

Benton County HCP Stakeholder Advisory Committee Work Session Minutes August 20, 2009



Stakeholder work session: Revisions to the draft HCP

The following is a summary of the comments and questions from the attendees (Table 1) during the presentation of the anticipated changes to the draft HCP to the Stakeholder Advisory Committee.

Introductions

Jeff Powers thanked the group for their time and Tom Kaye introduced some of the background on the HCP public process and some of the major revisions to the draft. Revisions to the HCP are a direct result of community and stakeholder input to the County. Revisions will be presented to the Benton County Board of Commissioners at their next work session on August 25th, 2009 for their approval.

Timeline

The draft HCP, as well as the Prairie Conservation Strategy, will be available for a 30 day public review in mid-September and there will be a public meeting in Corvallis during that time. After the revised draft is submitted to USFWS, there will be an additional 60 day public comment period with a public meeting in Corvallis jointly held by USFWS/Benton County.

Slide Presentation

(The slide presented at the meeting outlines all major anticipated changes to the HCP and is available on the Benton County HCP webpage:

<http://www.co.benton.or.us/parks/hcp/stakeholder.php>)

Carolyn Menke discussed the major changes to the draft HCP:

1. Mitigation costs for permitted activities on private lands in the Blue Zone will be covered by Benton County. Therefore, there will be no extra fees to private landowners in the Blue Zone when they apply for a building permit.
2. Maintenance of a 30' firebreak around an existing structure is not considered 'take'.
3. The Blue Zone mapping area was refined after review of data from the 250 surveys conducted this past spring on private lands. Landowners in the Blue Zone, or those landowners whose properties were removed from the Blue Zone, will be notified by mail.
4. Take estimates were refined due to the Blue Zone mapping refinement, from septic system impact analysis, and permit trend analysis.
5. Good Neighbor Principle: Private landowners outside the Blue Zone will be held harmless if nearby restoration efforts attract listed butterflies.

6. Management plan for Taylor's Checkerspot butterfly rough delineation of potential Taylor's checkerspot habitat will be included in revised draft.
7. The list of Cooperators whose activities are now covered in the HCP include:
 - City of Corvallis
 - Greenbelt Land Trust
 - ODOT
 - OSU
 - Pioneer Telephone
 - The Nature Conservancy.
8. Cooperators must fund their own mitigation, monitoring, and reporting. Compliance reporting must be submitted annually. Monitoring is still on a three year cycle.
9. ODFW, City of Philomath, and Oregon Parks and Recreation are no longer Cooperators.
10. ODA will not require cooperators to obtain a separate seed collection permit on their land.
11. The Prairie Conservation Strategy is included in the HCP as an appendix and will be available as a separate document.
12. Grazing is now a vegetation management tool.

Questions from attendees:

- Question: Does restoration on private lands count towards mitigation? Answer: No, mitigation must occur on protected land, but any restoration that helps the butterflies will lead towards recovery, and eventual de-listing.
- Question: If I build on my property in the Blue Zone, does that mean my neighbor can not build because I have used up the 'take'? Answer: No, both you and your neighbor can apply for a building permit with Benton County as usual. Take has been projected over the term of the 50 year permit.
- Question: Can cooperators collect seeds on easement properties? Answer: Yes, if the cooperator holds a conservation easement on the property.

Recommendations by attendees:

- Clarify the goal of the Prairie Conservation Strategy in relation to the HCP and to the Oregon Conservation Strategy. Each has a specific goal that may not overlap with the other document's goals. The Prairie Conservation Strategy is represented as a local implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, but the HCP is not an implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy. The goal of the HCP is to minimize and mitigate impacts to species while the Prairie Conservation Strategy's goal is to identify actions to help at-risk populations.
- Clarify grazing management requirements in HCP.
- Add a 'Research needed' section to the Prairie Conservation Strategy for topics such as grazing, burning, and mowing. Look at the USFWS Draft Recovery Plan for ideas.
- Outline a tax deferral program in the Prairie Conservation Strategy that is developed locally. Many land owners would like to switch from farm or forest deferral to conservation deferral to help native species. The ODFW WHCMP has a lack of funding and staff. Advocate to state to fund this program.

Table 1. Work session attendees.

Amy	Schoener	Private landowner
Karen	Fleck Harding	Marys River Watershed Council
Bill	Pearcy	Benton County Landowner
John	Gaylord	Audubon
Irene	Pilgrim	OSU Animal Sciences
Steve	Smith	USFWS
Ann	Kreager	ODFW
Dave	Lysne	OSU College of Forestry
Iris	Benson	City of Corvallis Parks and Recreation
Rick	Fletcher	OSU Extension
Ken	Faulk	Oregon Small Woodlands Association
Donna	Schmitz	Benton Soil and Water Conservation District
Adam	Novick	Public
Jeff	Powers	Benton Co. Natural Areas and Parks
George	McAdams	Benton Co. Natural Areas and Parks
Rachel	Schwindt	Institute for Applied Ecology
Carolyn	Menke	Institute for Applied Ecology
Tom	Kaye	Institute for Applied Ecology