERING COMMITTEE**

Sylvia Ciborowski asked the ST if they had anything to report to the SC. The ST did not provide any updates for the SC.

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

Sylvia Ciborowski shared appreciation for the ST's engagement in the HCP process reviewed upcoming meetings before closing the meeting.

- Tuesday, 2/28 12-2pm – *HCP Steering Committee Meeting*
- Wednesday, 3/22 1-3pm – *HCP Scoping Team Meeting*