

# MEETING SUMMARY

## WESTERN OREGON STATE FORESTS HCP SCOPING TEAM

Tuesday, September 3, 2019, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Oregon Department of Forestry, 2600 State St, Salem, OR

### ATTENDEES

**Participants:** Julie Firman (ODFW), Rod Krahmer (ODFW), Jim Muck (NOAA Fisheries), Ken Phippen (NOAA Fisheries), Nick Palazzotto (ODF), Mark Meleason (ODF), Rich Szlemp (USFWS)- *by phone*, Brian Pew (ODF), Ryan Singleton (DSL) - *by phone*

**Technical Consultant and Guests:** David Zippin (ICF), Aaron Gabbe and Melissa Klungle (ICF) – *by phone*, Mike Wilson (Resource Specialist Manager, ODF)

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

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

Deb reviewed the agenda, which includes: 1) Agency updates from Scoping Team (ST) members, 2) Update on stakeholder engagement, 3) Report out on Steering Committee (SC) progress, 4) Timber harvest modeling basics, 5) Review Steering Committee feedback on Biological Goals and Objectives, 4) Update on Conservation Strategy development, 6) and Review of HCP Development Schedule and Timeline.

Cindy Kolomechuk (ODF) reflected on the past ST meeting and reminded members that they spent many meetings and workshops refining the Biological Goals and Objectives (BGOs). The BGOs were reviewed by the SC and the hope is to seek stakeholder input on the BGOs in the coming months.

### AGENCY UPDATES

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

**Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF):** ODF is nearing the end of developing the fisher candidate conservation agreement. The safe harbor will likely get a one-year extension.

Spring Chinook may be up-listed in the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The ST may want to consider including spring Chinook as a covered species in the Western Oregon HCP.

**NOAA Fisheries:** NOAA Fisheries' revised ESA rules have been released.

## **WESTERN OREGON HCP STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT UPDATE**

The next Meeting Open to the Public is scheduled for October 15 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. ODF is working to secure a location. The meeting will be located either in Salem, Portland, or closer to the coast.

## **REPORT OUT ON STEERING COMMITTEE PROGRESS**

Cindy explained that the SC met on August 29, 2019. They reviewed the Mission, Vision, and Goals and the comments made by the public, stakeholders, and ST members. The SC updated the Mission, Vision, and Goals and have a final version that may be presented to the ST at their next meeting and to the public at the October 15 Meeting Open to the Public.

The SC also reviewed the BGOs during the meeting. Today, the ST will see the SC comments and edits. The SC were comfortable with the BGOs going to the public as a conceptual draft.

Deb encouraged ST members to meet with their SC counterparts to check-in on their thoughts on the HCP process and products to date, and to share any messages with the project team and other ST members. ST members should seek to meet with SC members in September, prior to the October ST meeting.

## **TIMBER HARVEST MODELING BASICS**

Brian Pew (ODF) introduced Mike Wilson, who has been leading the modeling work at ODF. He understands the interaction between harvest modeling and species modeling. Greg Lotta at ICF is doing modeling work for ODF; he is strategizing how to develop the model to get the information needed for the HCP. The information needed will inform the development of the HCP, will inform the Board of Forestry in their decision-making, and will be used internally to help manage the forest.

Brian described the four model runs anticipated:

- The first modeling run is minimally constrained (i.e., Forest Practices Act with current take avoidance strategies) in order to calibrate the model. It is understood that this minimal approach would not be taken, but it will help set up the model for future runs and will help provide information on how much of the landscape is operable.
- The second model run will include forest management practices that ODF is currently implementing.

- The third model includes revised take avoidance and Forest Management Plan (FMP).
- The fourth model would be HCP development.

## Discussion

ST members discussed and provided the following questions and comments:

- Members discussed concerns around the minimally constrained model. They noted that the Forest Practice Act (FPA) has been misrepresented in the past and is usually overestimated. The FPA is a difficult set of prescriptions to apply to a landscape scale; it is not straightforward. Will need to avoid these issues in the modeling run.
  - There was concern that modeling the minimally constrained option would give the misperception that this option looks like a viable one, even though it is not a legal option. ODF cannot implement only FPA practices because that strategy would not meet Greatest Permanent Value (GPV) requirements.
  - Others noted that running this minimally constrained model is useful because it provides a minimum sidebar. There is value in using it as a comparison point because it represents mitigation that ODF would be providing for the duration of the permit term.
- A member asked what the proposed No Action is for NEPA purposes. ICF replied that this is not known yet; it would likely be some version of FMP plus take avoidance.
- Members noted that ultimately, the modeling is not about finding the “right” harvest number; it is about illustrating the relative differences between the four approaches.
- Brian noted that ODF is developing an informational sheet that describes the different model rules and the impact on the model. For example, it will describe the stream buffer rules versus the young stand management prescription. As we start modeling these rules, we can bring those to the ST to talk about the different tradeoffs.

Mike provided context for how timber harvest modeling is done and explained what to expect out of the model in terms of timber values versus habitat values. To develop the model, ODF takes its inventory, harvest units, and operational measures, and then adds on constraints (inoperable areas, netting out roads, and other areas that cannot be harvested on), and layers in legal responsibilities like the FPA and take avoidance policies beyond the FPA. In the case of the HCP model, it would include the HCP constraints. Then, ODF runs the model to get a volume output and stand structure output. Other outputs (like volume and habitat conditions) are set up as goals and objectives in the model and they are weighted.

Members discussed and asked questions about timber harvest modeling:

- Members had questions about the level of assumptions in the model.

- Mike clarified that the model can weigh different objectives more or less heavily. For example, forest structure is typically heavily weighted in the model; whereas we may be able to set differing weights and objectives for other components of the landscape.
- It is important to define metrics that can come out of the yield tables in the model. Forest structure has been used as an important category of metrics in the past (using metrics such as stand age, etc.).
- The team clarified that the model will evaluate habitat at different time markers. It will include a report out on every time period, usually ten or five-year periods. Because of the age of Oregon forests, it is likely that the model will show that conservation benefits will be more prevalent in many decades from now. Also, harvest level is likely to be different depending on the decade, and we'll be able to see those effects on the landscape.
- A member expressed that it will be important to sideboard uncertainty.
- A member asked how the model defines non-tree species habitat. ODF responded that for fish species, we look at the buffers. The buffer widths are fairly fixed in the model. We will need to make assumptions on how different buffer widths recruit to the stream.
- The team clarified that the HCP model (fourth model run) will not be developed yet until the conservation actions are better defined. Then, those actions will be translated into model rules. The federal services expressed an interest in being involved in developing those model rules. The ST will have an opportunity to discuss and develop the model rules together. It is expected that HCP modeling will occur in late October and the ST will develop what goes into the model rules over the next few meetings. The project team will provide a draft for ST review and comment after mid-December.
  - The modeling will also take into account how ODF manages the forest outside of conservation commitments. Those forest goals and objectives will also be brought to the ST for their input and will help the ST understand how ODF will manage the forest outside of conservation commitments.
- A member clarified that even though there are four model runs, it is unlikely that the NEPA process would include four alternatives. There will likely just be one or two alternatives under NEPA.
- A member asked whether there will be modeling done specific to the FMP process, separate from the modeling done for the HCP process. ODF explained that there will be specific modeling for the FMP process and the same modeler will complete this work. This modeling is the third scenario (revised FMP). This model will be run in late October.

## **BIOLOGICAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

David Zippin (ICF) explained that the SC recommended changes to the BGOs at their last meeting. The SC provided the following feedback and suggested changes:

- The SC edits are mostly helpful clarifying edits; the SC members were overall supportive of the direction of the BGOs.
- The SC discussed using the term “conserve” or “protect,” and did not have strong opinions on which term to use. ODF was not concerned about the words being inconsistent with language used in the FMP and GPV. It is likely that the BGOs will use the term “conserve.”
- SC members identified one objective that is better defined as a conservation action (Objective 5.4: Participating in USFWS-approved barred owl management program) and recommended nesting this under objective 5.1.
- SC members made clarifications that the BGOs apply to the species covered under the HCP (not all species within the forest).
- SC members noted that geographic location is specified for some species, but not for others.
- Objective 4.2: SC suggested describing decay classes 4 and 5 in plain language.

## **Discussion**

ST members discussed and made the following comments on the BGOs:

- Objective 1.1: Consider using a measurement tool other than USFWS stream surveys. To measure wood recruitment. Those surveys do not measure wood recruitment very well. ICF noted that the SC was also concerned about identifying a specific methodology for measurement and suggested moving this into the action rather than objective. The interest is to keep the BGOs at a high enough level that they do not need to be revised much throughout the HCP term. Aspects that are likely to change (such as measurement types and methodologies) should be in the conservation actions.
- Objective 2.1: Clarified that “wood” here means “downed wood.”
- Suggest including a water quality metric for the two salamander species.
- A member expressed concern that objectives for fish species are not measurable. The desire is to measure for stream complexity, with a goal of increasing freshwater carrying capacity in the summer and winter. ICF noted that it is important that the objectives be achievable. ODF’s forest management are able to impact riparian conditions, but ODF has less control over the actual end result of stream complexity. You don’t want to measure success on how the system is acting, because you don’t have control over it.

The monitoring plan is where we can look at the system. Members agreed that there is an interest in stream complexity AND riparian conditions.

- Question about why coho is called out in Objective 1.2.
- Members discussed Objective 1.2 and noted that the objective is designed for very limited areas where targeted stream enhancement will occur, not throughout the landscape. Members agreed that the second part of the statement is too specific and should be removed. They also agreed to keep objectives 1.1 and 1.2 as separate objectives for clarity. There is potential that when the ST develops conservation actions, objective 1.2 will be turned into an action.
- Objective 1.3: Concern that there is not a way to measure suspended solids.
- Suggest cleaning up some of the objectives so that references to the geographic area is included within the goal (ex: objective 2.1).
- Goal 5: The SC asked why “resilience” is used with spotted owl but not for other species. Members discussed how to treat the term “resilience.”

Deb reminded members there is an interest in sharing the conceptual BGOs with the public. She encouraged ST members to discuss the BGOs with SC members to see if they have any remaining comments. She reminded members that the process to develop the BGOs is iterative and there will be other opportunities to revisit them.

Cindy added that the project team will update the BGOs to incorporate the edits provided by the ST today. Then the project team will send the BGOs to the ST and SC before sharing them with stakeholders. The ST and SC will review the BGOs in future meetings, along with the public input, and will have the opportunity to further refine the BGOs.

## **UPDATE ON CONSERVATION STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT**

Aaron Gabbe (ICF) provided an update on conservation strategy development. The key points of the presentation included:

- Terrestrial species habitat models:
  - Expert opinion models will be developed for Oregon slender salamander, northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, and red tree vole. Models will not be developed for coastal marten because there is a lack of information about the habitat relationship.
- Methods to develop terrestrial species models:
  - Will collect parameters (key habitat characteristics) and characterize relationship between those habitat parameters and quality.

- Will normalize the data and categorize it into low, medium, and high quality.
- Will use literature to weight some parameters more than others.
- Will map the distribution of habitat quality (map the model output). Can overlay occurrence information and other map layers as appropriate.
- The model allows for a lot of refinement to adjust to assumptions.
- Ultimately, the models will be used to 1) inform level of take, and 2) demonstrate that ODF is adequately mitigating.

## **Discussion**

ST discussed the terrestrial species modelling. Members asked how the team will do validation. The project team will send out the PowerPoint slides with additional information when available.

## **HCP DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE AND TIMELINE**

David reviewed the HCP development schedule:

- Chapter 2 (Environmental Setting and Existing Conditions) will be distributed to the ST for their review next week. It is a data-intensive chapter, and we hope members can spend time with it. ICF noted some challenges with the chapter: it is difficult to describe a diverse landscape with non-continuous parcels, so eco-regions were used to organize the information. We want to make sure the chapter includes what is necessary to set up the effects analysis.
- Chapter 4 (Conservation Strategy) and Chapter 5 (Effects Analysis) will be distributed to the ST for review in November.
- The terrestrial species accounts have been reviewed, and ICF is editing them in response to the comments received. ICF clarified that the species accounts will be updated if new data and information is important for the effects analysis and the HCP.
- Jim Muck (NOAA Fisheries) mentioned he can provide updated baseline information to ICF for the aquatic species accounts, if that would be useful.

Cindy noted that the Board of Forestry will make their decision on the HCP on September 10, 2020 (instead of July 2020, as originally planned), in order to provide them with more time to fully understand the HCP. The goal is to remain on schedule with the work that planning teams are doing.

An HCP update will be made at the next Board of Forestry meeting on November 6, 2019. ODF is working on the Board schedule for 2020. It will likely include a Board meeting in April 2020.

## **CONFIRM TOPICS FOR SC UPDATE**

The project team will relay discussion from today's ST meeting to the SC.

## **NEXT STEPS AND SUMMARY**

Cindy thanked members for their time and participation.

The project team reviewed dates for upcoming meetings:

- The next ST meeting is scheduled for October 1, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Salem.
- Two tentative ST meetings are scheduled for October 29 and November 5 to act as work sessions to help develop the conservation strategy.
- Members should continue to hold the October 24, 2019 meeting as a joint SC-ST meeting. It is possible that the meeting will only include the SC if it seems like there are too many ST meetings and if it is appropriate to keep it as a separate SC meeting.
- The next Meeting Open to the Public is scheduled for October 15. Meeting location is to be determined.
- A field trip to the Tillamook Forest is scheduled for October 9 and will include an opportunity to see some of ODF's management strategies. ODF will be in touch with an agenda and transportation logistics.
- There is a need to reschedule the April ST meeting. The project team will reach out with proposed dates to reschedule the meeting.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

The following action items were identified throughout the meeting:

- ST members – Connect with SC counterparts in September, prior to the October ST meeting, to check-in on their thoughts on the HCP process and products to date. Share any messages with the project team and other ST members.
- ST members – Discuss the BGOs with SC members to see if they have any remaining comments.
- Project Team – Update the BGOs to incorporate the edits provided by the ST. Send the revised BGOs to the ST and SC before sharing them with stakeholders.
- Project Team – Send out the terrestrial species modeling PowerPoint slides to the ST.



- Jim Muck – Provide updated baseline information to ICF for the aquatic species accounts.
- Project Team – Reschedule the April ST meeting.

## RECORD OF AGREEMENTS AND GUIDANCE

Updated 9/10/2019

This record tracks agreements, guidance, advice, and levels of support of key milestones and elements of the Western Oregon HCP. It includes major outcomes and guidance provided by the HCP Steering Committee, HCP Scoping Team, and Board of Forestry.

Date	Group/ Body	Action	Relevant Milestone/ HCP Chapter
November 8, 2018	Board of Forestry	Unanimously voted to move forward with Western Oregon HCP Phase 2: Strategy Development and Stakeholder Engagement	Phase 1 Completion
February 7, 2019	Steering Committee	Expressed support for the Western Oregon HCP Phase 2 Scope of Work and Work Plan	Phase 2 Beginning
February 13, 2019	Scoping Team	Provided support for the proposed covered species list	Covered Species List (Chapter 1)
February 13, 2019	Scoping Team	Agreed that the current data on the covered species is sufficient to move forward with developing an HCP, and there is not a need to collect additional data at this time. Expressed support for ICF's approach to identifying best available data for each species.	Approach to Gathering Best Available Data
April 2, 2019	Scoping Team	Provided support for the covered species list presented by ICF, including an agreement to drop Lower Columbia steelhead. They also recommend not including Southern DPS red tree vole but revisiting that species when more information is available in fall 2019.	Covered Species List (Chapter 1)
April 22, 2019	ODF and DSL	Decided to include Common School Forest (CSF) lands in the Western Oregon HCP Permit Area.	Plan Area and Permit Area (Chapter 1)
May 2, 2019	Steering Committee	Adopted Western Oregon HCP Operating Principles by consensus.	Process
May 2, 2019	Steering Committee	Adopted the Western Oregon HCP Mission, Vision, and Goals by consensus	Mission, Vision and Goals (Chapter 1)

May 2, 2019	Steering Committee	Expressed alignment with Plan Area and Permit Area (with direction to ST to review inclusion of Santiam Forest area)	Plan Area and Permit Area (Chapter 1)
May 2, 2019	Steering Committee	Provided consensus support for the proposed covered species list	Covered Species List (Chapter 1)
August 29, 2019	Steering Committee	Reviewed conceptual BGOs and provided suggested changes to the ST. Expressed alignment to share the BGOs with stakeholders and the public.	Conceptual BGOs