

WATER Steering Team Meeting

August 10th, 2017

DS Consulting Office

Facilitator's Summary

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	BY WHEN?
Populate the revised issue elevation form for Issues 2 and 3; provide to the Steering Team for review.	DS Consulting	September 5 th Steering Team meeting
Add a column to the RME prioritization spreadsheet that denotes the Corps' funding capacity under CRFM funds and provide to the Steering Team.	Ian	September 5 th Steering Team meeting
Draft a 1-pager update on the Big Cliff TDG issue for the Steering Team to review	Ian and Diana	September 5 th Steering Team meeting
Pull together materials for an information share focused on the lessons learned in the 2017 hatchery baseline monitoring decision making process.	Marc, Tammy, and Donna	September 5 th Steering Team meeting
In preparation for the MF meeting: draft a brief history of the LOP passage operation approach, an explanation on the Corps authority, a summary of the power impacts, a summary of the 2017/2018 study, and technical aspects of the study.	Marc, Ian, Dan, and Stephanie	September 5 th Steering Team meeting
Provide written response to the Corps regarding BPA's decision on the LOP drawdown EA.	Dan	ASAP
Continue working to move the LOP EA and authority conversations forward. Conduct ResSIM analysis for the revised drawdown operation.	AAs	ASAP
Determine whether or not to move forward with a LOP baseline passage study in FY17 regardless of whether the drawdown occurs.	Steering Team	ASAP

Participants for all or part of the meeting: Stephanie Burchfield (NMFS), Joyce Casey (Corps), Ian Chane (Corps), Diana Dishman (NMFS), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Marc Liverman (NMFS), Dan Spear (BPA), Karl Weist (NPCC);

Participants on the phone for all or part of the meeting: Bernadette Graham-Hudson (ODFW), Nancy Gramlich (ODEQ), Rich Piaskowski (Corps), Lawrence Schwabe (Grand Ronde), Scott Snedaker (BLM), Riccardo Walker (Corps)

Facilitation Team: Donna Silverberg, Emily Stranz, and Alyssa Bonini (DS Consulting)

Welcome, introductions, & housekeeping

DS Consulting Facilitator, Donna Silverberg, welcomed the group to the Steering Team meeting. She noted that the purpose of the session is to discuss issues and seek consensus on process, substance and outcomes for efforts that affect participants engaged in the Willamette system.

The group reviewed and approved the July 14th Steering Team meeting summary with no additional changes. The summary will be posted on the Steering Team website.

The Team welcomed Scott Snedaker with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Scott is joining the Steering Team to be more connected with the ongoing activities of the WATER process.

Updates & Process Check-in

Budget Update: Ian noted that the Corps is nearing the end of the FY17 budget and is starting work efforts under the FY18 budget. He explained some funding gaps created by unexpected costs at the Walla Walla District (for example, the previously mentioned constructed island, Lower Granite fish passage system, and The Dalles auxiliary water supply project). Ian noted that it is still unclear how the Corps will fill these gaps; however, they may affect the Willamette River Basin FY18 budget. Ian expects to provide a clearer update in late September that will clarify the impacts. Mike noted that there is a lot of effort in the Columbia system that may inadvertently divert funds from the Willamette. He requested that the Corps let the Steering Team know how they might impact upcoming funding decisions. Joyce noted that, in the past, she has heard concerns regarding how Corps funds are divided between the Columbia and Willamette River systems. She noted that the NW Division is currently reconsidering the allocations. She suggested that partner managers might want to reach out to their counterparts at the Corps regarding this process. Ian added that the regional ranking spreadsheet is incredibly helpful for the process of determining how the funds should be allocated.

Ian continued that the President's Budget for FY18 allocated \$45 million for the Columbia, \$20.32 million for the Willamette and \$4.632 million for lamprey. Depending on the House and Congress' budget, either more or less funding could be allocated to the Willamette.

Additionally, Ian noted that Tammy Mackey, Corps, will provide an O&M budget update at either the September or October Steering Team meeting (once that budget information is available).

Sub-Basin RME Plan Staffing Update – Ian reported that after consulting with Brad Eppard, Corps, regarding staffing the development of the sub-basin RME plans, the Corps has agreed to staff the plans so they may be completed concurrently. They also requested that the ODFW and NMFS reintroduction plans be drafted concurrently so that those plans can inform the sub-basin RME plans.

Status of ODFW & NMFS Schedule for Conversation on Reintroduction Plans – Bernadette shared that NMFS is currently reviewing the draft reintroduction plan outlines that ODFW put together and the two agencies are scheduling to meet for a work session in September.

Hatchery Management Team Update – Ian provided an update for WFPOM's Hatchery Management Team (HMT). He noted that there was a malfunction at the Cougar Fish Facility during the recent heat wave. The malfunction caused issues with moving the fish into the facility, and it has been fixed. No fish were harmed during the malfunction. Additionally, there was a lift malfunction at the Minto Hatchery. Fortunately, there was a spare lift onsite and it should be back up and running later today.

Update on the Willamette Basin Review – Laurie Nicholas, Corps Project Manager working on the Willamette Basin Review (WBR), provided an overview of the WBR, including a status update and plan for the future. The purpose of the feasibility study is to assess current and future water needs in order to find a balance that allows for continued use. The project aims to reallocate the water stored behind Willamette projects that is available for contracting to downstream uses. This effort will allocate water for specific purposes such as fish and wildlife, municipal and industrial, irrigation, and recreation and considers water usage 30 and 50 years out. Laurie noted that climate change was considered, however, it does not have a specific allocation. The Corps anticipates that the stored water that they are proposing to designate as "joint use" will account for variation in climate change.

Laurie noted that this effort was initiated in 1991 with a reconnaissance study, followed by a demand study in 1994. In 1999, when steelhead and Chinook were listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Corps and State project sponsors decided to put the study on hold for a few years to ensure that ESA-listed fish needs

were included in the reallocation. Between 2001 and 2008, the Corps conducted ESA consultation, following that, the study was revived in 2015. The study is made possible by a cost share agreement with the State of Oregon and is expected to be complete in mid-August 2018.

Due to the individual purposes for which the dams are operated, there are a number of constraints in the study, including:

- No impact on flood risk reduction.
- Reallocated water is limited to 1.6 million acre feet (the current conservation storage water).
- No construction or modification to facilities is considered.
- Annual reservoir reductions (i.e. 100% of the total volume is not available every year).
- Maintain BiOp flow targets for listed fish.
- Minimize impact to downstream recreation users and to the hydrosystem.

The study looked at three different alternatives and selected Alternative 3 (to meet all user needs with Willamette Project storage). They then looked at allocation scenarios within Alternative 3.

Laurie noted that when all of the users' estimates of future peak demands are added, the demand is much greater than the storage capacity of the reservoirs. Thus, the study considered prioritizing uses, reallocating water at the 2050 levels instead of the 2070 levels, and holding some water in a joint use stored pool. This division of storage is the allocation scenario included in the tentatively selected plan. In the end, instead of prioritizing allocations, they hold some water in the joint-use storage pool and will "divide the hit" amongst all of the users when demand is greater than the supply. In dry years, joint use water will be reduced first. This approach is the management scenario included in the tentatively selected plan.

Under the selected allocation scenario, approximately 920 thousand acre feet (kaf) was allocated for fish and wildlife, 73 kaf for municipal and industrial, 290 kaf for agriculture, and 300 kaf for joint use. The Flow management team will manage the annual implementation of the plan.

The project is now at the stage of having a tentatively selected plan that has been approved by Corps' Headquarters to release for a 45-day public review. There are other reviews as well, including concurrent, technical, and independent external reviews. The Corps plans to review comments and adjust the plan as needed. At this point, the Corps is aiming to have an agency decision by Jan 12, 2018, after which point there is time for any additional technical work that may need to be done. The final Chief's Report is expected to be completed mid-August 2018 and marks the end of the study and begins the next phase of seeking congressional approval. The reallocation will be implemented after the Corps receives Water Resource and Development Act (WRDA) approval.

Laurie noted that the State of Oregon also needs to take actions in order to reallocate, as the State manages water rights. ODFW will apply for an instream water right to protect the flows for fish.

The Steering Team had the following questions:

- If the project is not building or modifying anything, what is WRDA going to do? Laurie said that she can look into this and get back to NOAA.
- The RPA calls for high flow actions in years with abundant stored water - how will additional storage be used in those years? Laurie noted that in those years there would be an opportunity to release more than the minimum BiOp flows and the joint use allocation could be shaped. These decisions would be made by the Flow Management Team.

The Steering Team requested another update from Laurie sometime in the fall, after the plan has gone through review.

Issue Elevation and Resolution Process

Review and discuss draft issue resolution pathway (derived from 2017 WATER Guidelines) – Donna noted that this list is pulled directly from the WATER Guidelines that the WATER teams approved in April 2017. She suggested that the draft *Issue Elevation Form* could be used to elevate issues for resolution. Mike noted that different teams would use the form differently. For example, the technical teams may require responses to questions from the Steering Team, whereas the Steering Team may offer potential resolution for decision makers.

The Steering Team agreed that the team receiving an elevated issue needs to be able to clearly understand the issue being raised. They clarified key elements that need to be included in the elevation form: the form needs to identify the conflict; allow for written discussion of the issue from all perspectives; and state the proposed resolution or question(s) that the resolution team needs to answer.

Mike noted that it is in everyone's interest to work together to define the issue, because when only one WATER member is describing the issue it will result in a one-sided description and the deciding team will not have a comprehensive understanding on which to base their response. Joyce added that, whether one person or the team is drafting the elevation form together, there needs to be an expectation of good staff work, which from her perspective would be accurately articulating all sides of the issue. It was noted that if only one agency feels there is an issue, it might be challenging to describe the other's perspectives.

The group stressed that timely resolution of the issues raised is paramount. In the past, issue elevations have been a slow process in which the Steering Team has not felt there was enough information for a decision and the issue was pushed back down to the RM&E Team, unresolved. This pattern delayed resolution. Moving forward, there may be decisions that need to be made in a short timeframe. These issues would need to be highlighted and all teams will need to respond quickly. This may require unscheduled meetings or calls solely focused on addressing the issues and making immediate decisions. It was suggested that all decisions, regardless of the drop-dead date for a decision, should be made in a timely manner.

- **AGREEMENT:** The group agreed that, when an issue is elevated to the Steering Team, the Steering Team will schedule an initial call within two weeks of the elevation date to discuss the issue and work towards resolution.

Steering Team Issue Elevation - The group discussed various issues that they have been grappling with as a team and identified the issues they will develop for elevation to the Managers at the September 29th Managers Forum meeting (see below for more on the September 29th agenda, including action items):

- **Issue 2: Annual parentage analysis, spawning surveys and screw trapping** - The group agreed to work this issue through the issue elevation process in preparation for the Managers Forum meeting.
- **Issue 3: Green Peter outplanting, parentage, spawning surveys and screw trapping** - The group agreed to work this issue through the issue elevation process in preparation for the Managers Forum meeting.
- **LOP Drawdown** - The group discussed whether this issue should be elevated to the Managers. They generally agreed that, because other WATER Teams are in the process of exploring options for resolution, it is not ripe for elevation. However, there was a request to add a placeholder to the September 29th agenda in case there is a need for a briefing.
- **Big Cliff TDG** - The group discussed whether this issue should be elevated or briefed at the Managers Forum meeting. The Steering Team decided to brief the Managers on their current path forward.

- **Baseline Hatchery Monitoring** - Because this decision has already been made by the Corps, there is no resolution to ask for from the Managers. However, from a process point of view, there is opportunity for WATER teams to learn lessons from the input and decision process in 2017. It was noted that the way this issue was dealt with was outside of the agreed on WATER process, both in how the decision was made and the process for elevating/addressing the situation. To be accountable to the agreed upon WATER process, this lesson will be presented to the Managers as well.

Issue elevation/resolution tracking and status report - The Steering Team discussed next steps with Issue 2 (*Annual parentage analysis, spawning surveys and screw-trapping*) and Issue 3 (*Green Peter outplanting, parentage, spawning surveys and screw trapping*), both of which were elevated from the RM&E Team in October 2016.

Ian noted that at the July 28th joint RM&E and Steering Team meeting the group discussed these types of ongoing monitoring efforts. He reiterated that CRFM funds cannot fund ongoing monitoring efforts. At the joint meeting, the Corps suggested that any of the studies that inform actions should be added/linked to individual projects: if a study does not inform an action, it cannot be funded. Mike noted that yes, the group talked about the issue, however, from USFWS' perspective, this work is important and a solution needs to be found that allows these valuable studies to move forward.

Dan observed that the CRFM is a “concrete” based program and the work that the Services are looking to have funded is more of an “animal” based issue. There are some areas that these two missions overlap well, and other areas that they do not overlap at all. The areas where there is not an overlap are causing ongoing issues for the region. Mike clarified that the Services see these efforts as RPA issues, not animal issues and suggested that the distinction is more of a difference in mission between the Services and Action Agencies. Others generally supported Mike's characterization.

Dan noted that the BPA Fish and Wildlife program is fully allocated; however, he said those funds could likely be shuffled around. Bernadette suggested that, while they can reprioritize how those monies are spent, that does not resolve the issue of no funding sources for priority research in the region.

As noted above, the group agreed to work this issue through the issue elevation process in preparation for the Managers Forum meeting.

→ **ACTION:** DS Consulting will draft an issue elevation form for this issue and provide it to the Steering Team at their September 5th meeting for review.

Big Cliff: COP and TDG Issues

The Corps reported that they set up a regional workgroup under WFPOM to dive deeper into the operations, impacts, and potential changes in operations to improve total dissolved gas (TDG) at Big Cliff Dam. Ian noted that the Corps is very interested in a TDG study downstream of the project to learn more about the impacts of TDG on fish in various life stages; Emily reminded the group that the RM&E Team is in the process of developing a concept for this study. The WFPOM workgroup will also look at developing a spill priority list. Chris Walker is heading the work group.

In regards to policy clarification about what is a “flood control operation”, Ian acknowledged that he forgot to check on this and will follow up with the group at the September meeting.

Marc reported that NOAA's change form request to start spilling across more bays in October is in the works and will go out tomorrow or next week.

FY18 Prioritization Conversation Continued

The Steering Team was joined by RM&E Team members from the Corps and NMFS to continue conversations on the concepts that were flagged for more discussion during the joint RM&E and Steering Team meeting. Ian reminded the group that the intention behind the prioritization ranking is to get regional input on the concepts to help inform the Corps decisions. He clarified that the Corps will use the regional ranking in their decision process, however, they may not fund the highest priority project in all cases; also, there may be some projects that the region ranked low that the Corps determines need to be funded.

- **APH-18-02-SYS:** This concept has two objectives: 1: evaluate pHOS below Foster after trap improvements; and 2: evaluate improvements to improve CE at Minto and evaluate pHOS after. Ian noted that the Corps is not aware of an issue with near term actions to reduce pHOS below Willamette Project Dams in the Santiam at this point, thus they ranked this concept a 'D'. Marc noted that pHOS is a piece of the study and Stephanie added that increased collection efficiency at Minto could help reduce pHOS. Rich added that the temperature changes are impacting collection efficiency and could be influence pHOS. For a long time, Rich noted, the operation adjusted the temperature of the trap water to influence movement or delay. This year they are adjusting water temperatures to a lower temperature. He continued that this objective is studying conversion rates more so than collection efficiency. Marc observed that the region would like to reduce pHOS and is not in a position to reduce hatchery production at this time; he suggested that it is important to study impacts to pHOS so that they can make any potential adjustments. Ian decided to keep the Corps rank at "D" and continue conversations into the future.
- **APH-09-01-CGR and APH-09-01-FOS:** Ian noted that the difference in the scores is due to the AAs desire for reintroduction plans to be in place before studies related to reintroduction are carried out. He noted that the RM&E Sub-Basin Plans will be developed soon and the Reintroduction Plans are needed to provide key information for developing the RM&E plans. Fish Managers explained that they need the studies for interim management of the fisheries and to adaptively manage once the Reintroduction Plans are in place. For example, there have been questions as to whether or not to put NORs above Big Cliff before passage is implemented; this decision requires information on fish survival in the Minto reach. New data can help NMFS adaptively manage adult fish as they return to traps below the dams, and NMFS is amenable to changing the current management if study results support such changes. Bernadette added that OR has chosen a more conservative approach to managing fish because they do not feel like they have enough data.

From the AA's perspective, Ian noted that until there is passage, there is no way to achieve replacement. Dan was not comfortable changing his ranking at this time, however, he will follow-up with the Steering Team next month.

- **APH-17-02-GPR:** This issue is a continuation of the 2017 concept elevated to the Steering Team and thus will be elevated to the Managers Forum in September along with Issue 3.
- **JPL-18-01:** This concept requires more discussion on performance standards for DET passage with AAs and NMFS.
- **JPL-18-03-HHB:** Dan said that BPA ranked this concept high because they believe that it would be helpful to study in order to find a solution that might free up a significant amount of O&M funding. Stephanie noted that there are two objectives for this study, one dealing with additional work at Green Peter and the other Cougar regulating outlet (which everyone likely agrees is important information). Stephanie suggested breaking out the objectives, as NMFS does not think the Green

Peter piece is necessary because the work has already been done. However, NMFS does support the study at Cougar. ODFW agreed that they would rank the Cougar study higher as well. Grand Ronde and USFWS were not available to provide input on whether separating the objectives would change their ranking. Rich noted that the Green Peter study is taking the previous study and expanding it to inform design at other projects (larger sized pipes with lower gradient). NMFS said they would increase their ranking to a “2” with that information; however, they suggest studying the pipe changes onsite instead of to inform a separate project.

- **FMWQ-18-01:** There is a more thorough study of revetments this year (funded through the dam safety group), there were six areas identified as priority areas for providing habitat opportunities if altered. Once this study is complete, it will go to the Habitat Technical Team, which is chaired by BPA, who can fund habitat work.
- **DET/BCL TDG:** The RM&E team is in the process of developing a concept paper for this and the Steering Team will rank once it is developed.
- **SYS SWIFT:** The RM&E team is in the process of developing a concept paper for this and the Steering Team will rank once it is developed.

NMFS suggested adding the baseline hatchery monitoring and evaluation to the spreadsheet. Ian noted that that work is O&M funding and so it could be added to the spreadsheet, however, it should be a separate section. The group added it to the spreadsheet to signal that some prioritize this work highly. Additionally, the group reiterated that they would like to see a column added to the spreadsheet that shows whether the Corps’ CRFM funding is capable of funding the concept.

→ **ACTION:** Ian will add a column to the spreadsheet that denotes the Corps’ funding capability under CRFM funds. He will provide this to the Steering Team at the September 5th meeting.

Prepare for September 29 Managers Forum Meeting

The Steering Team developed a draft meeting agenda for the September 29th Managers Forum meeting. They suggested the following topics, which Donna will pass by Managers.

- Update and next steps: Big Cliff TDG issue – *presenter to be determined*
- Information share: lessons learned from hatchery baseline monitoring decision making process – *presented by Marc and Tammy.*
- Briefing: Progress on LOP drawdown operation – *presented by Marc and Ian*
- Issue resolution papers for Issues 2 and 3 – *presenter to be determined.*

→ **ACTION:** – Ian and Diana will draft a 1-pager update on the Big Cliff TDG issue for the Steering Team to review at the September 5th meeting.

→ **ACTION:** Marc, Tammy, and Donna will work to pull together materials for an information share focused on the lessons learned in the 2017 hatchery baseline monitoring decision-making process.

→ **ACTION:** Marc will draft a brief history of the LOP passage operation approach, Ian will draft an explanation on the Corps’ authority, Dan will draft a summary of the 2017/2018 study impacts to BPA power values, and Stephanie will provide information on the technical aspects of the previous year’s study. All will provide drafts to the Steering Team at the September 5th meeting for review.

→ **ACTION:** DSC will draft initial issue evaluation forms for Issues 2 and 3, for the Steering Team to review at their September 5th meeting.

Regional Updates from WATER Members

Corps: The Corps reported that they received a legal complaint regarding its summer steelhead program. They have decided to do a hatchery genetic management plan for summer steelhead. While this does not resolve the litigation issue, the Corps feels a plan is needed.

Ian reported on the LOP drawdown update: He noted that the District and Division Solicitors are working to further clarify the Corps' authority. There is also a formal effort underway to bring BPA in as a cooperating agency on the Environmental Analysis (EA). In regards to whether an EA or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required, Joyce noted that, from the Corps point of view, an EA is sufficient. Joyce asked BPA for written clarification about whether they also believe an EA is sufficient. The Corps clarified that they are continuing work on the EA in case the operation moves forward in FY17.

→ **ACTION:** Dan will work internally to provide a written response regarding their decision on the EA to the Corps.

Ian noted that he has asked for input from Solicitors regarding the Corps' authority. Specifically, can they confirm what flexibility the Corps has to lower reservoir levels below the power pool, and moving forward, does the Corps have authority to use this type of operation as a passage solution? Marc noted that the RPA states that a request for change in authority may be warranted. Dan clarified that there are two authorities at play: authority regarding flood control and authority regarding drawing down the power pool.

Mike noted that for the three years he has participated in the WATER forum, they have been talking about doing a deep drawdown and thus it is frustrating to hear the AAs potentially push it out further. He asked whether the power generation loss is still an issue for BPA. Dan noted that they conducted analysis on the operation and the primary issue is not being able to generate any power for such a long duration. Dan continued that they need to do more analysis on the potential solution, which the RM&E developed at their July 27th meeting; this is a necessary step in the process. The Corps will work with BPA to get the analyses going.

→ **ACTION:** The AAs will continue to move the EA and authority conversations forward. The Steering Team needs to determine whether to move forward with a baseline study in FY17 regardless of whether the draw down occurs. The Corps will work with BPA to get the ResSIM analysis going for the revised drawdown operation.

ODFW: Bernadette noted that she has accepted a new position within ODFW: she will now be the Western Region Manager. In this new role, Bernadette will be the first female Regional Manager in the 125 years of ODFW history. Because of this, she is not sure what her participation will look like moving forward with the Steering Team. In September, the group will celebrate Bernadette's efforts with WATER and her new role at ODFW.

ODFW revised the UWR winter steelhead population analysis to look at sea lion predation impacts and effects on extinction rate. The results were bleak and thus ODFW is working to move forward to control the sea lion predation issue. There is a bill with Congress to streamline the sea lion removal process. Concurrently, ODFW is working on Section 120 MMPA approval with NMFS.

In regards to the Willamette Falls fish ladder, NMFS and ODFW are looking at the site and identifying necessary improvements to ensure safe fish passage into the future there. Ian noted that there is a Corps program that potentially could help with cost share for the design.

NMFS: Marc reported that NMFS is working with the USFS and BLM who are expecting large increases in forest management due to changes in aquatic requirements. Also, the Federal Highway System is doing a lot of work that might affect aquatic resources and Marc is coordinating with them.

Next Steps

The Steering Team approved a new meeting schedule: they will now meet on the 2nd Tuesday of the month from 12:30 to 4:30 at the DS Consulting Office. The next meeting dates will be 9/5, 10/3, 11/7, 12/5, 1/2, and 2/6.

The group brainstormed the Steering Team agenda for the September 5th meeting:

- Celebrate Bernadette!
- CRFM budget update
- Reintroduction Planning
- WFDWG
- Final RM&E concepts to move forward as proposals
- Managers Forum preparation

Moving forward, the Steering Team will continue conversations on the FY18 RM&E concepts, as well as the LOP drawdown operation. They will work to prepare for the September 29th Managers Forum meeting, during which they will elevate Issues 2 and 3 for resolution.

Donna thanked the group and adjourned the meeting.

The next Steering Team meeting is September 5th from 12:30-4:30 at the DS Consulting Office.