

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

Steering Team Meeting

May 11, 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 4/13 meeting summary	Emily	5/18/17
Report back to Steering Team on progress with Green Peter discussions.	Joyce, & Marc	6/8/17
Discuss TDG and project operations at the Flow Team; report back to the Steering Team on the conversation.	Dan	6/8/17
Review and discuss prioritization and elevation process at the next Steering Team meeting.	Steering Team	6/8/17

Participants: Joyce Casey (Corps), Ian Chane (Corps), Brad Eppard (Corps), Bernadette Graham-Hudson (ODFW), Nancy Gramlich (DEQ), Doug Komoroski (Corps), Marc Liverman (NMFS), Tammy Mackey (Corps), Dan Spear (BPA), Valerie Walker (Corps), Karl Weist (NPCC);

Facilitator: Donna Silverberg; Notes: Emily Stranz, DS Consulting

Welcome, introductions, & housekeeping

Facilitator, Donna Silverberg, welcomed the Steering Team, noting that the purpose of the Steering Team is to discuss issues and seek consensus on process, substance and outcomes for efforts that affect participants engaged in the Willamette system.

The Steering Team reviewed the April 13th meeting summary and pending the suggested edits provided by Dan Spear, approved the summary with consensus (All 1's and 2's using the Five Fingers of Consensus).

Updates & Process Check-in

Report from Corps & NMFS re: Green Peter (RM&E Elevated Issue #3 Green Peter outplanting, parentage, spawning surveys and screw trapping): Marc Liverman, NMFS, reported that he and Joyce met to discuss potential options to move forward on the Green Peter issue. Options generated included: 1. NMFS redact the RPA measure; 2. Add the Green Peter outplanting, parentage, spawning surveys, and screw trapping to the high-head study at Green Peter; and 3. Include the studies in the reintroduction planning process. Marc shared that the group has not yet found a solution, however, the next step is for Marc to talk to Bruce McIntosh to see about adding the studies to the reintroduction plan that ODFW is in the process of developing. He reiterated that the RPA defined studies at Green Peter as a required action under the BiOp. Ian Chane and Brad Eppard, Corps, suggested that the studies be included in the reintroduction planning process. Marc suggested they are included in the FY18 concept package. Marc agreed to connect back with Joyce and then report back on his conversation with Bruce at the June 8th Steering Team meeting.

Updates on Technical Teams: Ian noted that the Willamette Fish Facility Design Work Group (WFFDWG) is working on a document that describes the 30%, 60%, and 90% design stages Detroit and Cougar passage and temperature control. WFFDWG is outlining the details that will be included in the various design stages, including steps in the process for regional review and input. A schedule will be provided to the Steering Team once it is drafted and NMFS and the Corps have reviewed it jointly.

The group circled back to previous conversations regarding a potential reorganization of the WATER Technical Teams. Tammy shared that due to the shift from a Cooperative Agreement to Sole Source

Contract with ODFW for hatchery work, there is no longer a need for the Hatchery Management Team (HMT). He explained that the Corps cannot have other agencies directing their contractor, so instead, partners can contact the Hatchery Coordinator (Andy Traylor) on hatchery related matters and Andy will work directly with ODFW. Additional coordination with the region would be handled through Willamette Fish Passage Operations and Maintenance (WFPOM). Additionally, as needed, a hatchery task group could be put together to respond to issues if/when needed.

Bernadette Graham Hudson, ODFW, noted that ODFW hatchery staff has found the HMT to be of value in connecting ODFW, NMFS and the Corps. She encouraged the Corps to reduce the redundancy between HMT and WFPOM. Dan Spear, BPA, shared that from his perspective the WFPOM is a one stop shop where many of the region's discussions can take place. Marc agreed, noting that NMFS would like to streamline the meetings where possible, as it is a lot of work for them to participate in all of the teams.

The group discussed the Flow Team and Ian noted that this team would remain intact. It was clarified that the Flow Team works on issues both within and out of the BiOp. Bernadette noted that the Flow Team and WFPOM often cover the same information and again, there seems to be too much redundancy between the teams. Tammy Mackey, Corps, shared the intent of the Flow Team is different than the WFPOM: the Flow Team is intended to address real-time flow management issues on a bi-weekly basis and there are more stakeholders included than just the WATER members. WFPOM coordinates on issues such as operational changes, fish kills, transmission issues, and potentially TDG (predominantly addressed through the Flow Team). Updates from the Flow Team will be provided at WFPOM.

Bernadette asked for clarification on who should be staffing the WFPOM meetings. Tammy noted that WFPOM will not be meeting as often as the Flow Team; however, the Corps would like to retain the regularly scheduled meeting as there will be a greater need for coordination as the region moves forward with passage. Ideally, WFPOM it is attended by representatives from regional agencies who have the authority to provide recommendations on the Corps actions. At WFPOM, Memorandums of Coordination are discussed with the intent of coming to resolution. Tammy continued that partner agencies can reduce their workload by providing oral input that will be recorded in meeting summaries. Both summaries and agendas are posted on the WFPOM site so that Representatives can see what will be discussed ahead of time; however, at times there will be ad hoc agenda items.

Hatchery M&E: Marc noted that the way that information was shared regarding M&E funding after the request for input, seemed intentionally off. Brad reassured Marc that there was no intentional ill will. Marc appreciated Brad's response, noting that there is a need to continue working on together and to improve intra and inter-agency communication. He pointed O&M funds going to un-prioritized screwtrapping studies, after the region was directed to pursue O&M funds for high priority screwtrapping studies.

In regard to the Hatchery M&E funding, Tammy noted that ideally the Corps would have had a better understanding of where they were on funding and the funding mechanism to be used. However, a lot of decisions came late and communication was poor. She assured the Steering Team that internally the Corps is working to better align these processes so that in the future the process is collaborative. Brad noted that one of the ways that the Corps is going to work to improve communication is by including Tammy in the Steering Team meetings.

The Corps wants the region's input on the hatchery M&E even though there are not funds for it this year; they need to know the region's priorities in case there are funds available next year. Tammy explained that the Corps works on 2-year cycles and last year they took a risk that there would be funding available for FY17, but there was not and instead there was a \$1.2 million shortfall due to BiOp requirements on the Columbia. The Corps had expected to be able to ask for more funding, however, they were not able to get more funds so Tammy had to balance the budget within the program. The Corps had internal

discussions about priorities and felt that M&E was a lower priority than hatchery production due to recent public security around cutting production. She acknowledged that there should have been regional conversation regarding M&E.

Bernadette suggested that because the Steering Team is tasked with helping the Corps implement the BiOp, they should be able to weigh in on funding decisions pertaining to the BiOp implementation. Marc asked if there is O&M money for biological purposes, to which Tammy responded yes. There are fish and wildlife O&M funds for each project and then separate O&M money for Tammy's program. Marc suggested that the project specific O&M project managers are brought into the Steering Team as well in order to keep everyone in the loop. Tammy explained the projects managed their own funding and prioritized their own work. She noted that there is a change of culture that needs to take place at the Corps to encourage more discussion between the projects and the District so that everyone understands the direction of the region. The Corps is working to get better aligned with projects and the District and then Brad, Ian, and Tammy can speak to the collective Corps interests at the Steering Team.

The group acknowledged that the region is working to meet as many of the system research needs and with limited resources. Thus when money is spent on work that is not high priority it is frustrating. Donna noted that the tone of the conversation was helpful and that action needs to follow the talk. Donna also encouraged the group to put some thought into how the WATER partners can actively work to build trust.

Willamette System Funding Clarity

Corps Funding Mechanisms: Upon request, Tammy provided explanation of specific funding mechanisms that the Corps uses. She noted that Cooperative Agreements had been used in the past; however, due to the Corps' mitigation responsibilities and contract law, they will not be used in the future.

- Cooperative agreement: This is a granting mechanism used to provide funds for mutually beneficial efforts that the Corps has a role in; however, these efforts are not primary missions for the Corps. Co-op Agreements allow for less direction from the Corps to partnering agencies.
- Contract Agreement: This is a detailed contract which outlines the work to be completed and associated timeline. Contracts will be used for hatchery work moving forward because hatchery mitigation is a Corps' responsibility. A contract is necessary because the efforts are part of the Corps' "mission"; thus they need to be able to direct implementation to ensure the mission is complete, and provides them recourse if necessary.
- Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU): This process is an internal process for contracting through the Engineering Research and Development Center (ERDC). ERDC sends out a 'sources sought' request to those who have been previously identified to perform the work, then proposals are sought and assessed. These are used in the Columbia and the Willamette, for example with the University of Idaho. There is a CESU vehicle for states to use and ODFW is currently working to get pre-approval. CESU cannot be used for hatchery monitoring and evaluation because of ownership complexities at the hatcheries.

It was noted that the contracting process is getting more and more difficult and taking longer to work through. Dan noted that contracting leaves a paper trail and thus there is more opportunity to scrutinize errors; he also noted that the ability to do contracting can be revoked, thus both BPA and the Corps are increasingly stringent on the process.

CRFM Funds: Ian explained how the CRFM budget is determined. He said it is based off of budget planning which is conducted two years in advance of the actual fiscal year in which funds will be spent. For the request, the Corps considers the previous budget needs and what work they know is coming up. The CRFM funds are dedicated to RPAs for Columbia and Willamette Rivers, as well as the Fish Accords (unless renegotiated, the Accords will expire in 2018). Funding ask is based on the COP and the five year

plan, as the Corps looks to the major actions in these plans and the associated research. Ian suggested that the sub-basin plans will help the region weigh in on the priorities.

Marc suggested that the Corps could base the budget ask off of the RM&E prioritized projects from the previous years. Ian noted that some of the RM&E projects are ranked low by the Corps because they do not see them fitting within the parameters of CRFM funds, thus they would not be able to fund them.

In regard to non-“major” actions for out-years, these will likely fall into O&M funding. The group was again encouraged to provide comments in on the hatchery M&E priorities so that the Corps can look to those to help guide where M&E falls. The COP, 5-year plan, Reintroduction Plans, and RM&E Sub-basin plans help the Corps have an idea of what will be needed in the next 5 years; regional help in completing these plans is vital. Additionally, out-year planning is a good way that the Steering Team can help to get ahead of the budget needs.

Tammy noted that the FY19 O&M budget has been submitted and is based on FY16 actuals with inflation added. It was suggested that if there is a need for cuts, the Steering Team should be consulted.

Bernadette noted that there are RPA measures that are slipping through the cracks and not being implemented because of the CRFM parameters, for instance, TDG. She asked how the region can help make these RPA measures a priority for the Corps. Ian said that the Middle Fork RM&E Plan will help shape the budget asks for FY19 and the more agreement they can get around the RM&E needs for the sub-basins the better. Bernadette asked how to make the RPAs that do not fit within the CRFM funds a priority for O&M funds. Tammy shared that the funding situation for O&M is static; however, the needs are not. There is no room in the budget for studies, as the priority will be to maintain the infrastructure to support the fish. If the region prioritizes and the O&M is funded to full mission (which is not realistic) then theoretically, they could fund down the list. O&M funds are not likely to increase; historically, Headquarters guidance says that they can only ask for 75% of the rolling 5-year average. The NW already gets a large portion of the Corps’ regional allotment.

The Corps representatives shared that they have to make the best with what they have. They can only fund efforts that respond to an immediate management action that is related to the BiOp. Marc pointed to the dire Spring Chinook and steelhead counts this year, noting that the current situation is worse than when the species were listed. The Steering Team brainstormed ways to move forward:

- Out-year planning with regional input via sub-basin RM&E plans. For example, after the DC meeting, Ian knew that there was a plan for the Middle Fork so he could earmark funds for it.
- Recognize the region’s successes – we are in the process of getting Cougar and Detroit construction underway and the region could focus efforts on this work to ensure that it is a success. The success of these projects is vital to securing more funding in the future.
- Work on enhancing partnerships in the valley and leverage those relationships.
- Within the WATER forum, support each other.

TDG Issues

The group discussed TDG issues and options to move forward to address them in the near term. Ian noted that the total project costs brought forward through the COP did not address a TDG fix. The thought was that they would learn from Foster and use that information to address TDG at other projects. Dan noted that he has talked with the Corps about operations to see if there are operational fixes. Currently, water passed through the spillway is increasing TDG. Dan noted that project operators would like data that points to the effects of moving a specific amount of water through the turbine, instead of spilling, and how it correlates to TDG. They are interested in realtime temperature and TDG data. The group felt that it would be helpful to have more conversation on this ASAP.

Dan continued that due to the run sizes this year, it is important for everyone to be thinking and acting on any efforts their agency can do to help address this tough situation. Bernadette noted that ODFW cut back the harvest allotment last week.

→ **ACTION:** Dan and Ian will work to get more details from the project regarding the expected flows, turbine capacity, and to determine what the biological benefits to fish would be if operations were changed. This conversation will be taken to the Flow Team. Dan will report back to the Steering Team at June meeting.

Annual Conversation & Decision Plan

Donna provided an outline of an annual conversation plan for the Steering Team to fill out. The intention is to schedule out the conversations that need to happen in the region on an annual basis.

→ **ACTION:** DSC will send out calendar for each representative to provide input regarding what needs to be included in conversation and when.

Project Budget

Ian provided an update on the FY17 budget which allocates a \$84 million capability; \$14 million was carried over from FY16. Ian explained that these numbers will change over time, and that he will update the Steering Team with any changes throughout the year. He noted that the Corps is expecting to see a ramp up in Willamette funding as needs in the Columbia system decrease.

There was a request to see a similar breakdown for the O&M funds. Tammy noted that the O&M funds are incredibly complicated, however, agreed to do her best to get something manageable and worthwhile to the Steering Team.

RM&E Elevation Process

The Steering Team briefly discussed the need to add more clarity to the RM&E elevation process, specifically because the RM&E team will be prioritizing FY18 concept papers in May and then will prioritize those concepts. The Steering Team will review the prioritization process and elevation process at their June 8th meeting. It was noted that the Steering Team previously discussed having the RM&E Team prioritize based on biological and technical merits, and the Steering Team prioritizing based on funding and policy.

→ **ACTION:** Review and discuss prioritization and elevation process at the next Steering Team meeting.

Paired Release Data Sharing

There was conversation around the intention of the spreadsheet that the Corps provided to the region as an interim data share of paired release data. Brad noted that this was a preliminary data share and not intended to be a report. He continued that he and his staff were offended by some of the comments that came back stating that the reporting was unethical because it did not cite the researchers. Bernadette noted that ODFW researchers felt that their work deserved to be cited and that there is a culture in the research community, including ODFW, to give credit to the originators of the work.

The next Steering Team meeting will be on June 8th at the DSC Office.