

MEETING SUMMARY

WESTERN OREGON STATE FORESTS HCP STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, March 18, 2024, 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm

By Webinar and Teleconference Only

PARTICIPANTS

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

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

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

AGENCY UPDATES AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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

- **DSL:** 1) The Elliott State Research Forest HCP is moving forward. DSL provided the Final Draft HCP to the Services and is continuing to work on the Forest Management Plan (FMP) in coordination with ICF. DSL is also developing a biennial operations plan, an advisory board to work with the Land Board, and a carbon sequestration project. OSU is the most likely lead for the forestry research component and DSL is working with the University to determine what this could look like. DSL will maintain ownership and management of the forest for the medium-term. On April 9, DSL will provide an informational update to the Land Board. There will be a decision to adopt the FMP and governing structure during the June Land Board meeting.
- **ODFW:** ODFW's Director is retiring at the end of the month, and the Commission is in the process of recruiting candidates to fill the position.
- **OSU:** No updates.

- **USFWS:** No updates.
- **NOAA Fisheries:** NOAA Fisheries is happy the HCP is moving forward. Staff are working on the Elliott State Research Forest HCP and the Private Forest Accords HCP and will need some time to ramp up work on the Western Oregon State Forests HCP.
- **ICF:** In April, [updated regulations](#) for the Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 10 will be available. Changes are beneficial and will apply to all the active HCPs in Oregon, including permits that are in-process. ICF does not anticipate any impact to the Western Oregon State Forests HCP.
 - **Question:** What changes are included in the updated regulations?
 - **David Zippin:** Agencies can make amendments to HCPs as broad or narrow as they would like and the federal agency will only review the amendment. HCPs can be developed for non-listed species and do not need to include listed species.
- **ODF:** 1) Ron Zilli is retiring June 1. ODF will recruit a new Deputy Division Chief and is doing some restructuring. 2) ODF has not received approval for the agency recommended budget yet. The Governor's Office is reviewing strategic initiatives first. 3) ODF is looking for opportunities to treat some of the more costly areas of state forests. This has a nexus to management in the Habitat Conservation Areas (HCAs) with Swiss Needle Cast (SNC) stands.

MARCH BOARD OF FORESTRY MEETING UPDATE

Mike Wilson shared that the BOF voted 4-3 to move forward with the State Forester's recommendation to finalize the HCP and move towards Incidental Take Permits (ITPs). Three BOF members voted against the recommendation and proposed resolutions that would have delayed the HCP process. These resolutions were voted down 4-3. ODF will continue to meet with the Services to move forward and finalize the HCP.

Mike reviewed the next steps for implementation planning and the FMP. ODF has interim implementation plans (IPs) in place to cover fiscal year (FY) 2024 and 2025 sales. ODF will extend the IPs for one year to cover the FY 2026 annual operations plan (AOP). Even if ODF received ITPs early in 2025, the agency would not have enough lead time to finalize new IPs and AOPs. ODF hopes to have the FMP adopted by June 2025 and a new IP by the end of the year. ODF is continuing to work with the BOF on performance measures for the new FMP. ODF will review implementation scenarios with the BOF that are within the sideboards and discuss tradeoffs.

HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN UPDATES

Melissa Klungle, ICF, provided an update on ODF's fish passage commitment. ODF used ODFW's fish passage dataset to identify 334 potential projects to improve fish passage issues. After additional review, ODF found errors in the data including waterfalls, weirs, and projects that had already been addressed. ODF conducted a field and desktop analysis and identified six projects and three potential projects to improve fish passage. Projects will be prioritized using physical and biological criteria. ODF also has a process for addressing ongoing fish passage

issues through AOPs and IPs. ODF plans to look at the life expectancy of existing culverts and provide NOAA Fisheries with estimates for integrating the improvement of these culverts into the Biological Opinion.

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 May 28, and the next SC meeting is April 10. Mike Wilson thanked everyone for attending and being part of the process before closing the meeting.