

MEETING SUMMARY

WESTERN OREGON STATE FORESTS HCP STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, October 24, 2023, 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

By Webinar and Teleconference Only

PARTICIPANTS

Steering Committee: Mike Wilson (ODF), Kessina Lee (USFWS), Joe Zisa (USFWS), Bernadette Graham Hudson (ODFW), Kate Wells (NOAA Fisheries), Kim Kratz (NOAA Fisheries), Bill Ryan (DSL), Dan Edge (OSU)

Scoping Team Invitees: Jiajia Lin (DEQ), Josh Seeds (DEQ), Julie Firman (ODFW), Rod Kraemer (ODFW), Jeff Young (NOAA Fisheries), Erik Moberly (ODF), Vanessa Petro (ODF), Nick Palazzotto (ODF), Ron Zilli (ODF)

Technical Consultants: Melissa Klungle (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 Updates, 3) Board of Forestry (BOF) Process Update, 4) Modeling Update, 5) Update on Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Topics, 6) Steering Committee (SC) Direction to Scoping Team (ST), and 7) Approach Going Forward, Next Steps, and Summary.

Mike Wilson, ODF, welcomed SC and ST members and opened the meeting.

AGENCY UPDATES AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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

- **NOAA Fisheries:** No updates.
- **USFWS:** No updates.
- **DSL:** 1) Bill Ryan is serving as the acting director of the Department of Agriculture. 2) The Elliott State Research Forest HCP is on track to be complete at the end of 2023. Work continues on the Forest Management Plan (FMP), financial viability, and a potential carbon sequestration project.

- **DEQ:** No updates.
- **ODFW:** No updates.
- **OSU:** No updates.
- **ODF:** 1) The red tree vole could be listed the end of January 2024. The HCP will not be complete by this time and ODF is starting contingency planning for take avoidance for a newly listed species. The potential new listing has been communicated to the agency and to BOF members. 2) BOF members met in October to work on their Strategic Plan. The HCP was not a topic of discussion. 3) Erik Moberly, ODF, and Vanessa Petro, ODF, have been working with the Upper and Lower Nehalem Watershed Councils on the Nehalem Bay Partnership. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was recently signed. ODF also signed an application in support of Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) partnership. This is a great step forward and will help ODF prioritize partnerships. ODF has a large land base in the Nehalem basin area and the HCP will prioritize these projects.

BOARD OF FORESTRY PROCESS UPDATE

Mike Wilson provided context for the resolution Chair Kelly put forward during the September BOF meeting. Earlier in 2023, ODF conducted modeling for interim Implementation Plans (IPs) starting with fiscal year 2023 and ending with fiscal year 2026. The IPs are needed because ODF may have Incidental Take Permits (ITPs) before the FMP is final. The results of the IP modeling were lower than ODF's typical harvest numbers and generated concern. The intent of the resolution was to consider an option with additional timber for harvest. ODF is continuing to work on modeling and postponed the modeling presentation to the BOF from September to December 14. The intent will be to help provide context for what timber harvest could look like With the HCP and the Draft FMP

The BOF meeting included two hours of public comment on September 6 and 7. The resolution was tabled and ODF does not anticipate that the resolution will be put forward a second time. ODF held small group meetings with BOF members in October and will present modeling results during a Special BOF meeting on December 14.

The modeling results will show a range of potential outcomes within the sideboards of the HCP. ODF is interested in modeling scenarios that would generate the most take for purposes of developing the Biological Opinions, as well as scenarios that include less timber harvest. In the areas outside of Habitat Conservation Areas (HCAs) and Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs), timber can be managed at a variety of spatial and temporal scales; this is where the BOF has decision space. Modeling for the Comparative Analysis included a departure from harvesting older stands to a basic rotation on the landscape. In the past, ODF has modeled non-declining event flow to provide stability. ODF will ask the BOF if they want a departure from this option.

This meeting will be virtual. ODF anticipates taking written testimony and will hold time for discussion between the Forest Trust Lands Advisory Committee (FTLAC) with the BOF.

Discussion

Question: Does ODF anticipate there will be a reduction in harvest with the latest modeling?

- **Mike Wilson:** There may be a reduction in harvest compared to past harvest, but it's difficult to determine the magnitude. This round of modeling works to optimize results and reduce constraints. For example, ODF has historically modeled by district and will model within a larger geographic area to provide more solution space.

Question: Does the model account for timber harvest conducted in HCAs to improve stands?

- **Mike Wilson:** ODF does not know at this time. The focus will be on harvest volumes outside of HCAs and RCAs. ODF will report what comes out of HCAs but it's important to make a clear distinction. ODF does want to understand how much it will cost to conduct activities in the HCAs.

MODELING UPDATE

Ron Zilli, ODF, provided an update on modeling. ODF used a linear programming model for the Comparative Analysis. The current model is a tactical level heuristic model that is more spatially discrete, but still not operational. ODF staff worked with consultants to make growth and yield improvements. ODF is also conducting modeling at different scales, by district and by geo-region. This includes the North Coast region, the Willamette Valley region, and the Southwest region. ODF will run four model scenarios:

Scenario	Goal	Harvest	Scale		Comments
			GeoRegion	District	
#1 Max Volume	Maximize Volume	Even Flow	X	X	Base Run - CMAI
#2 Extended Rotation	Maximum Volume constrained by longer rotations	Even Flow	X	X	Longer Rotations
#3 NPV Even Flow	Maximize NPV	Even Flow	X	X	Short Rotations (within context of NSO dispersal habitat)
#4 NPV Departure	Maximize NPV	Departure	X	--	CA Comparison, departure, but with draft FMP/HCP rules (NSO dispersal habitat)

Ron shared that ODF completed the yield table work and a calibration run to validate how the model is performing relative to following model rules. The districts provided feedback to the modeling team and adjustments were made. ODF will run scenarios and seek additional district review in early November, and feedback will be shared with the Leadership Group. ODF hopes to have the staff report for the Board of Forestry with modeling results ready by late November.

Sylvia added that ODF is scheduling a meeting with the Services to provide an update on and context for the modeling effort.

Discussion

Question: When will ODF have a better understanding of how the HCP process will proceed?

- **Mike Wilson:** ODF is hopeful that the BOF will provide guidance to move forward in December after the modeling results are presented. If not, ODF will continue to work with the BOF in early 2024 to move forward. ODF has made it clear to BOF members that if any of the scenarios meet timber harvest expectations, this should be an indication to move forward. ODF has communicated to the BOF that the Services are balancing competing priorities and will continue to do so.

UPDATE ON HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN TOPICS

Monitoring and Reporting

Cindy Kolomechuk, ODF, shared that the agency has identified areas of the HCP that need to be clarified prior to implementation. ODF is continuing to meet with the Services to discuss any changes needed and working internally to integrate clear, consistent monitoring and reporting requirements. ODF has compiled monitoring and reporting requirements in a central location and is completing an assessment to determine data, process, and staffing needs.

Fish Passage

Erik Moberly, ODF, shared that ODF used ODFW's fish passage layer to help identify fish passage barriers on the landscape within the HCP permit area. After additional review, ODF determined there are approximately 30 barriers that require additional habitat analysis (quality of habitat upstream, miles of habitat opened, etc.). ODF will conduct field reviews for these barriers to complete the inventory and report their findings to the Services. In addition, ODF is developing a barrier removal prioritization process based physical and biological elements.

Discussion

Question: NOAA Fisheries is interested in increased productivity and abundance. Having a summary of factors ODF will consider with prioritization will help the Services understand the impacts.

- **Erik Moberly:** ODF will look at intrinsic potential and a variety of variables. ODF is open to suggestions and is considering what regional partners use for prioritization. ODF will work with the Services on the prioritization scheme.

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 direction.

APPROACH GOING FORWARD, NEXT STEPS, AND SUMMARY

Sylvia Ciborowski shared that the next ST meeting is Nov. 29 and ODF is working on scheduling for 2024. Sylvia thanked members for their continued engagement and closed the meeting.