

**OREGON COASTAL COHO RECOVERY PROJECT**  
**Stakeholder Team--Ninth Meeting**  
**Port of Umpqua Building, Reedsport**  
**Facilitator's Meeting Summary**  
**June 17, 2005**

**Attendees for all or part of the meeting:**

Stakeholder Team Members: Paul Englemeyer (Audubon-Public at Large), Tom Forgatsch (Farm Industry), Wayne Giesy (Alsea Valley Alliance), Jennifer Hampel (Coquille Watershed Council), Les Helgeson (alternate for Bill Bakke; Native Fish Society), Cindy Heller (STEP), Wayne Hoffman (Mid-coast Watershed Council.), Bob Jacobson (Oregon Salmon Commission), Tom Kartrude (Port of Siuslaw), Richard Oba (Oregon Coast Sport Fishing), Dennis Richey (Oregon Anglers-NW Steelheaders), Blake Rowe (Longview Fibre Company), Johnny Sundstrom (Oregon Soil and Water Conservation Districts), Terry Thompson (Assoc. of Oregon Counties)

Resource Advisors:

Ed Bowles (ODFW), Rosemary Furfey (NOAA), Louise Solliday (OR Gov's Office)

Alternates and Technical Resources: Todd Buchholz (USFS), Bob Buckman (ODFW), Jeff Dose (USFS), Harold Ettelt (STEP), Brandon Ford (ODFW), Kevin Goodson (ODFW), Mike Gray (ODFW), Dave Harris (STEP), Jeff Lockwood (NOAA), Dave Loomis (ODFW), Jo Morgan (ODF), George Westfall (ODFW)

Other Interested Parties: Walt Morgan (public)

Facilitation Team: Donna Silverberg and Robin Harkless

**Action Items**

Action	Who	By When
Work to get city official added to team	Louise Solliday	July coho meeting
Change guidance document to 'Stakeholder Principles for Coastal Coho Conservation'	Facilitation Team	ASAP
Send Federal Registered Notice of listing decisions to stakeholder team	Rosemary Furfey	June 30
Email power point Conservation Tasks to stakeholder team	Kevin Goodson	DONE: June 22
Develop bibliography of science on limiting factors and threats	State and NOAA	July coho meeting
Send questions to Kevin Goodson re: high quality habitat, etc to be answered at the July coho meeting	Englemeyer, other stakeholder team members	July 22

## Introductions/Housekeeping/Comments on 5/9 Meeting Summary

*Membership* – Louise Solliday, Oregon Governor’s Office, is working to add a city official to the Coastal Coho Stakeholder Team membership. There will likely be someone in place for the July meeting.

*Guidance Document* – A revised DRAFT stakeholder team guidance handout was provided to the team after a member of the public noted that the document did not include specific guidance language from the Native Fish Conservation Policy (NFCP), which is ODFW’s guidance document for conservation planning. The revision included a new title to better reflect the intent of the document: *Stakeholder Guiding Principles for Coastal Coho Conservation*. Stakeholder team members commented on the draft handout:

- We do not need guidance to help plan, but rather need guidance to set priorities for making decisions and allocating resources, etc. Let’s move on to the conservation plan, which will be just as meaningful as addressing principles.
- The document is an overview of the value of fish, not to help define how we are going to get there, how we are going to fund this effort, etc.
- Suggestion: take out the word ‘guiding’. They are principles. We could add ‘operating’ principles, taking into account experience thus far and other models, etc.
- A suggestion was made for how to proceed with the process: Develop a list of actions we can manage, cannot manage, and those we can respond to. Work from that to choose what actions are appropriate to do, appropriate to respond to, and then determine how to do that. (It was noted that this will be part of the process at some point.)
- We have protocols, these are our principles.
- **ACTION**: The document will be changed to “*Stakeholder Principles for Coastal Coho Conservation*”. The rest of the document will remain as is.

*Contact List* – A member/technical advisor/resource advisor contact list was distributed to the team prior to the meeting. The team agreed that the list could be made available to the public as a way for them to access the work of this group. However, team member information will only include mailing addresses, while phone numbers and email addresses for state and federal advisors will be provided.

### **Updates** – Rosemary Furfey

Rosemary Furfey, NOAA, reported that there has been a federal status review for the listing decision for proposed threatened or endangered species, which was announced on 6/16 in the news. Listing decisions for ten steelhead ESU’s and coastal coho were extended six months and two separate Federal Register notices were published regarding these ESUs. NOAA took a 6-month extension for coho which will include a 30 day public comment period on the state’s final coast coho assessment, which was not

available in time for the listing determination. (Rosemary noted that Bob Lohn, Regional Administrator, has an interest in making the determination in less than 6 months, maybe in July or August.) The extension resulted from substantial disagreement in scientific findings and the analysis used to make the decision. The state's final assessment is on the web, with comments on how the draft was changed per stakeholder team and other public input.

**ACTION:** Rosemary will forward the federal register to the stakeholder team when it is published next week.

*Stakeholder Team member question:* How does the addition of hatchery coho into the listing affect the determination? The final hatchery listing policy will be out this week. A decision will be based on that policy. Hatchery coho are not considered a large part of the coastal coho ESU.

Rosemary also reported that the TRT are fine tuning their draft viability criteria and assessing viability of the ESU. A draft will be available in early August for an internal review, then co-manager review in mid-September. At the TRT meeting on 6/16, Rosemary urged the TRT to complete the criteria as soon as possible. Pete Lawson will provide an update on the status of the TRT product at the July Stakeholder Team meeting. Rosemary will continue to press the TRT on this, and will provide the co-manager draft product to the stakeholder team when it is available (not likely before the July meeting).

*Stakeholder Team questions/comments:*

- Could NOAA recommend changes in the hatchery program within the parameters of the lawsuit? If a species is listed, hatchery programs are reviewed by NOAA, public comment is requested, and the program undergoes a NEPA analysis. Yes, in a recovery plan, NOAA could recommend changes.
- Note the TRT draft product, which was scheduled to be shared in mid-July, has changed to mid-September.

*Federal/state caucus meeting update* – A joint state/federal caucus meeting was held on June 2. Paul Englemeyer and Wayne Hoffman attended the meeting along with Rosemary Furfey, Jeff Lockwood, Louise Solliday, and Kevin Goodson. Rosemary reported that the goal of the meeting was to brief federal land managers and state agencies on the recovery process, and to engage them. The technical team will be asked to be on a technical team to help craft and review recovery scenarios. Attendees included BLM, Forest Service, EPA and others. Rosemary will work with Kevin to keep the agencies involved; at this point, they are on track for getting dedicated staff to the process. It was noted that work is needed to get USFWS, FEMA and the COE involved on the federal end.

*What is the TRT's role in this process?* The TRT will be developing recommended viability criteria in coordination with state, federal and tribal co-managers, with public and stakeholder team input. ODFW scientists are members of the TRT. (NOAA staff clarified after the stakeholder meeting that the final decision on viability criteria resides with the Regional Administrator of NOAA Fisheries). When Rosemary shared with the TRT (at their 6/16 meeting) the intended involvement and connectedness of the TRT with

this process, they were initially supportive, and will check with their Seattle supervisors to make sure this meshes with their plans. A TRT member will attend future stakeholder team meetings.

*Stakeholder Team member comments/questions:*

- Related to USFWS involvement in recovery planning, there are interests in using New Carissa law suit settlement funding for purchasing/selling land in river areas, with easements for the USFWS who manage refuges in the ESU.

### **Desired Status/Condition of the Coastal Coho**

Kevin Goodson, ODFW, presented a power point on conservation planning tasks to get to a final plan. He asked that the stakeholder team keep in mind, as they begin to develop strategies, the decisions will only be tentative until the conservation package is complete. The process will be iterative throughout, with feedback amongst federal and state scientists and the stakeholder team.

**ACTION:** Kevin will email the powerpoint to the stakeholder team. (NOTE: The slides were emailed to the group on June 22.)

*Stakeholder Team member comments:*

- Will the conservation plan spell out what ODFW has authority over or what the Oregon Plan controls? The state ESA limits actions to hatchery, harvest and habitat on state lands. The NFCP embraces all factors with the intent to guide the Oregon Plan. The conservation plan will be broader than ODFW authorities, addressing all limiting factors that effect desired status of the fish. So, the plan will address both. It will be a 'legal' document for the Fish and Wildlife Commission, and serve as recommendations for inclusion in Oregon Plan actions.
- What do state documents say about forestry? Hatchery management? Etc? The stakeholder team will need to understand this scientific information, which can be found in the assessment report. Input from the TRT on limiting factors is needed to move forward. One suggestion was to structure a half-day meeting on limiting factors and threats that are important from Oregon and NOAA's perspective. A concern was raised that the data may not be reliable, and/or could be one-sided. Finally, a comment was made that the Oregon Plan assessment has already completed this type of review, and there will never be consensus on the science.
  - **ACTION:** The State and NOAA will develop a bibliography of information on limiting factors and threats that is available, with links to the information. There may also be a workshop scheduled for those interested.

Kevin walked the group through steps/tasks he laid out for getting to a final conservation plan. Highlights from the presentation are bulleted below:

- Defining desired status and developing management scenarios were included as one task (#1), as they will overlap.
- Conservation level (task #3) was described as a trigger that strategies may not be working and that the management scenario needs to be re-examined. This step comes before adaptive management, as an extra safeguard.

- RM&E needs – to help with the adaptive management plan, and to get at what would be the best management strategy in areas where information is needed. Some of these needs will filter out of other tasks, e.g. management strategies.
- Cost and time estimate – required in recovery planning process and NFCP. How the stakeholder team will be involved with this step is to be determined. NOAA is working on methodology which they will share with the team when available.
- The facilitator report will identify areas of agreement and disagreement, and alternative ideas that came out of the stakeholder team process.
- *Question from stakeholder team member* – If coho are de-listed, will NOAA stay involved? Yes, NOAA will continue to support the state in developing a conservation plan.
- Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission adoption of conservation plan – this step will come after NOAA review to avoid having two plans.
- *Comment* – add a final step for other agencies taking formal action with the plan.
- *Public comment on RM&E*: Make sure what you are doing really works, and that the public is truly informed. Without public support, this will not work.
- It was noted that NOAA will stay engaged along the way to ensure that NOAA's needs are being met as the conservation plan is developed, reiterating that this will be a joint state/federal plan.

*Additional stakeholder team member comments:*

- As the effort moves us forward, less weight will be put on recovery (urgency, funding, and staff resources will go down). Is it possible to codify this concept or put it into rule/law? This will likely happen anyway – as coho start to return, funding will go to more critical areas. Also, multiple ESU's can benefit from shared action and the plan should leave room for this. Also, a sunset could be put into administrative rule.
- Add another step between 1 and 2: identify/agree on limiting factors and threats. Or, put this step between desired status and management strategies.
- There are RM&E needs regardless of the recovery level. We need to have a baseline of research in place to assure maintenance of the species. This could be addressed in the adaptive management plan.

Kevin then presented a review of the assessment numbers for abundance, productivity, persistence, distribution and diversity. How each population passes or fails each criterion will be a part of the desired status developed. Two possible scenarios were shown: all populations passing all criteria, and all but two populations passing all of the criteria. Graphs were also shown that displayed the results of the recruitment model used in the assessment for three scenarios: similar ocean survival conditions as was seen from 1961 to 2003; a similar ocean pattern, but coho survival being 25% better than the first scenario; and the same ocean pattern with a 50% increase in coho survival from the first scenario. These examples were intended to show the variability of adult abundances due to ocean and other environmental factors, and the potential numbers of adults that could be allocated to harvest or spawners. Mark Chilcote, ODFW, will explain in more detail how the graphs could change, and what would be needed to make changes, at the July coho meeting.

*Stakeholder team member questions/comments:*

- Where does the notion of potential come in? There could be a discrepancy between this and other areas. (There is another tool that can help address overall desired condition of the ESU.)
- How does this tie into the ‘button’ maps presented by Jay Nicholas earlier in the process? The ‘button maps’ were built from the table presented today. They will re-emerge when looking at limiting factors.
- RE: harvest estimates: ODFW does not require harvest cards to be turned in, as other states do, which would correct errors in harvest counts, particularly steelhead and in rivers with no docks. ODFW does not use the tag to do counts, but does use them as a check on estimated counts. This creates management pros and cons.

Kevin provided a handout on Amendment 13, to serve as a reality check for fishery management, asking the group to keep this federal process in mind when developing scenarios. The amendment includes language that an allocation for a commercial fishery will open when abundance reaches a certain level. A clarification on the impact rate numbers on page 1 was made, for the Marine survival index: low = 15%, high = 35%. (Note: Kevin was informed after the meeting that the version of the Amendment 13 table he copied from the PFMC website and shared was not the current table being used by the PFMC. The current impact rate table is provided in the ODFW agency report on harvest that was included in the Coho Assessment Report and can be found on the Coastal Coho Project website. The current table has impact rates from 0 to 45 % in a matrix that includes four coho abundance levels and four smolt survival levels.)

*Stakeholder Team member comments/questions:*

- What is full seeding of high quality habitat? This relates to abundance estimates. ODFW will bring Lawson and Nicholson, who are working closely on the habitat model, to describe/explain what it means.
  - **ACTION:** Paul Englemeyer and others will develop and send a list of questions to Kevin before presentations, so they can be addressed at the upcoming meeting. (Ed Bowles gave an explanation for part of the above question about changes in the amount of high quality habitat. He acknowledged that this is confusing to the public and said that ODFW will work to correct the language to clarify that it refers to the ‘amount under poor ocean conditions’.)
- Re: Amendment 13, on the last page. The Southern Oregon Northern California Coast Coho (SONCC) ESU might raise issues for this ESU eventually, if coho in the SONCC ESU remain listed.

A persistence graph of life cycle potential was presented. ODFW developed three scenarios based on information from this graph (current potential) and then looked at different levels of increasing potential (25% higher life cycle survival, 50%, and 75%). They overlaid a threshold level for harvest, as an example to show what it would take to stay above that level given the different potentials.

*Stakeholder team questions/comments:*

- Coho production drops during times of El Nino, so potential drops are followed by a

period of increased potential; the graph does not appear to show this. More details/information will be provided by Mark Chilcote at the July meeting.

- Clarification: the purpose of the model is to take historical information and show whether we can use that information to closely and accurately project the future.
- Caution that this is only a model and need to consider this as we continue developing scenarios. Build in a margin of error.
- Cannot support ideas based on a model; models are tragically flawed. (Agreed, and we need to model to provide a tool for what might happen. Models are a simplification of the actual system, and this keeps us aware of our assumptions, bias, etc.).
- Global warming could/should be part of this discussion and included in the model.

Kevin then showed how the Nickelson/Lawson model is used to estimate total smolts for high quality habitat and total smolts for all habitat. The purpose of this exercise was to show the effects of good and poor ocean conditions – that there is a need for high quality habitat during poor ocean conditions and a good response in all habitat during good conditions. A map of the coho ESU was displayed that showed where current high quality habitat and high intrinsic potential habitat are thought to occur.

#### *Stakeholder Team member comments/questions*

- Look at the ratio of high intrinsic potential miles and current high quality miles to work. (In other words, find opportunities to turn potential high quality miles into actual high quality miles).
- What is the definition of high quality? That habitat during 3% (poor, but not worst) ocean conditions which is fully seeded at 3 fish per meter during the winter.
- Suggestion to ground truth the models through on the ground observations via a project/field trips. It was noted that it will take multiple years to determine whether the model is accurate.
- Are there enough spawning grounds available? In most cases, this does not appear to be a problem. Fine sediment was listed as a potential, but not major, factor. One area was noted that does have a problem with sediment but not with over-wintering.

Ed Bowles, ODFW Fish Chief, reiterated to the group that, at the next meeting, ODFW will bring additional fleshed out tools for each of the populations and will have several scenarios. For example, they will use the existing assessment's built-in cushion so there will be a "pass plus" across the ESU. Rather than just tweaking 25% up, they will look at specific population changes to help be more specific and take risk off some of the smaller, wild populations. Questions: What is the current gap between here and where we want to be? What could be done to improve the gap? ODFW will not be able to say that if you do this action, it will result in this improvement. This is only true for harvest rates and there is not much room for more improvement in that area at this point.

#### *Stakeholder Team member questions/comments*

- Can you model hatchery increases? ODFW had not planned to because of noted impacts on the failing populations from hatchery causes. Some changes have been made to make improvements and they need to be better tracked. But risk factors included competition predation and other aspects that we cannot control. ODFW will

emphasize getting hatcheries up to current best practices and then will use the Hatchery Research Center to make improvements through research and study.

- Since there are 5 hatchery populations included in NOAA's considerations, how will ODFW treat this? There is a need to figure out how to embrace this in the analysis.
- Will ODFW take recommendations for how to deal with pinnipeds and other predators? Yes, ODFW might not be able to deal with them, but will take recommendations. ODFW hopes that part of the conservation plan will include more information gathering on this issue.
  - Is there any information on predator control based on reduced hatchery releases? Yes, but the real differences are noted in El Nino and non-El Nino years.
- Re: Map of high quality and high intrinsic potential habitat —many looked at it at the break and believe it is fiction. (Yes, science fiction!) Many can not relate it to anything on the ground that makes sense to those actually working in the landscape. The scale may be too crude to get the pockets of both good and bad habitat. Ed acknowledged that the map needs to be refined between now and the next meeting.
- What can local partnerships do to improve the data in terms of monitoring ground truthing, etc? Will need a calculated coordinated effort in the near future based on defined habitat characteristics.
- Fish may create their own spawning grounds, if there are enough fish in an area. ODFW responded that yes, rearing, especially overwintering where fish are vulnerable and need protection, is a problem. Actual spawning bottleneck areas are only in lake system areas.
- How does this relate to critical habitat designations? Critical habitat designations do not necessarily have any impact on development of the plan. Critical habitat is more of a regulatory issue and is based on fish needs, specifically the conservation value of watersheds based on an interagency expert panel.
- Conservation Security Act – could work well for farmer and fish. Look into this further.

### **What Effect Will NOAA's Decision Have on Work of Stakeholder Team?**

Louise Solliday, Oregon Governor's Office, suggested that listing or not, there is a high likelihood the decision will be litigated, and that some stakeholder team members may be litigating. Louise requested that members commit to continue with this process regardless of the decision and what happens outside of this process. Team members were asked to consider this request in the next few months.

#### *Responses*

- There would need to be assurance that we are working on the state's conservation plan, with different goals and bars than the federal process.
- This is the basis for our work regardless of ESA.
- We need to reaffirm our commitment to this process through our principles document.
- Some said they are committed to the process. Others cannot give commitment that they will continue regardless of litigation (based on previous experiences).
- Consensus is an interest from the anglers/sport fishers' perspective, and they plan to



continue for the long term.

### **What Have We Learned from and about the Oregon Plan?**

Jay Nicholas, OWEB, and Louise Solliday discussed and came up with a list of lessons learned from the beginning of the Oregon Plan through today. Louise noted that up to this point, many resources and time have been spent “doing”, not “analyzing”. The assessment was the first time to analyze data from 1997 and before. The revised assessment includes, as part of the adaptive management piece, revisiting every 5 years to do an analysis of the Oregon Plan. Shifts will be made relative to staff time and other resources. Lessons learned from the assessment included:

- More monitoring is needed at the population scale.
- We are honing in on specifics so we can be more strategic.
- How data is collected, analyzed and used needs to be more accessible to agencies and the public.
  - A data warehouse has been built – it needs to be improved and made useful to the public and decision-makers.
- Inter-agency coordination at first was very structured and there was a high level of energy and activity. When the Oregon Plan was completed, not as much inter-agency interaction occurred while implementing the plan. The coho assessment has raised that level of energy and participation, and we need to keep it up as we continue with recovery planning over the next two years.
- Limiting factors were dealt with in isolation from other agencies. The plan showed that we need to look at limiting factors as a collection and manage them as a system.
- Investments made in the Oregon Plan are significant since 1997. Restoration funding was directed at substantial watershed function issues in all areas; now we are more strategic in prioritizing what is most beneficial and useful. Need to continue to improve this strategic planning.
- Monitoring: as data rich as this area is compared to others, it is still limited. Need to improve monitoring effectiveness through a statewide strategy. Develop a monitoring plan that includes how to invest monitoring funds.
- All quality habitat during low ocean conditions is very important and now much better understood, not just ‘high’ intrinsic potential habitat. We need a strategy for keeping high quality habitat in place to support the fish during poor ocean conditions so they can survive and persist. This is likely to be important for other species as yet unknown.

#### *Stakeholder Team member questions/comments*

- The Oregon Plan has not been good at putting recommendations of IMST on the ground. There is very little reference to IMST in the report. A presentation from the IMST on their recommendations on the agency reports (e.g., highlands, uplands, and habitat) would be helpful.
- Priorities will be different for viability vs. broad sense recovery goals. Caution against tying too close to the viability analysis when doing broad sense recovery.
- Basin plans have built in a basis for strategic work/prioritizations. Do not minimize this fact.
- What have you heard from other agency directors in terms of revitalizing interagency

interaction? The Governor's office and ODFW are working to get engagement on various inter-agency technical teams; state resources are available to help with this. The agencies understand recovery is important and needs to be done. The state should be the lead in the process, and the commitment is there.

- Oregon Soil and Water Conservation Districts: Assessment, evaluation and effectiveness monitoring of the Oregon Plan is important. There has been much contribution from different agencies over the years. The delivery system and cost may create a problem for effectiveness, based on competition for funding for 'cooperative' efforts. The delivery system needs to be further refined. We need to evaluate the Oregon Plan in terms of leveraging funds from other sources and continuity of staff so the learning curve can continue. How do you measure partnership? Without it the watershed suffers, but it is difficult to show concrete benefits to partnering.
- Competition is a problem in some areas, and not in others. Look at partnership and volunteer projects/programs that are working well, e.g. Lewis River.
- Appreciation was expressed for having Louise back on board to help continue this process.
- Need to think about watershed councils when no more funding exists and they are forced to support themselves.
- OWEB and OACD have pledged commitment to come up with an analysis that shows partnership between soil and water conservation districts and watershed councils, in hopes of minimizing the perception that the two cannot work well together.
- The link between the IMST and OWEB and the problems with OWEB/GWEB need to be resolved so we can move on.
- 80 councils are receiving some funding, many areas of the state do not have OWEB-funded councils. Watershed councils and districts have in the past been the most cost-effective mechanism for getting projects going on the ground. Overhead costs are low (15-18%) compared to what goes to the actual project. The commitment to cost-effectiveness made it a worthwhile investment in the context of Measure 66.
- At OWEB budget hearings, there was a good show of successful watershed council work. Accountability is being taken seriously by OWEB. Last month OWEB voted to fund 57 coordinators.

### **Review of Oregon's Final Assessment sent to NOAA**

Ed Bowles highlighted changes made from the draft to final coho assessment, summarized in bullets below:

- Viability analysis – May final report:
  - Population structure shifted based on further TRT analysis; Umpqua strata went from 2 to 4 populations.
- 2 populations in southern strata did not have sophisticated data, re-analyzed in Floras and Sixes watersheds.
- To address minimum criteria vs. broad sense recovery viability confusion, a continuum was added in the final assessment to better explain this.
- Density dependent approach; did not change but embraced a different density independent model to address sensitivity around this – the results were basically the same. Staying with original model.
- Other models looked at persistence, from multiple perspectives. TRT is looking at 5

different models, ODFW still awaiting co-manager draft to share with stakeholder team. Re: Nicholson/Lawson model found glitch between predictive and actual; recalibrated and now useful again.

- Corrections to fundamental data were made, e.g. numbers of hatchery fish.
- Criteria did not previously include abundance. Developed simplistic abundance criteria for final assessment. Noted that TRT still has concerns.
- Shifted productivity criteria to be more consistent with TRT.
- End result had 7, not 5, failed populations.
- Moved away from yellow 'near misses' to avoid confusion. Showed instead through metrics those that were on the verge of failing.
- Looked more carefully at future changes; more rigorous sensitivity analysis of future risks.
- Stronger section on risk of catastrophic events.
- A few members felt the tone was too optimistic. ODFW understands there is a lot of uncertainty and sensitivity was built in to deal with this.

The final assessment is available on the Oregon Plan website and includes changes to this section, and PECE A and B. <http://www.oregon-plan.org/>

**Next Meeting, July 29: Location TBD**

The Alsea Hatchery Research Center will not be open or available for the stakeholder team to meet on July 29. We are working to find a location and will share when we have it. An agenda will be developed for the July 29 meeting. Stay tuned!