

## Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

### WATER Steering Team Meeting

DS Consulting Office

January 26, 2017

[http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/tmt/documents/FPOM/2010/Willamette\\_Coordination/](http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/tmt/documents/FPOM/2010/Willamette_Coordination/)

### Facilitator's Summary

Action	By Whom?	By When?
Send DSC suggested edits and input on 2008 WATER Guidelines	Steering Team members	2/9
Provide draft critical path and update on DSC contract.	Dan Spear	2/23
Prepare for joint RM&E & ST 2018 Strategic Research Planning session on 2/23.	DSC & Teams	2/16
Provide written response to Issue 1 and 2016 paired release spreadsheet for RM&E and Steering Teams.	Ian	2/23
Discuss Issue 2 internally and report back to Steering Team	Corps	2/23
Draft sub-basin and annual plans for each Willamette sub-basin.	Steering & RM&E Teams	ongoing

**Participants (for all or part of the meeting):** Chris Allen (USFWS), Leslie Bach (NPCC), Stephanie Burchfield (NMFS), Joyce Casey (USACE), Ian Chane (USACE), Brad Eppard (USACE), Bernadette Graham-Hudson (ODFW), Nancy Gramlich (ODEQ-on the phone), Marc Liverman (NMFS), Rich Piaskowski (USACE), Lawrence Schwabe (Grand Ronde-on the phone), Dan Spear (BPA), and Karl Weist (NPCC).

**Facilitator:** Donna Silverberg; **Support:** Emily Stranz, DS Consulting

#### Welcome, Introductions, & Follow-up

Facilitator, Donna Silverberg, welcomed the group, noting that the purpose of the day's session was to discuss issues and seek consensus on process, substance and outcomes for efforts that impact all participants engaged with the Willamette system. RM&E Team members were also present for joint conversation with the Steering Team on technical and policy issues.

Donna asked the group if there were any additional edits to the 12/19 meeting summary; there were no additional edits and the summary was approved by consensus (all 1's and 2's using the Five Fingers of Consensus).

#### WATER Updates

Donna reminded the Steering Team that the goal is for them to have conducted internal conversations around the Draft 2008 WATER Guidelines and provided written suggestions for revisions to DS Consulting prior to the February Steering Team meeting. DSC will then compile the comments and provide them back to the Steering Team for a February conversation aimed at developing a cohesive recommendation for the March 17th Managers' Forum meeting.

→ **ACTION:** Steering Team members will coordinate internal conversations regarding the 2008 WATER Guidelines and send their suggested edits to DS Consulting by Thursday February 9th.

Dan Spear, BPA, provided an update on the Middle Fork Sub-basin RM&E Plan Critical Path. He shared that BPA is wrapping up the contracting process for a contractor to draft the critical path. Dan expects to bring a draft-draft to the February Steering Team meeting. Emily Stranz, DSC, noted that the RM&E

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Team felt that Rich and Stephanie should work closely with the contractor as the RM&E Team’s technical representatives.

Dan was also asked to provide an update on the status of the DS Consulting contract, because Steering Team members had heard that the funds were being used faster than originally anticipated.

→ **ACTION:** Dan will provide a draft Critical Path and an update on the DS Consulting contract at the February 23<sup>rd</sup> Steering Team meeting.

**Separating Policy and Technical Discussions and Decisions**

The Steering and RM&E Teams discussed the intersection of policy and technical discussions and decisions, recognizing the interconnected nature of some issues. Focusing on delineating the two types of issues should allow for more efficient, transparent, and predictable decision making.

The group brainstormed ways to distinguish between appropriate technical (RM&E Team) and policy (Steering Team) issues and conversations:

<b>Policy Issues (Steering Team) include...</b>	<b>Technical Issues (RM&amp;E Team) include...</b>
Clarifying the appropriate priority of documents: RPA, COP, HGMPs, etc. (NOTE: The ST has worked to clarify this.) Also, includes providing clarity on different interpretations of RPA and COP direction, as well as differing perspectives of critical information needs.	Continuing to utilize guiding documents to help inform critical paths and study objectives.
Addressing funding needs, priorities, and disagreements, including the “color of money” and limitations of funding sources, such as CRFM.	Focusing on the technical/biological needs without considering the funding or other policy decisions. (Note: Funding/policy issues have created impasse within the RM&E Team in the past).
Funding advocacy for CRFM or other funds.	Prioritizing projects and studies based on technical merit and need (without discussing what can or cannot be funded by CRFM) for review and funding discussions/action by Steering Team
Providing direction for annual planning that meets the region’s overarching goals by giving guidance to the RM&E Team (so that they can design studies that meet the bigger picture goals and needs).	Using Steering Team’s guidance and direction to create sub-basin and annual research plans that meet the policy needs.
Requesting consensus from the RM&E Team on the study priorities and finding funding for studies with consensus of that team. Where there is not RM&E consensus, the Steering Team will work to clarify disagreements and then make decisions to fund or not to fund based on the policy and funding issues at play.	Discussing and addressing issues with specific studies; clarifying the ability of a study to meet objectives; and then prioritizing studies based on the technical merits. (Then pass prioritized list to the Steering Team). NOTE: There needs to be more clarity in the ranking process: what are the appropriate criterion?

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The two teams noted the usefulness of their joint discussion and determined it would be beneficial to have a joint Steering and RM&E Team meeting to determine the FY18 priorities and needs. These needs will inform the longer-term sub-basin plans. **Those present agreed by consensus (all 1's and 2's) to hold a strategic research planning session in February 2017 after attending the Willamette Science Review. The Corps noted that this planning session should be scheduled for October/November in the future, followed by a budget check-in meeting in February.**

→ **ACTION:** The Steering and RM&E Teams will meet on February 23<sup>rd</sup> for a joint FY18 strategic research planning session.

The teams also agreed that, moving forward, it will be helpful to develop multi-year sub-basin RM&E plans for each Willamette sub-basin. The teams will use these to inform annual plans because they will provide further detail about how to meet the sub-basin plans. The sub-basin plans will be treated as living documents that incorporate lessons learned, recent data, reintroduction plans, HGMPs and budget.

### Elevated RM&E Issues

The Steering Team continued discussion regarding the three elevated issues from the RM&E team.

**Issue 1: Ongoing analysis and reporting of paired-release returning adults** - Ian shared that the Corps has decided it will not fund the annual reporting and analysis of data from the paired release study. Instead of a full study, they will provide annual raw data to the group in the form of a spreadsheet. They will provide a final report when all of the data is collected (likely in 2023). Additionally, ODFW will present the 2016 data at the Science Forum by ODFW on February 7-9, 2017. Steering Team members requested that Riccardo send the spreadsheet sooner than later for 2016 to see if it meets the group's needs.

The group clarified their process for when the Corps makes a decision that differs from the recommendation of the remainder of Steering Team members. The Corps previously agreed to provide a written explanation of their decision and Steering Team members felt that was an important step to document the overall WATER process.

→ **ACTION:** Ian will provide a memo clarifying the Corps' decision not to fund the annual report.

→ **ACTION:** The Corps will share the 2016 data spreadsheet with the RM&E and Steering Teams as soon as possible.

**Issue 2: Annual parentage analysis, spawning surveys and screwtrapping** - The group reviewed the prioritized list of projects that correspond to the elevated Issue 2, they included:

- Priority #12: APH-09-01-CGR (Cougar – genetic pedigree)
- Priority #13: APH-09-01-FOS (Chinook) (Foster – genetic pedigree)
- Priority #14: JPL-10-02-SYS (System – screwtrap)
- Priority #17: APH-15-01-SYS (System – spawning survey)
- Priority #20: APH-09-01-DET (Detroit – genetic pedigree)

The group focused their discussion on the Cougar genetic pedigree study (priority #12: APH-09-01-CGR). Ian shared that the Corps does not see a direct connection to the CRFM required action at this point. From the Corps' perspective, this study seems more like re-introduction effort and they believe four years of pedigree data is sufficient to inform the decisions the region needs to make at this point because it shows consistent trends and different fish recycling scenarios. Bernadette disagreed with this decision and explained that ODFW and other fish managers use the data (returning fish, size, etc.) to inform decisions on out-planting and other in-season, interim fish management decisions. She

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explained that the trap has operated differently each year; as such, this affects the data's value for decision-making. From ODFW's perspective, there is not sufficient data for each of the operations (fully recycling, partial, or no recycling). Stephanie agreed, noting that this is a fish passage question and the fish agencies want more information to better refine fish recycling management decisions in the near term. She explained that NMFS needs more data to know when/whether they can stop recycling fish. NMFS believes the fishery could be managed better if there were more information regarding when the fish are coming back. Fisheries managers believe this information provides more certainty on adult fish passage, and is needed to understand if there are ways to further minimize the impacts on the fish. The fish managers clarified the management question from their perspective:

- How can we ensure that the fish you are passing upstream originated from upstream of Cougar Dam and how can we keep the fish that originated downstream, downstream of Cougar Dam? The fish placed upstream of Cougar cannot get back downstream and the fish managers want to try to avoid putting the self-sustaining population that originated below the dam, upstream because it can't get back down.

Bernadette said ODFW is trying to avoid mining altogether, which requires full recycling; however, NMFS does not like the recycling, so they want more information to figure out a better approach. The genetic pedigree data also has been useful at Detroit: for example, they do not currently outplant above Detroit. However, due to the results of the study, ODFW might consider outplanting in future bad water years. She noted that everywhere they have gotten this data it has changed fish management and is used for adaptive management.

Rich noted that he did not see the variation in the 4 years of data as that significant: it is between 0.5-3%. Bernadette agreed, and pointed out that the sample size is small and it is not good to make decisions off of one year of data with such a small sample size.

Joyce shared that it is important to her to hear the different needs and to understand from the fish managers' perspective how this information is beneficial. She had not heard or considered the in-season management decisions that this data might support and felt this additional information was useful for her and her team to appreciate. Rich noted that the February sub-basin planning meeting should be a good opportunity to revisit the importance of these studies in the bigger picture. Ian recognized that this is an interim management strategy for the fish managers, whereas the action agencies were thinking of longer term management.

Donna pointed to the prioritization spreadsheet – noting that the Corps and BPA had given zeros to these projects while others ranked them as 2 or 3. She noted that, if you take out the zeros and average the score, this project ranks at 2.6 which puts it tied at 5<sup>th</sup> place. She suggested that the Corps might want to consider the impact of these rankings.

The group shifted from the technical to a policy-based discussion on the issue. Karl suggested that the Steering Team should consider:

1. How much does it cost?
2. Do we have the funding?
3. How does it fit into the region's priorities?
4. If we were to spend the money to get additional data, what outcomes would we see as a result?

The group listed the following policy issues related to the study:

- Both the interim and end product information is valuable to improve in-season management.

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- Additional years of pedigree data are valuable for management of the stock. If funds are not available to analyze the data this year, it would be helpful to secure the funds for future years.
- This is O&M funding associated with the trap – it is worthwhile information, however, the Corps’ sees difficulty tying it back to passage.
- What funding options are available?
  - The CRFM funding is sensitive and the region must be careful with how funds are used.

**The Grand Ronde, ODEQ, ODFW, NMFS, NPCC, and USFWS all agreed that this study provides important interim information for fisheries management and encouraged the Corps to fund it.** Bernadette suggested that all of the concepts listed under Issue 2 should be funded because they all include datasets that inform in-season management.

The group coalesced around the idea that longer-term datasets which provide valuable data, but do not fit within CRFM need to find a funding home. This is a policy issue that needs to be addressed by the Managers.

→ **ACTION:** The Corps will take Issue 2 back to the Corps for more discussion, recognizing the level of importance to the region. They will report back to the Steering Team regarding their conversation.

**Issue 3: Green Peter outplanting, parentage, spawning surveys and screwtrapping** – Marc shared a NMFS memo with the group, in which NMFS has determined that research for passage at Greenpeter is necessary as part of the BiOp. He encouraged the Corps to start the process to research passage at Greenpeter.

### Next Steps

Steering Team members will coordinate internal conversations on the 2008 Guidelines and provide their agency/organizations’ input to DS Consulting for compilation. DS Consulting will work with Steering and RM&E Team members to coordinate the joint sub-basin and annual planning session for February 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Corps will provide their decision on Issue 1 in writing and will revisit Issue 2 and 3 internally.

**The next Steering Team meeting is February 23<sup>rd</sup> all day. It will be a joint session with the RM&E Team.** Discussion topics include:

- Process conversation on Guidelines
- Work session on priorities and annual sub-basin plans.

*\* This summary is provided by the DS Consulting Facilitation Team; suggested edits are welcome and can be sent to Emily Plummer at [emily@dsconsult.co](mailto:emily@dsconsult.co). \**