

MEETING SUMMARY

WESTERN OREGON STATE FORESTS HCP SCOPING TEAM

Wednesday, April 24, 2024, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

By Webinar/Video Conference

ATTENDEES

Participants: Jeff Young (NOAA Fisheries), Josh Seeds (DEQ), Rod Krahmer (ODFW), Ryan Singleton (DSL), Julie Firman (ODFW), Vanessa Petro (ODF), Erik Moberly (ODF), Nick Palazzotto (ODF), Ron Zilli (ODF)

Technical Consultants and Guests: Melissa Klungle (ICF)

Facilitation Team: Ellen Palmquist and Gilly Garber-Yonts (Kearns & West)

WELCOME AND AGENDA REVIEW

Ellen Palmquist, Kearns & West, welcomed Scoping Team (ST) members and reviewed the agenda, which included: 1) Welcome and Agenda Review, 2) Agency and Stakeholder Engagement Updates, 3) Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Topics, 4) Report-Out to HCP Steering Committee (SC), 6) Approach Going Forward, Next Steps, and Summary.

AGENCY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT UPDATES

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

- **NOAA Fisheries:** Jeff Young is the acting Oregon Coast Branch Chief until at least the end of July.
- **USFWS:** No updates.
- **ODFW:** No updates.
- **DEQ:** Oregon DEQ is responding to public comment on the Willamette Temperature Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). DEQ and the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) presented the Coastal Plan to the Land Conservation Quality Commission. This is not expected to impact state forests.
- **ODF:** No updates.

HCP TOPICS

HCP Schedule for Completion

Melissa Klungle, ICF, informed the ST that the Board of Forestry (BOF) voted to continue to implement the HCP and the project team is working to refine a project timeline. ODF will continue to share timeline updates with the ST as they are available.

Discussion

Comment: NOAA Fisheries is receiving pressure from the Governor's Office to share a timeline for issuing Notice to Proceed (NTP). NOAA Fisheries' timeline is dependent on the HCP timeline. The Services need to understand the timeline to move forward with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and begin drafting the Biological Opinions (BiOps).

- **Ron Zilli:** Is the focus on the suite of Oregon HCPs or the Western Oregon State Forests HCP?
 - **Response:** The focus is on the Western Oregon State Forests HCP.
- **Melissa Klungle:** ODF has been meeting with the Services to share HCP updates. Timeline coordination could be a future meeting topic. ODF has also posted and shared a document on the ODF website tracking changes to the HCP.

Process Based Restoration

Vanessa Petro, ODF, shared that prior to beginning work on the HCP, ODF was operating under the 2010 Forest Management Plan (FMP) and implementing smaller buffer sizes for riparian management areas. Under the HCP the Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs) buffers expanded, resulting in slivers of densely stocked stand that were previously part of the harvest area.

Vanessa shared that these areas pose challenges including forest stock concern which is heightened in areas with Swiss Needle Cast. Pre-commercial Thinning (PCT) is a preapproved activity under the HCP, but the densely stocked slivers can't currently be treated. ODF is working with the NOAA Fisheries to update the HCP to allow PCTs in the slivers of densely stocked stand that are 10-20 years old. The slivers are spaced out in the permit area and encompass approximately 4,000 acres that could benefit from treatment. She shared that the action would be one entry over the life of the stand and that NOAA Fisheries has identified PCT as Process Based Restoration (PBR) due to its mimicking of natural processes. She shared that PCT would allow ODF to accelerate forest health in these previously managed portions of RCAs.

Vanessa shared that ODF is hosting a field tour with NOAA Fisheries on May 1 to visit a densely stocked stand and a thinned stand. If NOAA Fisheries is in alignment, ODF will add PCT to Conservation Action #3.

Monitoring

Vanessa Petro shared that ODF has been reviewing the HCP for monitoring commitments to ensure that the Chapter 6 tables line up with the biological goals. ODF worked with ICF to create a spreadsheet that displays monitoring actions and reporting timelines under unique line items which will aid in HCP implementation.

Melissa Klungle shared that the table will act as a consistency check for understanding what monitoring commitments exist.

REPORT-OUT TO HCP STEERING COMMITTEE

Ellen Palmquist asked the ST if they had anything to report to the SC. The ST did not have anything to share with the SC.

Discussion

Question: What will ODF be reporting to the SC at their next meeting?

- **Ron Zilli:** ODF anticipates sharing timeline updates and updates on ST topics.

APPROACH GOING FORWARD, NEXT STEPS, AND SUMMARY

Ellen Palmquist shared appreciation for ST engagement in the HCP process and reviewed upcoming meetings before closing the meeting.

- Wednesday, May 22 – *HCP Scoping Team Meeting*
- Tuesday, May 28 – *HCP Steering Committee Meeting*