

## WATER Steering Team Meeting

June 26th, 2017

USACE 300 Block Building Portland, OR

[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?
Incorporate the agreed on edits and send a final version of the 5/11 meeting summary to the Steering Team.	DSC	ASAP
Provide the group with additional information on the research, funding needs, allocations, etc., for the Willamette Basin Review for ST discussion.	Ian	7/7
Develop information packet to inform conversation on Big Cliff TDG issues.	Bernadette, Dan, and Ian	7/7
Email the Steering Team describing the rationale for why the McKenzie sub-basin should be next plan developed.	Ian	7/7
Provide update on FY18 and FY17 budgets.	Ian	7/15
Revise the chart to incorporate Steering Team input & send the revision to the Steering Team prior to the joint meeting.	RM&E/DSC	7/15
Fill in the expected funding source for each concept.	Corps/BPA	7/15
Schedule joint RME and ST meeting for prioritizing FY18 concepts	DSC	ASAP
Provide input on the annual WATER calendar.	ALL	7/7

**Meeting Participants:** Leslie Bach (NPCC), Joyce Casey (Corps), Ian Chane (Corps), Bernadette Graham-Hudson (ODFW), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Marc Liverman (NMFS), Tammy Mackey (Corps), Dan Spear (BPA), Karl Weist (NPCC);

**On the Phone:** Nancy Gramlich (ODEQ), Lawrence Schwabe (Grand Ronde Tribe), Jason Sweet (BPA);

**Facilitation Team:** Facilitator: Donna Silverberg, Notes: Emily Stranz, Observers: Nancy Pionk and Alyssa Bonini (DS Consulting)

### **Welcome, Introductions, & Housekeeping**

DS Consulting Facilitator, Donna Silverberg, welcomed the 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. Donna reminded the group of the WATER Teams' discussion protocols, noting that the overarching goal of the WATER process is to coordinate implementation of the RPA and operation of the Willamette Project, drawing from the expertise of the affected Agencies and Tribes.

The group started by reviewing the May 11<sup>th</sup> meeting summary. In addition to the edits already provided, there were a handful of clarifying edits discussed. With the incorporation of those edits, the team approved the meeting summary (all 1's and 2's using the Five Fingers of Consensus).

- ACTION: DS Consulting will incorporate the agreed on edits and send a final version of the summary to the Steering Team.

## **Updates & Process Check-in**

Steering Team members shared brief updates on their individual agency and tribes' WATER related efforts in the basin. Donna noted that this "round-robin" briefing is an opportunity to update each other on current work in the region to ensure that team members are aware and tracking what's happening, and to build possibilities for partnering with others::

**USACE:** Ian, Joyce and Tammy reported that the conversation at WFDWG regarding the Cougar passage structure was productive. The Corps would like to plan more time for more regional discussions on actions in the Willamette Basin over the next couple of years, such as downstream passage at Detroit and Cougar. They noted that the Corps would like to work with the Steering Team on messaging out to the public on these efforts, and suggested that the group should consider starting up a WATER Public Affairs team. On the budgetary side of things, the Corps and ODFW are in the process of negotiating hatchery contracts, and bids are in for the trout hatchery mitigation efforts. The Corps is also working on submitting the 2019 budget to Congress; while setting up for 2018 and further clarifying what the program will look like for FY2017.

**NPCC:** Karl reported that Ian attended a Council meeting and provided an overview of the actions in the Willamette, including what has been implemented and what is planned. Karl also noted that a couple of habitat restoration projects will be implemented this year through the Habitat Technical Team; surprisingly, this is the first year that the projects will not require all of the allocated funds. Karl was uncertain about how those unused funds would be handled.

**BPA:** Dan reported that the Lookout Point research effort associated with the drawdown is turning out to be more complicated than previously thought. The research efforts and reservoir regulator need to drawdown the reservoir over a lengthy period of time in order to get the reservoir down to the desired level are not lining up well, which means that the project would have to remove a hydropower project purpose for a couple of months in order to implement the research. BPA and the Corps are taking a closer look at the operation feasibility and implications and will get back to the group with their results.

**USFWS:** Mike reported that the Pacific Lamprey Recovery Implementation Plan for the Willamette has been drafted and that the Five-Year Summit will be held in November 2017. Mike reminded the group that the Five-Year Summit provides an opportunity for partners to revisit and recommit to the Conservation Agreement, to which all of the WATER members are signatories. He will provide more details once the date for the Summit is narrowed down.

**CTGR:** Lawrence reported that Grand Ronde has been working with the Willamette Mitigation program, and are close to closing the purchasing of a property on the North Santiam that will be the focus of restoration efforts.

**ODEQ:** Nancy reported that they are in the first stages of the cold-water refugia study and will be working with USGS to gather data on the Willamette River from river mile 0 to 50. DEQ is also working with US EPA on a two-year effort to revise the Willamette Mercury TMDL to meet the human health standard for fish consumption.

**NMFS:** Marc reported that NMFS is busy coordinating with the Corps' Regulatory program on early remedies for the Portland harbor, storm water, and various overwater structures. NMFS is also working on a number of Forestry Habitat Conservation Plans, including 40,000 acres in Clackamas and the Elliot State Forest. He

noted that NMFS might request that more modelling take place as part of the Willamette Basin Review because they have concerns about flow assumptions and operational feasibility regarding impacts to agriculture. Marc asked about funding mechanisms for this work, duration and sustainability of the efforts, as well as the priority compared to other research in the region. He also questioned why flow studies are fundable with CRFM funds, and how the decision to use CRFM funds is consistent with other decisions that CRFM funds can't be used unless directly related to fish passage actions. It was noted that NMFS and the Corps are meeting on June 28<sup>th</sup> for more conversations on the Willamette Basin Review; additionally, the project is being presented in Salem on June 29<sup>th</sup> if there is interest in learning more. Ian clarified that this study was proposed as a multiple year study and is currently planned to be funded through CRFM since instream flow needs for fish are required as an RPA in the BiOp.

- **ACTIONS:** The group will circle back to this conversation at the next Steering Team meeting;
- Ian will provide the group with additional information on the research, funding needs and allocations, etc., to help ensure the Steering Team has the information they need for a productive conversation.

Marc continued by noting that concerns around the lack of hatchery baseline monitoring and evaluation in FY17 are now being addressed by managers at OR/WA Area Office and the Corps' NW Division. He was unsure of the current status. In March, the Corps brought the hatchery baseline monitoring and evaluation study to the RM&E Team, late in the FY17 prioritization process, and then this issue was discussed by the Steering Team. However, not all parties were satisfied with the process or outcomes, thus it has been elevated beyond/outside of the WATER forum to the federal executive level. Tammy noted that there will be a Memorandum of Coordination (MOC) provided through WFPOM; this will be an opportunity for WATER partners to comment on the decision.

**ODFW:** Bernadette reported that the Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program (managed by ODFW with BPA funding) is in the middle of its solicitation for FY18 projects. The Program is considering seven habitat protection projects in the Willamette Basin; over \$18 million is requested, and approximately \$8.8 million is available. Additionally, ODFW is working to request a permit for the lethal removal of California sea lions at Willamette Falls due to the increase in salmon and steelhead consumption. And, last, but not least, she let the group know that Steve Marx is retiring from ODFW at the end of the week.

### **Updates on Tech Team Work**

*RM&E Team: status of sub-basin RM&E planning?* The RM&E Team is in the final stages of reviewing the draft Middle Fork Sub-basin RM&E Plan. Edits are due into Rich by July 7<sup>th</sup>. Rich and Stephanie will work to get comments incorporated and the document finalized by the end of August, with the intent of sending the plan to the ISRP by October. It was noted that the document will need to pass through the Steering Team prior to sending it to the ISRP for review. Ideally, the RM&E team would like all of the sub-basin plans to be reviewed by the ISRP.

The Steering Team discussed which sub-basin plan should be next in line for development. Emily noted that the RM&E Team felt this question would be easier to answer following the joint RM&E and Steering Team FY18 prioritization meeting. Ian suggested that the next sub-basin should be the McKenzie, as the next passage project will be at Cougar. He also noted that it will be key to link in the Reintroduction Plans into the sub-basin plans and that the Steering Team will need more discussion on how to do so.

- ACTION: Ian will email the Steering Team describing the rationale for why the McKenzie sub-basin should be next in line for plan development. The Steering Team will revisit this at their July meeting.

*Hatchery Management Team (HMT): how is it working?* Tammy reported that the HMT, a sub-group of WFDWG, will continue operating, however; the focus of the group may change. She noted that any HMT suggestions related to mitigation will not be implemented until there are contract modifications in place between ODFW and the Corps.

*Flow Team: report back on TDG conversations.* Dan reported on conversations with Mary Karen regarding potential operational fixes for TDG downstream of Detroit Big Cliff. During high flow events, putting more water through the turbines has a minimal impact on TDG because there is not much turbine capacity. Bernadette noted that this response highlights the issue at hand: because there is not an operational fix, what needs to happen to mitigate the high levels of TDG? Dan pointed out that the structural fixes that were analyzed in the COP included flip lips that would help reduce TDG and that, ultimately, structural fixes to reduce TDG were not contemplated as part of the package that was agreed to in DC and that is part of the CRFM budget. Ian noted that the next step may be to determine the biological consequences of high TDG levels below Big Cliff, considering depth composition and, potentially, pedigree studies. This might be accomplished by, either, looking at research from Foster or designing a study for Big Cliff. Mike noted that the effects of high TDG are well documented and the reach may still need to be used for salmon and steelhead, as well as other species. He noted that the region needs to determine whether there is anything that can be done to reduce TDG during flood control. It was noted that, due to turbine limitations, options are limited. Additionally, TDG standards are not required to be met during flood control operations. Dan suggested that there might be an opportunity to look further into depth compensation. He suggested that the group start by reviewing the assumptions and management decisions made in the COP to have a more informed conversation about how to move forward.

- ACTION: Bernadette, Ian, and Dan will look at the COP to determine what information the Corps considered in the COP decisions. They will provide the Steering Team with a summary of the data available (including, but not limited to: the Issue papers from the Corps and Flow Team; how often the project is exceeding TDG standards; and how often exceedances are during flood control operations). DS Consulting will then put together an information packet for the Steering Team's July meeting.

### **Corps Presentation of FY18 Budget**

Ian shared that he will have more detail to provide on the FY18 budget by the July Steering Team meeting. He will bring a budget sheet similar to that provided to the Columbia River System Configuration Team (SCT), which breaks out the line items and can be used by the Steering Team to manage the budget in real-time throughout the year.

Regarding CRFM funds, there is a project on the Columbia (Spill to the Gas Cap) that was not previously accounted for in the CRFM budget for FY17, however, it will need to be funded because of the recent court decisions. Ian does not yet know the cost, however, he will provide an update in July.

### **RM&E FY18 Priorities and Process**

Donna provided the group with an initial draft chart that summarizes the FY18 RM&E Concepts in order to get Steering Team feedback on the format and level of information provided. The purpose of the summary is to

provide more information on the potential FY18 RM&E so that the Steering Team can add input and guidance into the prioritization process. The summary table describes the concept, purpose, and relation of the concept to the RPA. Mike expanded that the intent is to develop sufficient information that will allow the Steering Team to provide guidance on the priorities and relevant questions.

RM&E Team has been discussing an intentional process shift for the FY18 RM&E concept prioritization. This process shift would aim to get ahead of the funding issues that tend to bog down the RM&E team by jointly determining, with the Steering Team, whether or not the proposal moves forward for development at the RM&E Team. Leslie Bach shared the RM&E Team perspective that they no longer want to spend time working on projects that are not going to be funded. Instead, they would like to know ahead of time where to devote their energy. The projects that are identified as ‘important to inform management decisions in the basin’, but are not likely to be funded in the given year, would still be tracked for inclusion in plans and future development. However, these concepts would not be further developed if they were not slated to be funded in the given fiscal year.

The group agreed that the end goal is to have an RM&E sub-basin plans for each sub-basin, which will help provide direction and limit the amount of discussion and conflict. In the meantime, the RM&E Team needs the Steering Team to provide input as to whether and which concepts should be further developed.

Ian noted that prioritization is an ongoing process: as the budget situation changes throughout the year, the Steering Team should be aware and discussing the proposals in real-time.

The group discussed whether it would be helpful for the RM&E Team to clarify their agreed upon priority concepts, and then the Steering Team would recommend the Corps fund those projects. Leslie noted that, in that case, there is no way for the RM&E Team members to separate the funding and policy questions from the concept, as they have the knowledge of what can and cannot be funded through CRFM. In the past, the RM&E Team attempted to identify common priorities and ran into issues due to the difficulty of separating funding and policy from technical. This is precisely why the RM&E Team is asking the Steering Team to conduct a preliminary prioritization process that clarifies the concepts to develop based on policy and funding priorities.

The group asked the Corps to conduct a preliminary funding screen prior to the joint meeting, indicating which concepts meet or do not meet the Corps criteria for FY18 funding. This would allow the RM&E Team to move forward in developing the concepts they agree can and should be funded, while the Steering Team continues working through any disagreements or funding challenges to determine how to move those priorities forward.

Regarding the draft concept summary document, Mike noted that the RM&E Team wants to know what information the Steering Team needs in order to inform a joint conversation. He stressed the need for the joint conversation: there is too much information to consider than can be provided in a succinct summary. Still, the RM&E Team wants to create a helpful tool to prompt discussion with the Steering Team. The Steering Team expressed that the summary was a great start to a helpful tool; they provided the following suggestions:

Include “other factors” that may be helpful for the Steering Team to know as they make decisions. This can be added to the “Clarifying Questions and Comments” column. This column would be filled out during the joint RM&E and Steering Team meeting.

Clarify the “big picture” of how this information will be used, what decision is it supporting? This should be noted in bold text at the top of the “purpose” column.

Add “key concepts to be analyzed” in the title of the “purpose” column to better describe the intent of the column.

Add a column to clarify whether the concept supports in-season fishery management decisions.

Add a column to signal the potential funding source for the concept.

Clarify acronyms and abbreviations.

The DS Consulting team and Leslie agreed to share these recommendations back to the RM&E authors in order to prepare a completed table for a joint RM&E and Steering Team meeting in July. Prior to that, the Corps and BPA will review the complete list and signal which projects could be funded with CRFM and/or O&M funds.

- ACTION: The RM&E Team will revise the chart to incorporate Steering Team input. They will send the revision to the Steering Team prior to the joint meeting. The Corps and BPA will fill in the expected funding source for each concept.
- ACTION: DS Consulting will schedule a joint RM&E and Steering Team session for concept prioritization in July.

### **Next Steps**

Donna provided the group an updated annual WATER meeting schedule/planning calendar, noting that the RM&E team added the RM&E process to the calendar, including a few opportunities for joint check in/planning meetings with the Steering Team. Donna asked the team to review and provide input on what is missing for the Steering Team.

- ACTION: Steering Team members will provide input on the annual WATER meeting/discussion calendar.

The group discussed future meeting dates and duration. They were not able to find a reoccurring date that worked for everyone, so they will continue to work on that. Donna observed that 3-4 hours has not been enough time for the Steering team to adequately discuss all of the issues they need to address. She suggested shifting to six-hour meetings for a while until they can take care of outstanding issues that need to be resolved. Bernadette suggested incorporating quarterly, in-person reports from each of the Tech Teams at the Steering Team meetings to help build real ties between WATER teams.

- ACTION: Those identified above will work to pull together information, revise drafts, and prepare for productive conversations at the July 14<sup>th</sup> Steering Team meeting and the joint RM&E and ST session. DS Consulting will send a Doodle poll to schedule the joint session.

**The next Steering Team meeting will be from 9:00-3:00 on July 14<sup>th</sup> at the DS Consulting Office.**