

MEETING SUMMARY

WESTERN OREGON STATE FORESTS HCP STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, June 22, 2021, 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

By Webinar and Teleconference Only

PARTICIPANTS

Steering Committee: Paul Henson (USFWS), Kim Kratz (NOAA Fisheries), Tere O'Rourke (NOAA Fisheries), Leah Feldon (DEQ), Doug Cottam (ODFW), Bill Ryan (DSL)

Technical Consultant and Guests: Troy Rahmig (ICF), David Zippin (ICF), Mike Wilson (ODF), Richard Szlemp (USFWS)

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, 3) Updates on the HCP and NEPA Processes, 4) Updates on Forest Management Plan (FMP) Process and Seeking Alignment on Role of Agencies in the Process, 5) Steering Committee Direction to Scoping Team, and 6) Approach Going Forward, Next Steps, and Summary.

AGENCY UPDATES AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Steering Committee (SC) members provided the following updates relevant to the Western Oregon HCP process:

- **ODF:** The agency is moving forward with additional contracting and will be releasing an RFP for FMP technical services.
- **Oregon Consensus:** Brett Brownscombe is no longer with Oregon Consensus.
- **United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS):**
 - USFWS is hoping the revised proposed critical habitat rule will be reviewed and approved the third week of July, with a final rule published in December.
 - USFWS received an NOI for red tree vole and is proceeding with marten work and research.
 - USFWS received an NOI for fishers for northern California and southern Oregon

- **Department of State Lands (DSL):** Ryan Singleton's forester position will be converted to permanent. DSL is moving forward with the Elliott State Forest HCP and is still working out details for spotted owl and marbled murrelet conservation.
- **NOAA Fisheries:** The Administrator for NOAA and the Assistant Administrator for National Marine Fisheries have been identified. The acting Willamette Branch Chief was appointed as the Official Branch Chief.
- **DEQ:** The agency received funding for TMDL work (Clean Water Plans) and additional funding for the 401 program. DEQ also received funding for two laboratory positions and equipment for harmful algal blooms (HABs) work.
- **ODFW:**
 - ODFW will form a Habitat Division and increase the number of staff working on habitat. Rod Kramer will be moving to the Habitat Division and ODFW will have a new administrator. HCP work will still have habitat, fish, and wildlife divisions involved.
 - The Commission decision on the marbled murrelet is scheduled for October 9. Kathayoon Khalil was appointed as the 7th commissioner.
 - Doug Cottam is retiring at the end of July. Bernadette Graham Hudson will be the new West Region Manager and will start the beginning of August. Doug's HCP Steering Committee replacement will be Deputy Administrator Kevin Blakely.

Mike Wilson shared an update on the most recent Board of Forestry meeting:

- This was Nancy Hersh's first BOF meeting as interim State Forester. Jim Kelly is the new BOF Chair.
- Board members asked questions about the HCP and noted the following topics of interest:
 - Questions about the HCP financial outlook
 - Wanted to know more about fuels buildup and fire management in HCAs
- ODF will work with new BOF members to increase understanding of the HCP, long term outcomes of species conservation, and operational certainty.
- ODF is working with the Board to identify and commit to an engagement process moving forward.

Discussion

Members discussed the recent Board of Forestry meeting and provided the following comments:

- Sharing past sales data and the historical process for each harvest with the BOF could highlight the true purpose of the HCP and resource benefits.
- HCPs that are successful build in communication with everyone, including new Board members that can influence planning outcomes. Recommend increasing outreach efforts

with Board members in addition to meetings that are already scheduled. It will be important to share the true cost of what happens if there is no HCP.

Sylvia Ciborowski shared an update on public and stakeholder engagement:

- A Meeting Open to the Public was held on May 6 to provide an update on the HCP and NEPA process and to kick off the FMP process.
- The next Meeting Open to the Public is scheduled for August 10.
- 6/11 SFAC Meeting – shared an update on the timeline for the HCP, NEPA, and FMP processes.

Cindy Kolomechuk shared an update on tribal engagement:

ODF has been developing relationships with tribes and gaining a better understanding of tribal interests. Moving into FMP development, ODF will take a more concerted, integrated, and authentic approach in working with tribes to recognize their interests in policies and management plans. Specific opportunities for collaboration are in larger-scale landscape restoration planning and sharing information about project planning, funding, and prioritization. ODF is also engaging the tribes on planting recommendations for culturally specific plants that are honored and used in arts and ceremony, and access to sacred places accessible to elders. ODF will release an RFP for archeological and cultural resources assistance in the fall.

Discussion

Members discussed tribal engagement and provided the following questions and comments:

- How will ODF document communications with the tribes and where can this information be found?
 - Cindy responded that ODF is discussing how to line up meeting times and planning for restoration projects with the Coquille Tribe and Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde to understand where priorities lie. A lot of this information could be included in the FMP under restoration planning implementation, but ODF does not anticipate changes to the HCP. ODF is focused on developing FMP policies that are more respectful to tribal rights to these lands. FMP development does not include formal government to government consultation.

It will be important for federal agencies to coordinate tribal engagement with ODF.

- Tere O'Rourke noted that NOAA Fisheries met with six of the nine tribes and ODF before the NEPA scoping process on the HCP. The tribes believe informal consultation, staff to staff, rather than government to government consultation is appropriate, but that could change at any time during the process. NOAA Fisheries will do a similar consultation a month before the draft EIS so the tribes have time to consult with tribal councils on their response to the draft EIS. This topic can be included on coordination calls for further discussion.
- Members discussed involvement of the State Historic Preservation Office.

Feedback from the public or stakeholders:

- Members noted that they have continued to hear requests from industry interests to restrict HCA areas.

UPDATES ON THE HCP AND NEPA PROCESSES

NEPA Update

Tere O'Rourke provided an update on the NEPA process. NOAA is still refining potential alternatives, adjusting modeling, and gathering information. ODF has been very responsive to data and modeling requests. NOAA is looking at counties and taxing districts to see if there are negative economic impacts and if there are adjustments that could be made to conservation areas that would keep them biologically intact. Thus far, the most affected areas are school and fire districts. NOAA is also looking at landslide initiation and debris flow to see if there are any adjustments that could be made. National Historic Preservation Act issues are also being considered and NOAA may ask the state for help in getting SHPO to respond.

HCP Update

Cindy Kolomechuk and Troy Rahmig shared HCP updates. ODF has been working with staff internally to review the Administrative Draft HCP. They have specifically asked operations coordinators to critically review the Draft from an implementation and operations perspective. ICF is managing feedback and ODF is hosting workshops to discuss topics of interest and to clarify intent. Overall, staff comments address clarifications and consistency issues across the document. The commenting process has been useful for gauging the level of understanding of the document and HCP requirements. No major changes are being considered, but ODF will bring a few items to the Scoping Team for discussion.

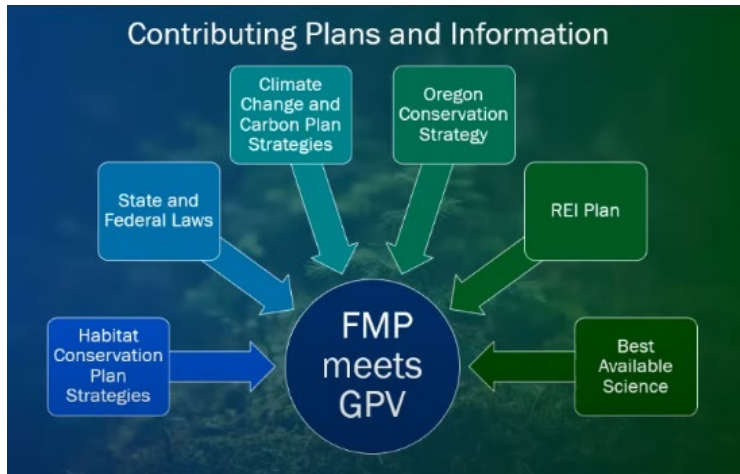
Discussion

Question: Is there any development in making minor adjustments to HCA boundaries in response to industry comments?

- **Mike Wilson:** No boundary changes have been made to the HCAs in the Administrative Draft. Minor adjustments are not off the table, but ODF prefers that input and any changes come through the draft EIS analysis and public comment and then those comments can be considered. It is important that the Board be very aware of public input and how it informs future directions.
- **Tere O'Rourke:** NOAA is taking a critical look at taxing districts by county to ascertain what the true impact may be. Then NOAA will overlay HCAs and consider the options.

UPDATES ON FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN (FMP) PROCESS AND SEEKING ALIGNMENT ON THE ROLE OF AGENCIES IN THE PROCESS

Mike Wilson provided an update on the FMP process. The FMP is ODF's overarching document to guide forest management that HCP goals and strategies fit into. The FMP Team is made up of a leadership group, project team, subject matter experts, and state partner agency experts.



FMP contributing plans and information

The FMP Team completed a recent technical exercise to refine the project timeline. There will be a need for additional modeling to understand FMP outcomes. For example, counties are interested in county-level results in addition to the sub-geographic modeling. The FMP Team is anticipating two modeling phases: 1) high level modeling with a more refined strategy around timber management and different geographic scenarios and 2) refined implementation plan modeling. The FMP Team needs to have additional conversations about how to align the modeling timeline with the HCP and FMP timelines, and provide information to the Board during the process. Additional modeling is anticipated for November or December with a staff report in January. Engagement with the Board on the draft EIS is scheduled for February, but it's likely modeling results will not be ready to share until April.

The FMP Team is repurposing every other HCP Scoping Team meeting to be a State Partner Agency meeting for the FMP. The HCP Scoping Team and HCP Steering Committee will still be involved through regular updates on the work of the State Partners to ensure alignment.

Sylvia Ciborowski asked members for their level of alignment on this general process and role of the HCP Scoping Team and Steering Committee. *Agencies signaled agreement with the plan for future updates and engagement.*

STEERING COMMITTEE DIRECTION TO SCOPING TEAM

No direction was identified.

APPROACH GOING FORWARD, NEXT STEPS, AND SUMMARY

Upcoming Meetings

- The next HCP Scoping Team Meeting is July 6
- The next FMP State Partners Agency Meeting is August 3
- The next Steering Committee Meeting is August 24

Cindy Kolomechuk thanked everyone and closed the meeting.