

**Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)  
Steering Team Meeting**

July 3, 2018

Location: Fireside Room, Corps' 300 Building

[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**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>By Whom?</b>	<b>By When?</b>
Provide any additional edits to the 5/24 and 6/5 meeting summaries	ST members	7/11
Track down the Corps' LOP deep drawdown memo; Clarify the rationale as to why the operation is outside the Corps' authority; connect with NMFS on information needs.	Kate/Corps	Before 8/7 ST meeting
Provide an update on DET HHB progress.	Brad/Ian	8/7 ST meeting
Work with Chris Walker on next steps to formalize the Big Cliff planned outage schedule to limit TDG impacts.	Erik	8/7 ST meeting
Discuss regional messaging re: WATER internally and bring draft language to Steering Team for discussion.	ST members	8/7 ST meeting
Share Oregon's PVA with the Steering Team after NMFS has finalized its comments.	Kelly	When finalized

**Participants in the Room:** Brad Eppard (USACE), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Erik Peterson (USACE), Riccardo Walker (USACE), Kathleen Wells (USACE);

**Participants on the Phone:** Diana Dishman (NMFS), Nancy Gramlich (ODEQ), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Lawrence Schwabe (Grand Ronde), Dan Spear (BPA);

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

**Welcome and Housekeeping**

Donna conducted a round of introductions and review of the 5/22 and 6/5 meeting summaries. No additional edits were provided on the summaries, however, not all members were present to consent to their being final. It was agreed that summaries would be considered final if no additional edits are provided by July 11<sup>th</sup>. [*Facilitators Note: Marc Liverman and Lawrence Schwabe confirmed via email that they did not have additional edits*].

→ **ACTION:** Additional edits to the 5/24 and/or 6/5 meeting summaries will be provided to DSC by July 11<sup>th</sup>; if no additional edits, the summaries will be considered final.

In regards to conversation noted in the 6/5 meeting summary, Kelly Reis, ODFW, shared that ODFW continued internal conversations on the meaning of "sustainable population" and concluded that for them, a sustainable population is more than a replacement population: a sustainable population is a resilient population that is both genetically and spatially diverse and is expected to remain viable. Those in attendance were comfortable with this description of a sustainable population.

**Reflections on the Manager Forum meeting**

The group discussed the June 7<sup>th</sup> Managers Forum and Steering Team process leading up to the meeting. Generally, people thought the session was productive and that the Steering Team's work to prepare, both as a team and with their individual managers, was effective and made for a meaningful agenda. Steering Team members shared the following thoughts and reflections:

- Individual conversations at the Steering Team level to prepare for the Managers Forum were appreciated by Steering Team members.
- The subject matter was at the right level and information presented was relevant.
  - Members felt more engaged than with past agendas.
  - People appreciated the relevancy of the presentation on fish collectors and lessons learned.
- Moving forward, it would be helpful to continue providing the latest information and study findings to the managers (even if it is not 'fully vetted' at the time) to ensure an effective, iterative process and feedback loop continues between the managers and Steering Team.
- Some noted the tension expressed by managers caused by the uncertainty and risk which projects of this scale and cost present to managers.
  - Possible ways to alleviate this tension are to continue gathering/presenting information regionally and learning, from other related projects, what it takes to set up for success.
- Kevin Brice expressed a desire for regional support and joint messaging; however, it is unclear what this might look like and what messaging would be helpful to move things forward to show that the region is taking on risks...together.
- There was a sense of commitment from the region to explore high head bypass (HHB) at Detroit. The Steering Team intends to track progress and next steps for the conversation.
  - More clarity is needed regarding the region's expectations of the Corps about the High Head piped bypass for the September Managers Forum meeting
    - (Note: Brad suggested that the Steering Team follow-up with Ian regarding the Corps' perspective of the meeting).

Donna observed that the Steering Team's engagement in designing the agenda and their work with the managers to set up for the meeting was very effective. She encouraged the group to think about what needs to be taken forward to the managers in September (see conversation below).

The group circled back to the status update on Lookout Point that was provided from the Corps, noting that the next steps were unclear. NMFS requested more information on:

- how the Corps made the decision that the deep drawdown is outside of its authority, and,
- what is needed to get the authority necessary to test the operations.

The group requested the Corps and NMFS to connect on this prior to the next Steering Team meeting. Kate agreed to track down the Corps' LOP Deep Drawdown Memo to help move the conversation forward.

→ **ACTION:** Kate will track down the Corps' memo in order to clarify the rationale as to why the operation is outside of the Corps' authority. The Corps will connect with NMFS on this prior to the August 7<sup>th</sup> Steering Team meeting.

Currently, the RM&E Team is exploring options for spring and summer passage operations. However, the team determined that the deep drawdown was the only informative fall option worth testing. At this point, the operations being explored are thought to be within the sideboards of 'normal operations', so additional NEPA is not needed.

### **North Santiam TDG data: what are we seeing?**

Ricardo Walker, Corps, presented information on TDG in the North Santiam (PowerPoint slides were sent to the group ahead of the meeting and posted on the ST website, along with notes for discussion purposes which were provided by NMFS). The information presented was based from several years of water quality data gathered in the reach below Big Cliff Dam. He noted:

- In a high water year, there are quite a few days that fish downstream of Big Cliff are exposed to TDG higher than 115%.
- Lab studies show that recently hatched fry are the most susceptible to high levels of TDG, as they are embedded in gravel and depth compensation can't occur.
- At 120% TDG, mortality rates start to increase rapidly; effects are noticeable at 115% as well, however, they are not as severe.
- TDG in the Big Cliff tailwater and at Niagara mirror each other and are often over 115%; Minto and Mehama are typically around 105% when Big Cliff and Niagara are around or above 115% TDG.
- TDG exceeds 110% at Niagara frequently and is associated with flows. Even in a low water year TDG is above 110-115% (for example in 2015).
- Big Cliff dam is currently operated to decrease TDG (maximum generation, spill the rest and spread the spill).

At this point in time, the Corps' plans to meet the RPA by bypassing the reach and not putting fish above Minto. Diana Dishman, NMFS, noted that NMFS does not consider bypassing the reach as a long term solution for addressing water quality issues - not having fish in the reach is not the same as a structural solution to TDG water quality and resolving water quality issues as required by the RPA. Mike Hudson, USFWS, agreed, noting that there are resident species in the reach and bypassing some fish does not solve the TDG issues for others. Diana also noted that NMFS has said they would likely still outplant ESA-listed fish into this reach, even with downstream passage in place which bypasses juveniles around it, to make use all available habitat to maximize productivity.

The group discussed any additional potential options to decrease TDG in the short term:

- Diana noted that the 2017 draft Water Quality Report data shows significant TDG exceedances due to both planned and unplanned outages, as well as flood control actions. She noted that at Big Cliff, when the single turbine is tripped off and spill is required the river is very vulnerable to increasing TDG.
- Erik suggested they need to be careful about timing outages and, he noted, recapitalizing the unit so that it is more reliable would be beneficial because the unit would not be forced out as frequently. The unit is used a lot, and if this reach is important, upgrades to the unit should be invested in; He also noted that there are other funding priorities that would need to be considered.
- Brad noted that there are probably feasible structural fixes, for instance flow deflectors, revetments, etc., however; this reach represents such a small proportion of the capacity of the North Santiam that it does not seem to be cost effective to invest in.
- Mike observed that there is a difference of perspective in the value of this reach – 5% doesn't seem like much to some, however, every bit is needed from the endangered fish perspective. Diana added that while this reach is currently 5% of suitable habitat in the North Santiam, projected climate change reported in Bond et al. (2017) will make most of the habitat below Big Cliff Dam too warm by 2040 (and essentially all of it too warm by 2080), and therefore this reach will account for roughly 10% of the remaining suitable habitat in the North Santiam.
- Dan Spear, BPA, asked for clarity regarding the value of this reach from NMFS and ODFW's perspective, noting that the split basin approach set out in the HGMPs and the hatcheries/harvest policies manage those areas primarily for hatchery fish, not wild fish.

- Diana clarified that the Big Cliff to Minto reach is designated as a wild fish sanctuary and only natural origin fish are released there. She also noted that this reach is likely to become even more important according to the Bond report, which showed a drastic reduction in cold water habitat below Big Cliff Dam by 2040 based on climate change modelling.

The group identified the following potential short term(ish) solutions to explore:

- Update and formalize the outage plan to help decrease TDG.
  - Time the planned outages better.
  - Compress outage schedules even more to try to get work done faster.
- Recapitalize the old unit.
- Consider conducting feasibility studies for potential structural fixes.

ODFW, NMFS, and USFWS concurred that this reach is important to their agencies and expressed a need to address TDG issues. It was noted that Chris Walker is getting a team together to look at options. The Corps agreed that the reach is biologically valuable and noted that feasibility and effects of construction followed by a cost benefit analysis would need to be completed and then prioritized along with other projects (i.e. downstream passage). Mike asked that the Corps consider the longer term perspective and time that it takes to move things forward. He requested that the Corps consider whether they are open to feasibility studies in order to prepare for future decisions.

The group agreed to continue the conversation around the value of possible solutions to address TDG in the reach at the Steering Team and to tee-up the conversation for the next Managers Forum meeting in September. The group present had shared a consensus that the reach is biologically valuable and want to pursue additional options. The Corps will discuss internally to determine the possibility of assessing the feasibility of structural improvements.

- **ACTION:** The Corps will talk internally about whether they can start going down the road to feasibility studies. They will report back to the Steering Team in August.
- **ACTION:** Erik will work with Chris Walker on next steps to formalize the planned outage schedule to limit TDG impacts.
- **ACTION:** The Steering Team will hold a work session focused on ‘what we know and where next to go’ on N. Santiam TDG at their August meeting in preparation for the Managers Forum in September.

### **High Head Passage Team/Cougar Downstream Passage – Progress and Next Steps**

Kelly noted that ODFW was pleased about the decision at Managers Forum and suggested that the Steering Team add an ‘update/next steps’ as a standing agenda item on the Steering Team meeting agendas (the Fish Facility Design Team has already done so). The group concurred that “High Head Passage Team/Cougar Downstream Passage – progress and next steps” should be kept on the agenda as a standing agenda item and that Ian and Brad will be the point people for reporting on this.

Kelly updated the group based on what she heard from the Corps at yesterday’s WWFDWG meeting, noting that the High Head Bypass Team is currently coordinating with the Trap and Haul Team – asking the HHB team questions such as: what do you need to know and when regarding design elements? How much space is needed for a pipe/potential block outs for a pipe? The Cougar DSP and HHB teams plan to meet in mid-August for more discussion and there will be an update at the September WWFDWG meeting. It is expected that the 60% design will be ready for WWFDWG review in October or November.

### **PVA Analysis: Next Steps**

NMFS Science Center is going to review ODFW's Population Viability Analysis and then ODFW will circulate the final document to the region. If there are any final questions they can go directly to Matt Falcy (ODFW).

Kelly noted that the findings of the PVA demonstrate the urgency for action in the McKenzie reach. If the region is seeing evidence that trap and haul is not going to be successful, they do not have time to wait for a trigger in order to start looking at high head bypass or other options that are potentially more effective. She noted that the risk of losing the species is much greater than it was 10 years ago. Erik noted that there is utility in using the analysis to vertically align within the agencies.

→ **ACTION:** Kelly will share the PVA with the Steering Team when it is finalized.

### **Team Updates**

Team members provided updates. The RM&E is currently working on finalizing FY19 RM&E concepts and plans to get the concepts to the Steering Team two weeks ahead of the joint team meeting. The joint team meeting is in the process of being scheduled and will either be on July 26<sup>th</sup> or August 7<sup>th</sup>. It was noted that there is a FFDRWG meeting from 9:30-11:30am on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **Early thoughts about the September Managers Forum**

The team shared ideas for the September Managers Forum meeting, they noted potential topics for the agenda:

- High Head Bypass status – identify timeframe/changes; clarify outstanding questions – what can be done without affecting the current schedule?
- N. Santiam TDG below Big Cliff – possible methods for addressing high TDG in the reach and why addressing it is necessary
- Consistent regional messaging: ideas for messages that could/should be sent to decisions makers.

The Steering Team will continue discussions around these topics at their August meeting to get them ready for the managers. To ensure a productive August Steering Team meeting, each Steering Team member will come prepared with the message that they are willing/able to put forward at this point regarding WATER. Messages could be around WATER in general, Cougar and Detroit passage, HHB, big picture on the BiOp, etc. In August the group will work to clarify where the gaps are and how to fill them. The intended audience is elected officials and the chain of command in DC.

→ **ACTION:** Bring your agencies/organizations' message regarding the Willamette project/system to discuss at the August Steering Team meeting: What could your agency put forward today about the overall system? What should be said? Clarify this with your manager.

With that, Donna thanked the group and adjourned the meeting.

**The next Steering Team meeting is scheduled for August 7th, 2018 from 12:30-4:30. Location TBD, however, will likely be outside of Portland to avoid traffic from road closures. Initial agenda topics include:**

- **LOP follow-up**
- **N. Santiam TDG work session**
- **N. Santiam Planned Outage update**
- **Regional messaging ideas**

- **HH Passage Update**
- **Team check-ins**
- **Continue Managers Forum agenda development**

*This summary is respectfully submitted by DS Consulting. Suggested edits are welcome and can be sent to [emily@dsconsult.co](mailto:emily@dsconsult.co)*