

Oregon Department of Forestry
Summary Points
Elliott State Forest Management and Habitat Conservation Plans
September 2007

Background

Marbled murrelet permit expired. The Elliott is currently managed under a 1995 owl HCP and take avoidance for the marbled murrelet. About 91 percent of the forest is Common School Land and 9 percent is Board of Forestry land. The main driver for revising the plan is the expiration of the marbled murrelet incidental take permit in 2001.

Forest management affected. Marbled murrelets affect about 25 percent of annual proposed sales. Additional acres of occupied murrelet habitat continue to be set aside each year indefinitely.

HCP provides certainty. The revised HCP is expected to increase annual harvest volume from about 27 million board feet (mmbf) to about 40 mmbf, increase revenue, and provide business and management certainty while complying with the federal Endangered Species Act. The long-term sustainable harvest on the Elliott without listed species has long been considered to be about 50 mmbf.

Forest Management Plan

Draft FMP completed. The final draft of the FMP was made available for public review and comment at public meetings in September 2005. In January and February 2006, the BOF and SLB approved continued development of the HCP consistent with the strategies in the draft FMP.

Public involvement. In September 2005 public meetings were held in North Bend and Roseburg to obtain comments on the final draft of the FMP. At these meetings, the final draft FMP, draft HCP and draft Implementation Plan (IP) were made available to the public.

Varying viewpoints. Several viewpoints were represented in the comments, ranging from producing more revenue for the Common School Fund to providing more protection for other forest resources such as owls, murrelets and streams. All comments were reviewed and responses were provided to meeting attendees. Comments and responses also were posted on ODF's website.

Implementation Plan. The district has developed a draft 10-year Implementation Plan (IP) for the revised FMP/HCP. The Implementation Plan is on track for approval at the same time as the FMP and HCP in early 2009.

Forest modeling. The proposed landscape strategy has been modeled to help determine how well the strategies will achieve the goals for the forest. Inventory data being used in the model is good quality, with much of the existing data collected since 2000. Other management scenarios modeled range from an emphasis on conservation to an emphasis on timber production. Outputs for all models are being used in the impact analysis in the EIS. Two take avoidance scenarios also will be analyzed.

Habitat Conservation Plan

Minimize and mitigate effects. The revised, multi-species HCP is based on the revised FMP. It is designed to minimize and mitigate the effects of the authorized incidental take associated with forest management.

Multi-species. The revised Elliott HCP is intended to include the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet. Eighteen other species at risk for listing that are known to inhabit the Elliott State Forest, and for which there is suitable scientific knowledge, are also being considered for inclusion.

Final Draft. The final draft of the HCP was completed in March 2007 and is being used in the development of the draft EIS.

Federal Negotiations and Environmental Analysis (NEPA Process)

ITP requires NEPA. Obtaining an incidental take permit (ITP) requires participation in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. This includes public scoping, developing a draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), public review, a final EIS and obtaining a favorable Record of Decision. Negotiations with the federal services on the new HCP are also a part of this process.

Scoping helped identify alternatives. Scoping meetings were held on May 24-26, 2005 at Roseburg, Coos Bay and Salem. This was essentially the first step in the NEPA process and helped identify the alternatives that are being analyzed in the DEIS.

Substantial agreement. Substantial agreement in negotiations with the federal agencies on HCP strategies was reached in May, 2006. A draft HCP was delivered in June 2006 to a contractor who began developing the DEIS. A final draft HCP was completed in March 2007.

Public comments in March and November. A 60-day comment period on the DEIS and draft HCP is expected to occur in March and April 2008. The final EIS should be available for the public in November 2008.

Implementing Agreement. A final piece of the process is developing an implementing agreement between the State and the federal agencies. The Department of Justice has worked with the planning team and federal solicitors to complete a draft agreement. The draft IA is planned to go out for public review in March 2008 with the draft HCP.

Federal decision in February 2009. A federal decision on issuing an ITP is anticipated in February 2009, after completion of the NEPA process.

Board of Forestry and State Land Board

The current timeline for requesting SLB and BOF approval of the revised FMP and HCP is March 2009, after the federal decision.

Key Points in NEPA Timeline

2008

- March – Public Draft EIS comment period begins.
(draft HCP available for public review)
- May – Public review period for DEIS ends.
(HCP review ends)
- August – Public comments reviewed and responses complete.
- November – Final EIS complete.
- November – Public FEIS comment period begins.
- December - Public review period for FEIS ends.

2009

- February - Record of Decision by federal agencies.
- March – BOF/SLB decision on HCP/Implementing Agreement