

**Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)
Joint Steering & RM&E Team Meeting**

March 17, 2017

http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/tmt/documents/FPOM/2010/Willamette_Coordination/

Facilitator's Summary

<i>Action</i>	<i>By Whom?</i>	<i>By When?</i>
Incorporate agreed on changes to 2/23 meeting summary	Emily	3/23/17
Send Doodle poll to schedule the September and October meeting	Emily	3/23/17
Meet to revise the Critical Path; provide revised draft to the Steering Team for review	Chuck, Bernadette, & Marc	Prior to 4/13 ST meeting
Provide specific edits on the Guidelines to DSC.	Steering Team	Noon on 4/6
Provide revised Guidelines to Steering Team	DSC	4/10/17
Draft Managers Forum agenda and review with Managers	Donna	4/13/17

In the room: Leslie Bach (NPCC), Joyce Casey (USACE), Ian Chane (USACE), Mike Hudson (alternate for Chris Allen) (USFWS), Chuck Peven (BPA Contractor), Karl Weist (NPCC);

Participants on the Phone: Bernadette Graham-Hudson (ODFW), Nancy Gramlich (ODEQ), Marc Liverman (NMFS), Dan Spear (BPA)

Facilitation and Notes Team: Donna Silverberg and Emily Stranz, DS Consulting.

Welcome, introductions, & housekeeping

Facilitator, Donna Silverberg, welcomed the WATER Steering Team, noting that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss issues and seek consensus on process, substance and outcomes for efforts that affect participants engaged in the Willamette system. The focus of the session was on the draft Guidelines and process, the Middle Fork RM&E critical path, and preparing for the April Managers' Forum meeting.

The Steering Team reviewed and approved the February 23rd meeting summary, pending clarifications on page 4 regarding the NMFS memo on RM&E Issue #3, which mistakenly stated that research of fish passage at GreenPeter was required as part of the BiOp, not actual passage. Additionally, there were changes on page 4 regarding opportunity for the Steering Team to follow-up with a BPA representative from the Fish and Wildlife Program. These changes will be incorporated into the final summary.

Donna confirmed with the group that Steering Team meetings should still be regularly scheduled for the 2nd Thursday of the month from 1:00-4:00. The group agreed and, when needed to accommodate people's schedules, the meetings might be shifted to a morning session. Due to schedule conflicts, DS Consulting will need to reschedule the September meeting (currently the date is being held for a Managers' Forum meeting) and October meeting.

→ **ACTION:** DS Consulting will send a Doodle to schedule the September and October meetings.

Updates & Process Check-in

ODFW's involvement in WATER: ODFW and the Corps shared that ODFW has rejoined the WATER process, as they have worked through the issues that caused the previous impasse (changes in the contracting process and mechanism for hatchery services). Joyce explained that, in the past, the two agencies had Cooperating Agreements for the hatchery work; however, after a closer look at the legal

ramifications, the Corps needed to shift to contracting the work. She noted that there were significant communication challenges, and ODFW and other affected communities were caught off guard by the changes. This led to a need for additional clarifications on how the agencies will move forward in their work together, and how that will affect the public. Joyce noted that most of the work ODFW did under the Cooperative Agreements would likely continue under sole-source contracts. This shift may impact ODFW operations some, however, the parties are working to minimize impact as much as possible.

Middle Fork RM&E Plan: Critical Path: Chuck Peven, BPA contractor, presented the latest iteration of the Middle Fork RM&E Plan critical path. This draft incorporated input provided by the Steering and RM&E Teams in February, as well as input received from Marc Liverman. Chuck noted that he attempted to make it simpler and to clarify the decision points. Chuck noted that this draft reflects ideas generated to meet the needs of the RM&E plan, and he is eager for additional recommendations on how to improve it so that it works for everyone. He walked the Steering Team through the revised path, noting:

- Information needs are noted in the boxes, which extend over the years in which the information will be gathered.
- Red stars indicate decision points
- Purple boxes signify where performance criteria is needed (and needs to be developed by the Steering team)
- Alternative 8 is ongoing and applies to all passage options as it is used to assess the contributing factors that limited the efficacy of an option tested and/or unmet performance targets. It is a placeholder for options that do not meet performance targets, however, deserve additional exploration.
- Alternative 9 is intended to be a sensitivity analysis of the LifeCycle model.

The Steering Team offered the following questions and suggestions:

- Because “alternatives” are explored in the EDR stage, it is confusing to use that language in the Critical Path; instead use “passage options” to describe the various aspects of the path.
- Include a map key to show what the various shapes and colors signify.
- The timeline and decision points could be clearer. It is difficult to tell when exploration of an option is scheduled to be complete or articulated performance targets. [Note: Chuck noted that he will work to clarify end dates and performance targets; however, there is still a lot of detail that needs to be determined, such as performance criteria.]
 - Clarify when research would be conducted and concluded so that it is easy to tell how long it takes to accomplish. [Note: Chuck pointed to where this information is included in the current version and noted that he has ideas on how to make it more self-explanatory.]
- Clarify how the different pieces and parts feed into the decisions.
- Add the context of whether the option can achieve a self-sustaining population.
- The modelling currently is implicit; it would be helpful to have it explicitly noted.
- Add the funding timeline.

There was discussion around the passage options, specifically whether there is a head of reservoir option that is being explored. It was noted that HOR options in a tributary or upstream of Westfir should be left on the table at this point. Bernadette noted that, because there was previously a dam removed at Westfir, ODFW has some concerns with using it for a HOR.

Marc asked how long it takes to calculate SAR, to which Chuck responded that it depends on the species. Generally it is 4-5 years for a complete year class. Chuck said he did not include SAR because it is assumed in the LifeCycle model and is not necessarily a good metric to use as a performance target due to the lack of control once the fish out-migrate. Similarly, pre-spawn mortality (PSM) is incorporated into the LifeCycle modelling effort. Chuck noted that there is not a decision point on PSM, as it is ongoing and the researchers will always be working to find ways to optimize the survival. PSM will need to be

dealt with in a similar fashion as juvenile survival: assess along the way, explore causes, and adjust to see if it can be improved. The Steering Team recognized that if PSM is not reduced to a level that can achieve replacement, it is a red flag that needs to be discussed. They can determine through modelling if the levels of survival in the field are going to achieve replacement; there is available data to assume a SAR for this assessment. Marc said he still needed to see on the Critical Path, explicitly, what the points are and how they lead to decisions (especially when the modelling will be done and its goals).

Chuck noted that the Steering Team will eventually need to clarify how they are going to make decisions and clarify the decision criteria. Ian explained that a clear Critical Path would ensure that they have the information needed to inform decisions. The outcomes, from what is noted in the Critical Path, should illuminate the best biological options. Then, the Corps would work on Engineering Design Alternatives and request funding, once they have made a decision as to which option(s) they should explore further. He also noted that the Corps' funding is on a two-year cycle, thus a decision made in 2021 would be fundable in 2023.

The Steering Team thanked Chuck for his work on the Critical Path, noting that they would like to have him present it to the Managers at their April meeting for a process and content update.

→ **ACTION:** Chuck will meet with Marc and Bernadette to further revise the Critical Path and incorporate the Steering Team's input. He will provide a revised draft to the Steering Team for review prior to their April 13th meeting.

WATER Survey

Donna provided the Steering Team with a survey derived from the goals stated in the WATER Guidelines. She explained that she wanted to provide this as a quiz to see if the goals were still relevant and/or realistic. The survey could be a tool the group would use regularly to measure success towards goals that matter to the region. There was a range of responses and Donna provided the average score for each goal (see average scores attached).

The areas in which the average scores denoted that WATER was performing acceptably well (2.6 or higher) included:

- (A) Providing a forum for information sharing and discussion of operations and configuration of the Willamette Project as they relate to compliance with the ESA and the Willamette BiOps and RPA;
- (B) Ensuring broad technical and policy input into planning, funding, and implementing decisions regarding operation of the Willamette Project related to implementation of the Willamette BiOps and RPA or other applicable biological opinions;
- (D) Providing a vehicle for elevating and resolving disputes associated with the operation and configuration of the Willamette Project to appropriate levels of the involved governmental bodies;
- (F) Identifying opportunities for improved coordination and partnerships to increase efficiencies and avoid unnecessary duplication; and,
- (H) Facilitating open and transparent communication in making decisions, as well as to track progress and the rationale for decisions.

The areas in which the average scores denoted that WATER was not performing well (2.5 or below) included:

- (C) Seeking consensus on actions implemented related to the Willamette BiOps and RPA, including system configuration and water quality;

- (E) Promoting coordination between implementation of the Willamette BiOps and RPA and actions taken under other related regional plans to restore Willamette River Basin fish, such as ESA Recovery Plans or state Conservation Plans;
- (G) Increasing awareness and include consideration of the implementation of the Willamette BiOps' and RPA actions on non-listed species, cultural and other resources, and the multi-purposes of the Willamette Project;
- (I) Ensuring an adaptive management strategy is used effectively to implement actions for the recovery of ESA-listed species.

The Steering Team discussed this exercise, noting that it was a helpful reflection tool, and that the goals noted in the WATER Guidelines are very comprehensive....perhaps too comprehensive. They discussed the expanse of the goals, as well as the number, suggesting that it may be helpful to focus on the “key” goals and consider others as additional benefits to the process. They agreed to prioritize the goals to include A, B, C, D and H (incorporated into C) as the “key” goals; E, F, G, and I are additional benefits that could flow from the process. F, in particular, was noted as a good goal, yet anything happening on this front was happening by chance: WATER teams could be more intentional in their work with municipalities and watershed councils to increase the overall success in the Willamette.

There was discussion regarding how Recovery Plans are, and could be, incorporated into the WATER process. It was noted that the WATER process is focused around ESA through the BiOp, however, passage projects are part of the Recovery Plans. As such, the region needs to do what it can to contribute to those processes, or run the risk of operating in a vacuum. Additionally, there was interest in improving actions on non-listed species, cultural, and other resources (such as considering lamprey during passage design conversations, or coordinating with others working on non-listed species).

WATER Guidelines

Donna shared that the DS Consulting Team revised the WATER Guidelines based on input from the WATER teams. She reiterated that the direction from the Managers and Steering Team was that the Guidelines were generally good, but needed to be tightened up, simplified and shortened. The group briefly reviewed and discussed the Guidelines, noting the following:

- There are still concerns regarding the purpose and process of “seeking consensus” within the WATER teams. One member felt that striving for consensus is a fundamental flaw inherent in this process because if they do not reach consensus, this triggers an elevation process that does not work well and important issues get stuck. It was suggested that there be a recommendation process attached to the consensus seeking process, which would help clarify what to do when consensus is not reached.
 - Donna pointed out that the revised version says that if a team cannot get to consensus, they shift into the “conflict resolution process” in which they clarify what the issue is and whether it is important enough to elevate. This step is necessary to clarify when an entity feels an issue is truly important enough to elevate.
 - If, upon elevation, the Steering Team cannot get to consensus, then the team makes a recommendation to the AAs (with review/approval from the Services, in keeping with the legal authorities) who can follow it or not. If Steering Team members believe it is a policy issue in need of a higher level of manager to consider, they can kick it up to the Managers’ Forum for resolution.
 - Donna continued that from her experience working with groups, if people are not working to seek consensus, they instead work to influence the vote to get what they want. This limits the whole group working together to find the right solutions.
 - The group acknowledged that when consensus is reached, there is more power behind the decision.
- A lot of the conflicting issues are stemming from the limitations of the funding source.

- Collaboration and inclusivity were important to the Managers and need to be maintained for the spirit of the WATER process.
 - Shifting to a voting process, where only the AAs and Services are voting members, does not support a collaborative, inclusive process.
 - The AAs and Services have a special relationship with each other and are tasked with implementing the BiOp; to that end, they want and need to get input from the region.
 - The region, would like to see the AAs accept the consensus of the rest of the group more than they have in the past. If the AAs are never going to accept the group resolution, the WATER process will not be successful.
 - It is important to recognize the sideboards that member agencies work within, for instance, funding constraints – this will make it easier to reach agreement. Sometimes the Corps is able to push on things to try to make them happen and it helps to have the region’s support.
 - Sometimes there are disputes at the technical level that are not bound by the funding constraints, they are more bound by decision making authority – this impedes the group from coming to consensus and should be avoided whenever possible.

Donna noted that the goal remains to revise the Guidelines so that everyone can live with them. Steering Team members agreed to review the draft Guidelines and provide specific edits to DS Consulting by April 6th at noon. DS Consulting will provide a second draft back to the Steering Team by April 10. The revised, consensus-based Guidelines will be presented to the Managers at their April 25th meeting. If an agency needs to have its Office of Counsel review the Guidelines, please do so before the 6th.

→ **ACTION:** Provide specific revisions on the Guidelines to DSC by noon on April 6th. DSC will incorporate edits and provide a revised version for review prior to the April 13th Steering Team meeting.

Preparation for the Managers’ Forum session

Donna explained that she has meetings set up to connect with Managers regarding the April meeting agenda. Before then, she wanted to hear from the Steering Team as to what they thought should be included on the agenda. The Steering Team suggested the following topics:

- General updates: Update on changes in hatchery contracting and Notice of Intent to sue over summer steelhead (30mins)
- Decision discussion on the revised WATER Guidelines
 - WATER survey-quiz
- Update on the Sub-basin RM&E Plans
 - Middle Fork and other sub-basins
 - Clarify the Managers’ desired timeline for completion of the sub-basin plans
 - Also bring Chuck in for description of the Middle Fork RM&E Critical Path
- Status update on the Reintroduction Plans and integration into the overall effort, including longer-term RM&E needs
 - Clarify the timeframe and considerations (Note: Fish Managers have started work on the Reintroduction Plans.)
- Willamette Initiative – Invite Meta Loftsgarden from OWEB to present work going on in the Willamette outside of the WATER process.

Next Steps

Moving forward, Mark, Chuck and Bernadette will meet to discuss and revise the Critical Path; they will provide a revised path to the Steering Team before the April 13th meeting. The Steering Team will review the revised draft WATER Guidelines and provide specific edits to DS Consulting by noon on April 6th. DS Consulting will incorporate edits and provide a revised copy back out to the Steering Team on April

10th. Donna will work with the Managers to finalize the April 25th Managers' Forum agenda; if Steering Team members have additional items they will bring them back to the Steering Team.

The next Steering Team meeting will be from 1:00-4:00 on April 13th at the DS Consulting office.

Times are provided as a guide and will be adjusted as needed to support the conversation and needs of the Team. We will take breaks as needed. Coffee and snacks will be available.

WATER FORUM
Evaluation of Overall Effort
Steering Team Assessment March 17, 2017

Please rate how well you think WATER is doing on the following: (As a time frame of reference, please limit your scoring to the past 6 months)

Rate based on: 1-not well....2-needs improvement....3-fine....4-pretty well....5-very well

	SCORE (3/17/17)
A. providing a forum for information sharing and discussion of operations and configuration of the Willamette Project as they relate to compliance with the ESA and the Willamette BiOps and RPA;	3.8
B. ensuring broad technical and policy input into planning, funding, and implementing decisions regarding operation of the Willamette Project related to implementation of the Willamette BiOps and RPA or other applicable biological opinions;	2.8
C. seeking consensus on actions implemented related to the Willamette BiOps and RPA, including system configuration and water quality;	2.1
D. providing a vehicle for elevating and resolving disputes associated with the operation and configuration of the Willamette Project to appropriate levels of the involved governmental bodies;	2.6
E. promoting coordination between implementation of the Willamette BiOps and RPA and actions taken under other related regional plans to restore Willamette River Basin fish, such as ESA Recovery Plans or state Conservation Plans;	2.5
F. identifying opportunities for improved coordination and partnerships to increase efficiencies and avoid unnecessary duplication;	2.75
G. increasing awareness and include consideration of the implementation of the Willamette BiOps' and RPA actions on non-listed species, cultural and other resources, and the multi-purposes of the Willamette Project;	2.06
H. facilitating open and transparent communication in making decisions, as well as to track progress and the rationale for decisions;	2.75
I. ensuring an adaptive management strategy is used effectively to implement actions for the recovery of ESA-listed species.	2.12