Solutions Table Meeting Notes

July 6, 2018, 9:30-3:30, Olympia WA

The Solutions Table met for the second time on July 6, 2018 in Olympia, WA. All members except for Paula Swedeen (Conservation Northwest) were present and participated. Agenda items included the following.

- Solutions Table mission and operations
- Walking in one another’s shoes: presentations from participants on their perspectives
- Path to identifying potential solutions
- Update on HB 22285

In discussing the mission and operations, Solutions Table members agreed that the solutions developed in the Solutions Table process would be oriented to those that improve the outlook for timber-related jobs, beneficiary revenue, and murrelet conservation, regardless of what the Board of Natural Resources decides. They reaffirmed that the Solutions Table would be oriented towards “more” in all three areas rather than trying to “make up” or “mitigate” the specifics of eventual BNR decisions. They reaffirmed that the Solutions Table effort be held apart from the Board of Natural Resources (BNR) decisions, and that members would continue to engage, and advocate for their individual interests, in the BNR decision processes. Solutions Table members discussed the challenge, and importance, of allowing those BNR conversations to play out without “poisoning” the Solutions Table conversations.

With respect to timber-related jobs, the Solutions Table discussed whether the mission needs to include the notion of additional harvest (i.e., more board-feet of timber made available for sale). With respect to marbled murrelet protections the Solutions Table discussed use of the word “additional” and how that related to protections (and restrictions on harvest) which currently exist. Solutions Table members reaffirmed both their individual needs to trust that they each will work as hard for others’ interests as they do for their own, and that each Solutions Table member has an authentic commitment to all three “legs” of the Solutions Table: murrelet, jobs, and beneficiary revenue. Members agreed that the facilitator would produce a revised draft mission statement that reflected the discussion. (Attached.)

No specific comments or discussion were offered on the operating agreements. Solutions Table discussions around the mission statement affirmed many of the draft operating agreements including the notion of “win-win-win” opportunities, respecting one another’s ideas, learning from one another, surfacing hard issues and seeking to understand, and making the space safe for creative (and maybe controversial) ideas to be raised and discussed.
Each Solutions Table members made a presentation on the issues / information to which they are the closest. This included presentations on timber supply; county economic development, economic challenges and opportunities, and the role of timber in county economies; school beneficiary revenue, how it is used, and why it is important to educational outcomes; county beneficiary revenue, how it is used, and why it is important to counties; and marbled murrelet status and conservation. Presentations are available on the DNR webpage.

Solutions Table members discussed the presentations and raised a number of points and questions including the following.

- Different harvest rotations in different locations/counties set up challenges for protecting the murrelet, stabilizing revenue for beneficiaries, and creating sustainable jobs in fixed locations.
- Since harvest is below projected / sustainable levels, is it possible to meet sustainable harvest levels and if so over what timeframe and where?
- What is needed to ensure additional in-state value-added use of harvested wood from state lands can occur and generate additional revenue for beneficiaries and job creation in Washington?
- Is it possible to understand the revenue impact county by county for having protected lands and then figure out how to share the ‘conservation burden’ among all counties, not just in the counties that have the protected lands?
- Are there ways to even out the peaks and valleys of revenue to the beneficiaries so that a predictable stable revenue stream comes to them?
- There are changing demographics, service needs and school construction gaps in the smaller counties. What strategies might exist to address this in addition to timber harvest?
- How should federal land management practices be considered by the Solutions Table?
- Are there viable ways to generate revenue for the beneficiaries by preserving/protection landscapes from harvest? How does that affect timber jobs?
- Can the Solutions Table work on strategies that help keep timber lands in sustainable long-term production?
- What are the limiting factors and challenges to murrelet conservation and how can those be addressed?
- Temporal and spatial issues related to murrelet conservation.
- What does “success” look like for murrelet conservation.

Solutions Table members agreed to continue sharing information on these topics. They also agreed that, in particular, more detailed information on status, trends, limiting factors, and desired conservation outcomes for marbled murrelet would be useful. A conference call will be scheduled to share this type of information before the next Solutions Table meeting.

Finally, Solutions Table members discussed how solutions might come forward. They agreed that ideally solutions would benefit two or more interests at the same time, but that they also would need to be open to packages of solutions that were more specifically focused on an individual interest but taken together addressed all three. The briefly brainstormed potential areas and ideas to explore. These included: learning from other multi-benefit, incentive-based programs targeted at land owners (the Conservation Reserves Enhancement Program was mentioned); learning from work in other states (the Oregon sustainable harvest process was mentioned); leveraging riparian management zones, land swaps or other efforts oriented towards keeping high-value working forests at risk of conversation in working status and focusing habitat efforts in the most meaningful areas for murrelet conservation; spreading impacts of state-wide conservation obligations more evenly across counties; converting former timber land back to
timber; federal lands management opportunities; addressing non-supply related factors that may suppress timber-related jobs (unemployment insurance for seasonal workers was mentioned); carbon-related ideas; funding and market-based strategies; opportunities for small forest land owner assistance; opportunities related to fire treatment; and alternative funding mechanisms for local government financial security and essential services.

DNR provided an update House Bill 2285 and the Solutions Table. An initial report is due in September 2018. DNR believes this will focus on an initial report on the require economic analysis. The status of Solutions Table discussions also will be described along with any progress the group may have made on solutions. The group agreed that more information on the approach to the economic analysis would be useful. A conference call will be scheduled before the next Solutions Table meeting to provide this information.

Public comment was offered. There was one commenter. Comments included: concern that Solutions Table conversations might stray into discussion of other species of concern beyond the marbled murrelet, disappointment that the Solutions Table has not yet closed on its mission description, and the need for true and factual information in all cases and especially on marbled murrelet conservation status regionally, where populations in Oregon are increasing.

The next Solutions Table meeting will be August 29 and will be on the Olympic Peninsula.

Handouts from the meeting are available on the DNR webpage.
Revised draft prepared by facilitator after discussion at 7/6/18 Solutions Table meeting.

Revised Draft Mission
Design achievable, implementable solutions that are in addition to whatever outcomes transpire from ongoing Board of Natural Resources decision processes related to the marbled murrelet, and which lead to: improved survival and recovery potential for the marbled murrelet; additional stable and sustainable revenue to beneficiaries; and growth of timber-related jobs in rural communities through for example enhanced forest management, sustainable harvest, and value-added in-state timber processing.

Draft Operating Agreements (unchanged from 7/6 version)
• The Solutions Table is examining available information and looking for win-win-win opportunities.
• The Solutions Table does not replace existing ongoing decision processes; members will continue to advocate for their interests in those processes. The Solutions Table is separate from these other processes.
• Participants are respectful of one another and of each other’s ideas.
• Each person acknowledges and values each other person’s knowledge, experience, and expertise; participants expect to learn from one another.
• Participants welcome openness and the opportunity to hear the old hurts and surface disagreements; they do not take old hurts or disagreements personally; they seek to understand.
• The Solutions Table is a safe space for creative ideas to be surfaced and discussed in an atmosphere of trust and exploration as a group and without fear of repercussions.
• The facilitator is a neutral third party.