

Northern Spotted Owl Implementation Team (NSOIT)
Meeting Minutes
August 16, 2012
9:00am – 11:00am
NRB 411

Attending:

NSOIT: Andy Hayes and David Whipple. By phone: Shawn Cantrell and Kevin Godbout. **Others Present:** Cindy Mitchell (WFPA), Doug Hooks (WFPA), and Aaron Everett (DNR). **Staff:** Lauren Burnes.

Call Meeting to Order

Meeting called to order at 9:08am.

Review Draft Agenda

No adjustments to the draft agenda.

Assess Work Plan

David: I feel like we are making progress, but it is slow. The technical team process will take time, so maybe we can make some progress in other areas while that process follows its due course.

Shawn: It feels like progress is a long ways away, it's frustrating that we don't have on-the-ground results.

Kevin: Progress is dependent on group expectation. We've given great deference to the Technical Team. We had determined that we weren't going to focus on other work plan items until we determine the "where." After we determine the "where" then we move into the what/how – we've built a box in which we're waiting for the Technical Team. We've lowered our expectations, we still need to determine a strategy for financing, how are we going to generate revenue for incentives? There are mature programs out there, not exactly related to owls, but we aren't looking into that. We need some other folks to help us on identifying funding. This could be done concurrently, goal to determine how to pay for this/how to make it work.

Andy: We've focused a lot on the technical team, and we have likely 6-12 months left of that process. I think we have capacity within this group (NSOIT) to take on additional work. We expect to have access to the USFWS modelers soon.

Cindy: Project, funding, and a mechanism: there may be a coalescence of factors to move this forward.

Andy: There may be an opportunity to move some of these forward within the next few months. Maybe we can get some general direction on priorities and movement. I have a three-pronged proposal for you to consider: (1) identify how much more habitat we want to create with landowners, (what would we like to do?) (2) Where would that be? It's hard to identify geographies at this time, but some places to consider would be inside circles, inside SOSEAs, and outside SOSEAs; and (3) What are the mechanisms? RHOSP, funding cycles, Safe Harbor Agreements for landowners, habitat banking, LOPs, CHEAs? Even if we don't have the fully researched process, we should be able to determine the "how". Can we wrap our minds around this in the coming months?

Shawn: Regarding the hierarchy on where to put money, we haven't agreed on that yet.

Andy: Sorry - I wasn't suggesting a specific *hierarchy* earlier, just a number of possible components that could be prioritized.

David: The how much/where would be informed by the technical team process, we could have general discussions but I'm not sure how useful that would be to focus on at this time. The how much/where is more of a technical discussion – the how is really some of the bigger questions we could address now.

We could use this time to get a better sense of landowner wants and needs and craft a tool to address that.

Andy: The goal is not to preempt the biologists' process on the technical team, but we haven't yet had the discussion about where we want to invest first on the landscape. Do we want to only emphasize areas outside current regulatory areas (outside SOSEAs and circles) or inside those areas?

Kevin: We need to start having a conversation about how an incentives roll out would occur, thinking about the complexity of this and getting landowners to apply for grants/mitigation banking. We need to see why the Westside pilot failed. Getting some projects going to help owls will be difficult. We need to think about how we're going to get that accomplished. What is it that we could think about regarding Westside projects? How many could we fund? If we're not trying stuff we'll never know.

Shawn: Regarding the triad of tasks – identify a couple places – if it's a small pilot, what will it take? What's preventing that from happening? If it's a pilot, maybe we need to goose the pilot. Can we revive the Westside pilot?

Andy: We have an update on the eastside pilot for you. We had a first meeting with the pilot project team in late June. It was a good initial discussion where we looked at stand data and discussed our general approach to implementing the pilot. We have a field visit planned in two weeks over in the project area to look at potential candidate stands for treatment per the pilot. Lauren and I have been looking high and low for funding possibilities for this project. It has several unique characteristics that make it difficult to fund. We were quoted by the landowner that it would take \$250,000 in grant funding to get the pilot off the ground. We talked to Ken Berg about funding and he was just able to help fund the planning phase of this project with a grant for \$25k. This is very encouraging news, and means that we can now assure that we can get to the point of determining whether we can indeed implement this project as conceived. We expect that treatments to the stand would occur next near.

Shawn: That's very encouraging.

Cindy: That's really great.

Aaron: I support Andy's three-pronged approach. We need to be able to communicate what the next best steps for owl incentives would be. Set real world goals for the team. We need something to rally people behind. Some concise, definable thing is needed. If we can give ourselves some talking points, it would be helpful in acquiring additional financial support.

Kevin: Should we be talking to Ken Berg/Paul Henson to advocate for incentives? They're endorsing our approach; we need their help to advocate.

Aaron: Basically, we need to explain to funders "what is the thing I'm buying?" What level of commitment am I making – interminable or defined?" "What is its significance?" In the case of the pilot project, of it is just one of a bazillion pilots, what is the significance of this pilot? For example, this pilot represents step 1 towards the goal of doubling owl habitat (or whatever amount) on nonfederal lands. If I don't have broad strokes to work with from the team, it's a hard sell when I'm out looking for funding.

Kevin: I agree with this approach – it makes sense to me.

Cindy: I think we should be positive about what we've accomplished.

Andy: I propose that I develop a broad policy proposal to help with supporting RHOSP and other funding opportunities for discussion at our next meeting.

Aaron: We need to explain "what are those legs of the stool supporting." I could turn such a product into an advocacy tool for finding funding. I can help look for funding at the federal and maybe even state level.

Lauren: At our last Technical Team meeting, members reached a reasonable level of consensus on their draft scenarios they'd like to test with the USFWS modeling team. The Technical Team took time editing their draft analytical scenarios document (baseline and nonfederal conservation scenarios) in order to build a reasonable consensus. The team has convened two subgroups, one subgroup will be dedicated to speaking with Mr. Woodbridge, Andy, and I at a later date to determine a reasonable timeline, scope

of work, and reasonable commitment from USFWS to assist with our modeling process. The other subgroup will read the Dunk et al. 2012 document and report back to the larger Technical Team regarding development of a SW Washington draft scenario.

Cindy: How was this small group identified to explore a Southwest Washington proposal? It seems important to have the industry representative on that group. It might be good to have Tony Melchioris on the Southwest WA subgroup.

Kevin: We should keep our expectations in check when it comes to Southwest WA.

Andy: The technical team's biologists' role is to simply determine conservation value. We need to know "where." Until we know what the demographic response is, we're not going to look at the economics of it.

Shawn: Regarding the Westside pilot with Rayonier, is there a new approach or different process we could try?

Andy: Is there someone on this group who could assist or spearhead this? It would be great if you would be willing to help looking into that, Shawn.

Shawn: I'll reach out to Bob Meier to see if this project could be resurrected. Is this something Weyerhaeuser would be interested in?

Kevin: We're finishing up the NSO/BO telemetry study and are working with NCASI. Our report should be available in the fall (though it is behind schedule). SW WA has a huge population of barred owls.

Andy: I'll check in with Paula to see if she has any ideas for a Westside project. Cindy requested that the group discuss providing formal support for RHOSP funding. Thoughts?

Aaron: We're still way under-enrolled for RHOSP. We will have a hard time advocating for this if we can't demonstrate that there is demand.

Cindy: I can draft a joint letter to the Governor.

Doug Hooks: The HB 2238 mitigation process might be helpful to the NSOIT process. David- can we discuss that process?

Andy: Let's keep that conversation offline for now – perhaps Doug and David can discuss separately and bring back results to the group when you have them.

David: A report is due at the end of the year on HB 2238.

Andy: For next meeting: (a) pilot/TT update; (b) NSOIT agreement paper; (c) Cindy – letter to Governor; (d) Doug can report back to us on HB 2238 for owl mitigation.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:55am.