

## 6.0 Coordination with Others

### 6.1 Introduction

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations provided by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) direct project sponsors to involve agencies and the general public in preparing Environmental Impact Statements (EISs). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS; used together, the Services), and Plum Creek Timber Company (Plum Creek) have made public involvement an integral part of the EIS and Native Fish Habitat Conservation Plan (NFHCP) development process. This chapter describes the consultation and coordination activities at each stage of the EIS/NFHCP project. This discussion includes project planning, the scoping process, and Draft EIS (DEIS) development; and activities completed with the release of this Final EIS (FEIS), such as public meetings and comments.

### 6.2 Project Planning

The goal of early project planning was to develop an NFHCP that encompassed a variety of Plum Creek, agency, and public perspectives on habitat conservation planning and species conservation needs, and incorporated results of scientific studies. To meet this goal, the Services and Plum Creek conducted early agency coordination, public meetings, and reviews of scientific studies. The Services also relied heavily on previous scientific and public criticisms and critiques of the HCP process to inform planning and development of this HCP permitting process.

#### What is the Purpose of This Chapter?

This chapter documents the coordination that has occurred with agencies and the public throughout planning and development of this EIS/NFHCP. Consultation and coordination activities, including scoping and public involvement, are required by NEPA.

### 6.2.1 Agency Coordination

The Services provide technical assistance to businesses or non-federal entities that apply for Incidental Take Permits (Permits). Therefore, the Services, particularly FWS, have worked closely with Plum Creek since the project began. Early coordination included meetings, technical workshops, and field visits involving the Services' and Plum Creeks' scientists to develop the prescriptions included in the NFHCP. Informal meetings often followed the technical workshops to refine and expand these prescriptions.

Following early coordination, the Services and Plum Creek began coordination with affected state agencies, federal agencies, Native American Tribes, and interested public groups and individuals. Coordination included phone conversations, written communications (letters and e-mail), and meetings to describe the HCP process, and their opportunity for involvement. Agencies included state fish and wildlife and department of lands agencies, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Environmental Protection Agency, and others. All agencies, tribes, and interested groups are listed in Table 6.5-1, presented on page 6-6.

Preparation of this EIS by the Services, and the HCP by Plum Creek, included the use of a contractor to gather, summarize, and present information. CH2M HILL in Boise, Idaho, was selected and included in meetings and communications early in the project planning process. They helped organize and run public involvement processes, maintained project mailing lists, and facilitated communication among the parties preparing the documents and with the public.

### **6.2.2 Scientific Studies**

During project planning, a team of 17 scientists, assembled by Plum Creek, produced a total of 13 technical reports and 4 white papers intended to provide supporting scientific documentation for the NFHCP. The technical papers were distributed for scientific peer review, involving a total of approximately 30 scientists and technical specialists. Summaries of these reports and papers are available in Appendix B, and have been available to the public since July 1, 1999, on Plum Creek's Internet site at <http://www.plumcreek.com>. Full copies of the technical reports have been available from Plum Creek on CD-ROM since April 20, 1999. Copies may be obtained from Mike Jostrom, Project Manager, Plum Creek Timber Company, P.O. Box 1990, Columbia Falls, MT 59912. Please send \$10.00 by check or money order made out to Plum Creek Timber Company to cover the cost of printing and handling the CD-ROMs.

The Services identified a team of eight agency biologists to work part-time to assist Plum Creek with plan development. These eight biologists combined spent the equivalent of approximately 1.5 full-time biologists' effort per year over a 2-year period to develop this DEIS. In addition to

Plum Creek's scientific information specific to the Project Area, the Services also used outside information in scientific journals or unpublished literature to support their development of the DEIS, and their review and technical input to Plum Creek's development of their HCP.

### **6.3 Scoping Process**

In preparation for initiation of formal public scoping for this NEPA process, the Services and Plum Creek held a total of 39 meetings with interested publics between October 1997 and January 1998. Meeting objectives were to inform the public about the pending NEPA and HCP processes, and receive ideas and comments. Information received was included as formal public scoping comments in preparation of the DEIS.

Public scoping was formally initiated with publication of the public notice for scoping on December 12, 1997. Public scoping was conducted to help the Services determine what issues to consider in Plum Creek's proposed NFHCP and in the EIS, and the range of alternatives to be considered in the EIS. The scoping process is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.6, *Public Information and Involvement*. The scoping and public involvement process are documented in the *Scoping Report for the Plum Creek Timber Company Aquatic Habitat Conservation Plan* (FWS and NMFS 1998), which can be reviewed on the Internet at FWS's site (<http://www.fws.gov/r1srbo/srbo/plumck.htm>) or at Plum Creek's site (<http://www.plumcreek.com>).

## **6.4 Coordination During DEIS Development**

The coordination between the Services and interested agencies and entities and the public that began in early project planning continued to occur periodically throughout DEIS development. Issues identified during scoping were considered during preparation of the DEIS and the NFHCP. The Services and Plum Creek continued to receive comments from the public during DEIS development, and encouraged such participation on their web sites and through personal contacts. The Services did not share detailed information concerning the development of conservation commitments with agency cooperators or other interested scientists over much of the development of the HCP, at the request of the applicant to respect the proprietary nature of information shared with the Services. Some agency cooperators and interested scientists were involved in review of Plum Creek technical documents at the request of the Services.

### **6.4.1 Project Coordination**

Steering Committee meetings, consisting of participants from the Services and Plum Creek, were held approximately bimonthly. Conference calls were conducted weekly to keep all parties informed of project progress, and to share new technical information. Technical Committees were established to address several specific topics, including riparian resources, bull trout biology, and Permit species. These committees met as needed to contribute to the baseline science used to prepare the EIS/NFHCP. Periodic updates were shared within the Services to ensure coordination among agencies, field offices, and regions.

A documented total of at least 110 phone calls, 45 written communications, and 45 meetings were held among Plum Creek, the Services, and the contractors between June 1997 and September 1999. These documented communications include conference calls on key issues, e-mail or memoranda outlining key policy positions on issues, and scheduled meetings among the parties to resolve specific issues in development of the plan and documents.

Scientific studies that began during project development were continued during this phase. Additional comments were received on many of Plum Creek's technical reports and white papers, and the reports were finalized during this period. Coordination also occurred within Plum Creek. It was important to involve Plum Creek foresters in field testing project prescriptions to verify their operational feasibility.

### **6.4.2 Additional Coordination and Contacts**

The Services documented a total of at least 150 meetings, 110 letters and written communications, and 130 phone calls with agencies, tribes, and special interest groups. More than 20 of these contacts occurred during the project planning stage prior to scoping, and the remainder were contacted from scoping through the release of the DEIS. The Services and Plum Creek contacted the following organizations:

- Alliance for the Wild Rockies
- American Fisheries Society, Idaho Chapter
- American Fisheries Society, Montana Chapter
- American Fisheries Society, Western Division
- American Lands

- American Rivers
- American Wildlands
- Benewah County
- Blackfoot Tribe
- Clearwater Biodiversity Project
- Coeur d'Alene Tribe
- Colville Tribe
- Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
- Cowlitz Tribe
- Defenders of Wildlife
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Flathead Wildlife
- Flathead Valley Community College
- Friends of the Wild Swan
- General public
- Harvard University
- Idaho Conservation League
- Idaho Farm Bureau News
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- Idaho Division of Environmental Quality
- Idaho Governor's Office
- Idaho Department of Lands
- Idaho Forest Industry Association
- Idaho Rivers United
- Idaho Wildlife Federation
- Intermountain Forest Industry Association
- Intermountain Logging Conference
- Kalispell Area Chamber of Commerce
- Kalispel Tribe
- Kootenai River Network
- Kootenai Tribe
- Land and Water Fund of the Rockies
- Leadership Flathead
- Montana Bull Trout Roundtable
- Montana Bull Trout Scientific Group
- Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
- Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
- Montana Logging Association
- Montana Farm Bureau
- Montana Governor's Office
- Montana Stockgrowers Association
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- National Wildlife Federation
- Nez Perce Tribe
- Nisqually Tribe
- Northwest Timber, Pulp, and Paper Workers
- Pacific Rivers Council
- Petersen Elementary School
- Plum Creek Foresters and Ranchers
- PERC Seminar, Montana economics educators
- Puyallup Tribe
- Representative Hill
- Senate Environmental Committee
- Senators Baucus, Burns, Craig, and Crapo
- Spokane Tribe
- Squaxin Island Tribe
- The Lands Council
- Trout Unlimited
- Umatilla Tribe
- University of Montana
- U.S. Department of the Interior
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service (Regions 1 and 4, and several individual Forest offices)
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Wall Street Journal
- West Valley School
- Yakama Tribe

FWS conducted government-to-government meetings, provided written communications to, made phone calls to, and requested information from 14 Native American Tribes in the Planning Area on multiple occasions between September 1997 and September 1999.

A complete listing of the contacts and dates for the DEIS is available from Ted Koch, Project Manager, Snake River Basin Fish and Wildlife Office, 1387 South Vinnell Way, Room 368, Boise, ID 83709.

## **6.5 DEIS Coordination**

This section describes the coordination that occurred during the DEIS review period. A complete mailing list of all agencies, bureaus, organizations, groups, and individuals that received the DEIS is available upon request from Ted Koch, Project Manager, Snake River Basin Fish and Wildlife Office, 1387 South Vinnell Way, Room 368, Boise, ID 83709.

### **6.5.1 Request for Official Comments**

The agencies, bureaus, groups, and organizations that received the DEIS for review are listed in Table 6.5-1.

### **6.5.2. Public Meetings**

Six public meetings were held on the DEIS. Following is a list of the meeting dates, times, and locations:

- Kelso, Washington, on January 11, 2000, at Red Lion Hotel, from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m.
- Yakima, Washington, on January 12, 2000, at Cavanaugh's Gateway, from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m.
- Libby, Montana, on January 17, 2000, at Venture Inn, from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m.
- Kalispell, Montana, on January 18, 2000, at Outlaw Inn, from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m.
- Missoula, Montana, on January 19, 2000, at Holiday Inn Parkside, from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m.
- Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, on January 20, 2000, at Shilo Inn, from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m.

## **6.6 FEIS Coordination**

This section describes the coordination that took place during the DEIS review period and throughout the preparation of the FEIS. A complete mailing list of all parties who received the DEIS is available upon request from Ted Koch, Project Manager, Snake River Basin Fish and Wildlife Office, 1387 South Vinnell Way, Room 368, Boise, ID 83709.

### **6.6.1 Public Comments**

The public comment period opened with the announcement of the availability of the DEIS in the Federal Register on December 17, 1999. The comment period was originally established at 60 days and scheduled to end on February 17, 2000. The Services granted an extension request and the public comment period closed on March 17, 2000.

Comments were received by mailed letter, fax, and e-mail. The Services received 83 separate pieces of correspondence. These written comments, and the responses from the Services, are provided in Appendix F, *Public Comments*. In Section F.3, *Written Comments*, the full text of the comments is provided.

The first step in responding to public comments was to assign comment numbers to all individual comments within each piece of correspondence. A total of 1,281 separate comments were identified in this step. For the next step, the Services

**TABLE 6.5-1**

Agencies, Tribes, and Organizations Formally Requested to Comment on the DEIS

<b>Federal Agencies</b>	
Forest Service:	Bonneville Power Administration
Region 1 Office	Bureau of Land Management
Region 4 Office	Environmental Protection Agency
Beaverhead-Deerlodge	Fish and Wildlife Service
Bitterroot	Glacier National Park
Clearwater	National Marine Fisheries Service
Deerlodge	
Flathead	
Gifford Pinchot	
Helena	
Idaho Panhandle	
Kootenai	
Lolo	
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie	
Wenatchee	
<b>State Agencies</b>	
<b>Montana</b>	<b>Idaho</b>
Department of Environmental Quality	Department of Fish and Game
Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks	Department of Lands
Department of Natural Resources And Conservation	Department of Water Resources
Environmental Quality Council	Division of Environmental Quality
Natural Heritage Program	<b>Washington</b>
	Department of Ecology
	Department of Fish and Wildlife
	Department of Natural Resources

**TABLE 6.5-1**

Agencies, Tribes, and Organizations Formally Requested to Comment on the DEIS

<b>Tribal Entities</b>	
Blackfeet Tribe	Nez Perce Tribe
Coeur d'Alene Tribe	Nisqually Tribe
Colville Tribe	Puyallup Tribe
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes	Spokane Tribe
Cowlitz Tribe	Squaxin Island Tribe
Kalispel Tribe	Umatilla Tribe
Kootenai Tribe	Yakama Tribe
<b>Stakeholder Groups</b>	
Alliance for the Wild Rockies	Kettle Range Conservation Group
American Lands	Madison-Gallatin Chapter—Trout Unlimited
American Wildlands	McDonald Gold/7-Up Pete Joint Venture
Big Fork Eagle	Montana Council—Trout Unlimited
Blackfoot Challenge	Montana Logging Association
Clearwater Biodiversity Project	Montana Mining Association
Communities for a Great Northwest	Montana Resource Providers Coalition
Defenders of Wildlife	Montana Stockgrowers Association
F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Co.	Montana Wildlife Federation
Flathead Basin Commission	Montana Wood Products Association
Flathead Lakers	Montanans for Multiple Use
Flathead Valley Chapter—Trout Unlimited	National Wildlife Federation
Flathead Wildlife	Predator Project
Friends of the Wild Swan	Pyramid Mountain Lumber, Inc.
Idaho Conservation League	Sierra Club
Idaho Outfitters and Guides	The Lands Council
Idaho Rivers United	The Nature Conservancy
Idaho Wildlife Federation	The Western News
Intermountain Forest Industry Association	University of Idaho
Land and Water Fund of the Rockies	University of Montana
LWO Co.	

wrote a response to every identified comment. Some commentators shared the same concern, which was addressed by the same response; therefore, 814 separate responses were written. Finally, all the responses were compiled into a matrix and categorized by the type of concern or suggestion. For example, all comments dealing with road abandonment are listed in the major category of Roads and the sub-category of Abandonment in the response matrix. This matrix is provided in Section F.2, *Comment Response Matrix*, of Appendix F. This approach allows the reader to review responses to similar concerns and gain a complete understanding of the Services' perspective on key EIS/NFHCP issues.

### **6.6.2 Public Meetings**

Six public meetings were held as described in Section 6.5.2. A total of 95 people attended the public meetings, with the attendance at each meeting as follows:

- Kelso, Washington: 5
- Yakima, Washington: 10
- Libby, Montana: 12
- Kalispell, Montana: 22
- Missoula, Montana: 27
- Coeur d'Alene, Idaho: 19

The meetings were conducted in an open-house format with four information stations. The first station explained the purpose and need of the project and displayed a map of the Planning Area. The second station described the DEIS alternatives and summarized the impacts of each. The third station was Plum Creek's presentation of their NFHCP, which listed the NFHCP conservation commitments and included copies of Plum Creek's Technical Reports on CD-ROM. The fourth station contained comment forms for people who chose to comment at the meeting in written form, as well as a tape recorder to accommodate oral comments, if needed. All of the information displayed on boards at the information station was included in the Executive Summary of the DEIS. Copies of the Executive Summary were available to the public to take home. Officials from FWS, NMFS, and Plum Creek staffed each of the stations to answer questions and receive comments.

Comments received at public meetings were treated the same as written comments. They are presented in Appendix F with the written comments.