

## ODFW Beaver Management Work Group

Wednesday, April 13th, 9am-12pm PT

Zoom Meeting - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-DVCcB389I&t=1s>

### Work Group Members:

- Jill Zarnowitz, ODFW Commission
- *Mary Wahl (alternate), ODFW Commission*
- Wayne Elmore, Full Stream Consulting/retired BLM
- Chris Jordan, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries
- Ernie Niemi, Natural Resource Economics
- Jefferson Jacobs, Oregon Natural Desert Association
- Danielle Moser, Oregon Wild
- Brian Posewitz, Humane Voters Oregon
- Scott Beckstead, Center for a Humane Economy
- Leland Brown, Oregon Chapter of the Wildlife Society
- *Michael O'Casey (alternate for Leland Brown), Oregon Chapter of the Wildlife Society*
- Stan Steele, Oregon Trappers Association
- Amy Patrick, Oregon Hunters Association
- Lauren Smith, Oregon Farm Bureau
- Josh Chapman, US Forest Service
- Darren Bollen, Bureau of Land Management
- *Emily Johnson, Bureau of Land Management*
- Shannon Hurn, ODFW Deputy Director
- *Kevin Blakely (alternate for Shannon Hurn), ODFW Deputy Administrator*
- Tom Stahl, ODFW Fish Biologist
- *Matt Strickland (alternate for Tom Stahl), ODFW*
- Derek Broman, ODFW Wildlife Biologist
- Becky Hatfield-Hyde, ODFW Commission
- Drenda Howatt, Association of Oregon Counties
- *Robert Beschta (alternate for Boone Kauffman), Oregon State University*

### Absent:

- Tom Stahl, ODFW
- Michelle Tate, ODFW

### Facilitation Team:

- Jamie Damon, Kearns & West
- Samantha Meysohn, Kearns & West

### **Welcome, Agenda Review, Introductions, and Updates**

Jamie Damon, Kearns & West, opened the meeting and welcomed the Work Group Members. Jamie shared an overview of the agenda and meeting guidelines. Jamie introduced Emily Johnson, Bureau of Land Management, who is supporting Darren Bolen on the work group. Jamie shared the process for revising the draft recommendations: the BMWG members shared edits to the simple draft recommendations, the sub-group met to review edits and address concerns, Sub-group members

provided edits to the draft document, KW reconciled edits and circulated the draft to the sub-group and ODFW staff for preliminary review, KW circulated the draft to the full work group and provided a feedback survey to understand the level of agreement for each recommendation. Jamie acknowledged that the work group members were working hard to meet each other's interests in the draft report. She also noted that in many ways, the draft report is not an end product but a first step towards greater beaver management in Oregon.

### **Feedback Survey Results**

Jamie introduced the session by thanking everyone for sharing their feedback on the draft recommendations report by providing verbal comments and/or completing the feedback survey. Approximately one-third of the work group could accept the report with no further changes. Several participants provided minor (but important) changes to several sections, and the BMWG decided to focus its energy on the major sticking points in the document.

A summary of the discussion is below:

#### **Section VI A. Maximizing Beaver Modified Floodplain Landscapes**

##### ***Management Approaches***

- Several work group members advocated for simplifying the language for clarity. Some work group members wanted to include more context, although others felt that the report contains sufficient context earlier in the document.
- Work group members advocated for emphasizing that the proposed list of management approaches should be emphasized as a range of options to be considered.
- Work group members discussed how to acknowledge interactions between federal land managers and livestock management. Since Cattleman's Association is not a part of the work group, it was important to acknowledge the need to engage with them in discussions relating to grazing regimes. BLM noted that mechanisms exist to have conversations with permittees during permit renewals processes and land health assessments.
- Work group members discussed how to characterize harvest regulations to meet objectives within priority areas:
  - Some felt that it was important for ODFW to consider the "do no harm" principle when regulating harvest to the goals of maximizing floodplain landscapes by pausing harvest in priority areas until it can be shown that it will not negatively impact the ability to meet the objectives.
  - Several work group members noted that managing beavers to meet objectives outlined in the recommendations will expand the management objectives for ODFW. Hunting and trapping regulations are tools that can be used to help ODFW achieve the objectives.
  - Some work group members wanted to ensure that areas where passive restoration is occurring, areas where beavers are positively impacting floodplains, or areas where floodplain recovery could be improved are protected.
  - Several work group members wanted to emphasize that beavers should be managed for the benefit of all Oregonians. The report includes this goal in the overarching objectives. Several work group members noted that hunters and trappers are included in the "all Oregonians" statement.

- Some work group members stated that they are not supportive of any closures on federal lands as a matter of organizational policy. Other work group members expressed that they were supportive of harvest closures.
- Several members mentioned that ODFW is managing wildlife in accordance with its numerous policies and wanted to ensure that the language in the report acknowledged this.
- A work group member stated that the trapping community would be impacted by the report recommendations and felt they should be involved in working with ODFW to determine how to meet objectives.

The work group members agreed that they could live with the language for this section.

#### *Program Management*

- A member noted that funding for natural resources is usually limited. They shared they were supportive of the concepts in this section and wanted to clarify that they would not necessarily be able to prioritize this effort over other priorities from their organization.
- Several members emphasized that ODFW capacity is limited and accomplishing all the recommendations would require additional resources.
- Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund could be a mechanism for funding and could support efforts up to \$50,000 in grants.
- The state legislative budget cycle for 2023-2025 is underway, and the recommendations in the report may not be included in this biennium.

The work group members agreed that they could live with the language for this section.

#### *Section VI B. Improvement in Data Collection and Management Responsiveness*

##### *Harvest Reporting*

- Several work group members noted that it would be helpful to strengthen data collection from furtaker permits, and biologists can provide additional information about what data could be beneficial.
- A work group member expressed concern about necessitating additional requirements for private land managers. The work group members clarified that the recommendation would only apply to furbearer permits. A few work group members noted that some private landowners may want to support beaver management, and the recommendation could include allowing private landowners to voluntarily report take of beaver as a predatory animal on their lands.

The work group members agreed that they could live with the language for this section.

#### *Section VI D. Beaver Categorization*

- Several work group members emphasized that the Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS) document can help to open up funding streams and leverage efforts to support priorities.
- A few work group members were concerned that increasing a priority within OCS would come with a regulatory component; however, ODFW provided clarification that OCS does not come with regulation. Flowing water and riparian habitats and wetlands are OCS strategy habitats that acknowledge beaver are already included in the OCS as a strategy habitat.

- Several work group members noted that more discussion would be helpful to generate a consensus recommendation from the BMWG. Some work group members advocated for moving the section to the end of the report where additional issues without recommendation are documented. Other work group members felt strongly that exploring how to leverage the OCS could be an important first step towards acknowledging the interconnectedness of beaver and the listed OCS Strategy Species and advocated for keeping the section in the body of the document.
- The work group members agreed to keep the section in the body of the report and soften the language around the recommendation so that it encourages exploration of this topic.
- Some work group members were concerned that “categorization” could be confusing to readers and the work group members agreed to change the name of this section to “*Oregon Conservation Strategy*”

The work group members agreed that they could live with the language for this section.

### **Next Steps and Wrap Up**

Jamie asked Shannon to share about next steps for the report:

The BMWG report will go to the OFW Commission for the May 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. The report will be posted publicly in advance of that meeting. The OFW Commission may direct ODFW to review the report and return with recommendations for action. In August, the OFW Commission is anticipating hearing public testimony regarding this topic. If the Commission decides to enter into rulemaking, it will require posting to the Secretary of State and providing adequate notice to begin that process in accordance with state law.

Jamie invited Commissioners Hatfield-Hyde, Zarnowitz, and Wahl to share any final remarks:

- All emphasized their appreciation for the time, dedication, and hard work of the BMWG members.
- Jill noted there are opportunities to seek funding to support implementing the recommendations
- Becky shared gratitude for the diverse group of Oregonians who care deeply about taking care of this state.
- Mary shared appreciation for the group looking at managing beaver through a landscape lens. She noted that this report marks the beginning of more work to come.

Jamie confirmed the following action items:

### **Action Items**

- **KW:** Incorporate edits from the 4/13 BMWG meeting, survey feedback, and general edits from BMWG Work Group members into the draft recommendations report. Follow-up with work group members if there are any conflicting edits.
- **KW:** Circulate the final draft for “fatal flaw” review on **Tuesday, 4/19**
- **All:** Conduct final fatal flaw review by **end of day Tuesday, 4/26**
- **KW:** Send the final recommendations report to the ODFW Commission by **Friday, 4/29**
- **All:** Complete the feedback survey for the 4/13 meeting including any key messages to include in the ODFW Commission report by **end of day, Wednesday 4/20**
- **Sub-group:** Meet to prepare for the ODFW Commission Report on 5/13
- **KW:** Draft a 4/13 BMWG Meeting summary and share with work group by **Wednesday, 4/20**

Jamie thanked the work group members for their hard work. Meeting adjourned at 12:00pm PT.