

MEETING SUMMARY

WESTERN OREGON STATE FORESTS HCP

JOINT STEERING COMMITTEE AND SCOPING TEAM MEETING

Tuesday, February 25, 2025, 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

By Webinar and Teleconference Only

PARTICIPANTS

Steering Committee: Mike Wilson (ODF), Joe Zisa (USFWS), Kate Wells (NOAA Fisheries), Jennifer Wigal (DEQ), Bernadette Graham Hudson (ODFW), Chris Castelli (DSL), Dan Edge (OSU)

Scoping Team: Lance Kruzic (NOAA Fisheries), Jeff Young (NOAA Fisheries), Julie Firman (ODFW), Rod Krahmer (ODFW), Josh Seeds (DEQ), Jiajia Lin (DEQ), Ryan Singleton (DSL), Nick Palazzotto (ODF), Erik Moberly (ODF), Corey Grinnell (ODF), Vanessa Petro (ODF)

Guests: Tim Holschbach (ODF)

Technical Consultants: David Zippin, Melissa Klungle, and Jordan Mayor (ICF)

Facilitation Team: Ellen Palmquist and Gillian Garber-Yonts (Kearns & West), Cindy Kolomechuk (ODF)

WELCOME AND AGENDA REVIEW

Ellen Palmquist, Kearns & West, reviewed the agenda which included: 1) Welcome and Agenda Review, 2) Agency Updates and Stakeholder Engagement Updates, 3) Process and Timeline Updates, 4) Potential Addition of Covered Species, 5) Supplemental Data Package Update, 6) Steering Committee (SC) Direction to Scoping Team (ST), 7) Approach Going Forward, Next Steps, and Summary

Mike Wilson, ODF, welcomed SC and ST members and thanked them for joining.

AGENCY UPDATES AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

SC and ST members introduced themselves and provided the following updates relevant to the Western Oregon HCP process:

- **NOAA Fisheries:** Lance Kruzic is the new Oregon coast branch supervisor. Kate Wells, replacing Kim Kratz, is the new regional assistant administrator.
- **OSU:** No updates.
- **USFWS:** No updates.
- **DSL:** No updates
- **DEQ:** No updates.
- **ODFW:** No updates.

- **ICF:** No updates.
- **ODF:** 1) Cindy Kolomechuk shared that ODF is applying for a Section 6 HCP grant from USFWS and that to date ODF has received four grants totaling \$3 million. 2) Mike Wilson shared that Cal Mukumoto, ODF State Forester, resigned in January. Kate Skinner is acting as the interim state forester. Mike introduced Tim Holschbach as the new interim deputy state forester who oversees the state forest and the forest resources divisions. He noted that Kyle Williams is the deputy director of the fire protection program. Alexi Lovechio is replacing Bob VanDyke on the Board of Forestry (BOF) representing conservation interests. 3) A bill has been introduced to the Oregon Legislature that would shift the power to select the state forester from the BOF to the Governor. This shift would ensure the State Forester would be responsible for organizational management, while the deputy State Forester would provide technical expertise related to forest and fires.

PROCESS AND TIMELINE UPDATES

HCP Process Update

Cindy Kolomechuk, ODF, shared an update on the revised Draft HCP and noted that ODF has been implementing the primary conservation actions for the covered species since July 2023.

Cindy shared the following updates to the Draft HCP.

- Updated stream enhancement language.
- Included process-based restoration (PBR) to promote large recruitment in riparian areas that had been previously overstocked.
- Clarified language for Equipment Restriction Zones (ERZs).
- Added structure and clarity to the monitoring program so reportable metrics could be tied to conservation methods required for HCP compliance.

Cindy shared that all updates, except for the restructured monitoring program, have been shared with the ST and SC. The restructured monitoring program updates will be shared with the SC and ST following feedback from the Services. She added that all changes were made in collaboration with the Services and updates have been documented in the HCP [Key Changes Document](#).

NEPA Process Update

Lance Kruzic, NOAA Fisheries, reminded the SC and ST that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) went out for public comment in 2022. NOAA Fisheries is working to determine if a supplemental EIS is needed and hopes to reach a final decision in late March, following collaboration with USFWS. The Services aim to move forward with the HCP in an expedited manner. Lance added that Michelle McMullin is working with the ICF National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) team on addressing public comments and updating the Draft Final EIS.

Section 7 Process Update

Joe Zisa, USFWS, shared that the Section 7 process has formally begun and is in its early stages.

POTENTIAL ADDITION OF COVERED SPECIES

Vanessa Petro, ODF, shared that USFWS provided an updated workplan in 2024 with a list of potential species listings. Some of these species are not currently covered by the HCP. She shared that the Services are not able to issue Incidental Take Permits (ITPs) if identified actions would result in adverse impacts to listed species. ODF staff conducted a status assessment of species identified in the workplan and discussed which were likely to occur in the permit area, which species are likely to be listed before or after the issuance of the ITPs, and which species would be protected based on existing conservation commitments. She shared that ODF is considering adding the following three species to the HCP:

- Western ridged mussel
- Western torrent salamander
- Northwest pond turtle

Vannessa shared that ODF is working with ICF to develop species accounts, biological goals and objectives, and an effects analysis for the three new species. ODF's interest is to ensure that effects will be mitigated by existing conservation commitments. She noted that ODF is not anticipating new effects but is waiting on the analysis before confirming.

Nick Palazzotto noted that USFWS shared information about potential species listings with other agencies and organizations working on HCPs.

SUPPLEMENTAL DATA PACKAGE UPDATE

Corey Grinnell, ODF, shared that the Supplemental Data Package (SDP) was requested to support USFWS's Section 7 process and added that it is a high-level summary of the HCP. The SDP was delivered to the Services on October 10, 2024. Corey shared that Joe Zisa submitted comments on the SDP and ODF plans to share an updated version by February 28.

STEERING COMMITTEE DIRECTION TO SCOPING TEAM

Ellen Palmquist asked the SC if they had any direction for the ST. The SC did not provide any direction.

APPROACH GOING FORWARD, NEXT STEPS, AND SUMMARY

Ellen Palmquist thanked SC and ST members for attending and shared upcoming meeting dates:

- May 27, 12-2pm – *HCP Joint SC ST Mtg*

Mike Wilson thanked the group for their attendance and for continuing to engage in the process before closing the meeting.