

**Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)**  
**Steering Team Meeting**  
September 4, 2018  
Location: ODFW Salem Office

[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/)

**Final Facilitator's Summary**  
**(Edits received by: BPA, Corps, Grand Ronde, NPCC, NMFS, ST on 11/6 meeting)**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>By Whom?</b>	<b>By When?</b>
Provide edits on the August meeting summary to Emily.	Steering Team	9/11
Send Manager Forum materials to DSC.	Ian, Marc, others	Noon on 9/18
Discuss regional messaging with Manager and bring input to Steering Team (note: draft messaging can be found in August meeting summary)	Steering Team	Conference call at 2:00 on 9/18
Meet to finalize the Manager Forum meeting agenda.	Steering Team	Conference call at 2:00 on 9/18
Send Steering Team 2013 revetment study.	Karl	[Completed 9/4]
Check on review time of 2017 revetment study and report back to Steering Team.	Ian	ASAP
Look into how BC is addressed in BPA's asset management plan and what it would take to recapitalize the unit at BC to address TDG.	Dan	October ST meeting
Continue discussions on how to address TDG at BC.	Federal Family	October ST meeting
Refine APH-19-03-DET to include winter steelhead (along with spring Chinook) and to assess the impacts of TDG on production in the Minto to Big Cliff reach. Also consider options/impacts of outplanting in this reach, potential options to change operations, and carrying capacity of the reach.	RM&E Team	Prior to finalizing 2019 study proposal

**Participants in the Room:** Ian Chane (USACE), Diana Dishman (NMFS), Amy Gibbons (USACE), Nancy Gramlich (ODEQ), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Elise Kelly (ODFW), Marc Liverman (NMFS), Rich Piaskowski (USACE), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Dan Spear (BPA);

**Participants on the Phone:** Leslie Bach (NWPC), Lawrence Schwabe (Grand Ronde); Karl Weist (NWPC);

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

## **Welcome and Housekeeping**

Emily conducted a round of introductions and review of the August 7th meeting summary; members needed additional time to review the meeting summary.

- Team members will review the summary and provide any additional edits to Emily by 9/11; DSC will ask for approval for the summary via email.

## **High Head Passage Team/Cougar Downstream Passage**

Ian provided an update on high head and downstream passage. He reported that the Cougar PDT is looking into the specifics of a trap and haul program, and not the details for potential volitional passage. The Cougar PDT will however, consider where a port for a volitional bypass pipe would connect to the project. Instead, considerations for the volitional passage option will be explored by the High Head Passage Team. The High Head Passage Team will consider structural specifics, including any engineering and feasibility of the port and structure. Ian stressed the separation and direction for the two separate teams, noting that the distinction is being maintained to allow the Corps to stay on schedule with Cougar downstream passage work.

In regards to design work for Detroit, there has been a shift in the schedule, however, the Corps is not yet certain how significant the shift is. They are working internally to clarify timing and hope to have at least an “initial draft” of the timeline ready to share at the September 25<sup>th</sup> Managers Forum meeting.

## **North Santiam TDG**

The Steering Team continued conversations around options to address high levels of TDG downstream of Big Cliff Dam. The group previously agreed on the value of this reach for fish, as well as the poor water quality conditions due to high levels of TDG. . At the July and August meetings, the Corps was tasked with doing a high level alternative analysis to determine whether there was staffing capacity to look in to potential options for addressing TDG. The intention behind the STs request for a high level assessment was to get the “ball rolling” towards an eventual TDG fix; the group knows there is not, currently, a funding stream for the work, and they know it takes a significant amount of time to get projects implemented. Ian noted that the Corps has implemented a number of TDG fixes on the Columbia River projects and they are aware of the structural and operational options to lower TDG. The operational options at Big Cliff have been implemented; diving any deeper into the structural options would require funding. He continued, that the Corps planned fish passage improvements will bypass fish around the reach impacted by high TDG. He recognized however that until this fish passage is completed, and fish are being outplanted to the reach between Minto and Big Cliff dams, TDG will likely be an impact on fish. Ian suggested that a next step would be to conduct the research prioritized by the Steering Team to evaluate interim (before fish passage if completed) outplanting strategies (i.e. APH-19-03-DET), and assess the value of outplanting in each reach associated with different levels of TDG. He suggested that a next step would be to conduct research to determine the impact of TDG biologically in the reach: what are the impacts on rearing, spawning and returns? He suggested that the Steering Team ask the RM&E Team to consider how to answer questions around productivity in the reach, noting that the more information will be needed to move towards funding and a fix. The group agreed this evaluation could provide some information on relative productivity of North Santiam reaches, and recommended winter steelhead should be included in the evaluation along with spring Chinook salmon. There were concerns about whether and how research would be able to tease out the impact of TDG on production. The reach continues to be seen of importance for fish managers.

- **ACTION:** The Steering Team will request that the RM&E team refine APH-19-03-DET to include winter steelhead (along with spring Chinook) and to assess the impacts of TDG on production in the Minto to Big Cliff reach. Also, consider: options for/impacts of outplanting in this reach, potential options to change operations, and carrying capacity of the reach.

The group revisited the idea of “recapitalizing” the project, which was previously mentioned by Erik Peterson (Corps), who was not present to share more on this concept. There was interest in finding out what it would take to recapitalize the one unit that causes many of the unplanned outages and thus leads to higher TDG. Dan Spear agreed to look into BPA’s asset management plan for Big Cliff and will bring information back to the Steering Team regarding BPA’s current plan and what it would take to recapitalize Big Cliff. He cautioned that the investment dollars are limited and need to cover the entire region, so this will come down to a cost-benefit decision. Steering Team members acknowledged this and requested transparency on what BPA considers when making this decision.

- **ACTION:** Dan will look into how Big Cliff is addressed in BPA’s asset management plan and what it would take to recapitalize the unit at Big Cliff in order to address TDG. He will bring information to the October meeting.

It was agreed that this issue would not be elevated to the Managers in September, but noted that elevation may be a process option to help move the issue forward in the future. The federal family will discuss further at their next meeting.

- **ACTION:** The Federal Family will continue discussions on how to move towards an interim solution at Big Cliff at their next meeting.

### **Revetment Conversation Update**

Mike and Karl reported on their conversation with Steve Gagnon from the Habitat Tech Team (HTT) and Karl’s subsequent conversation with the River Design Group (RDG). It was reported that RDG is doing a follow-up study of the Corps’ previous revetment study. The RDG study has not yet been released, but will be once the Corps has finished its internal review. The study includes a look at 90 revetments (some Corps owned) in the Willamette Valley, and specifically considers the biological feasibility of 25 revetments. If this study answers the questions posed by the Steering Team, it may provide the information needed. Ian noted that the RDG study is in the process of internal review and will be provided to the WATER teams once reviewed.

If the RDG study does not address the RPA questions and needs that the Steering Team is looking to have addressed, there may be a funding/cost share opportunity option to explore with the HTT. If this is the case, Steve Gagnon noted that it would be helpful for the HTT to know more about what the Steering Team is looking for in a study. There was a request for more information on the timing of the Corps internal study review, as there may be FY18 or ‘19 monies available.

- **ACTION:** Ian agreed to find out more information on the timing of the Corps study review; he will email the Steering Team with an update.
- **ACTION:** Karl will send out the Corps’ 2013 revetment study.

The group noted that revetment work on the mainstem may be an interim option to address some of the RPA habitat needs while passage is being worked on. Revetment removal may be an important part of restoring the mainstem habitat, as there are not very many options for restoration on the mainstem.

- The Steering Team postponed work on the HTT memo to see if the study addresses the information need.

### **September Managers Forum Agenda Development**

Donna noted that the next Managers Forum meeting is scheduled from 10:00-2:00 on September 25<sup>th</sup> at the CRITFC office. The Steering Team identified topics they thought should be included on the meeting agenda.

- Jeopardy presentation and re-initiation status - Information from NMFS, with DOJ input on the timeline (Marc)
  - Provide background on 2008 BiOp process and findings, what has changed since 2008 and what this round of consultation might look like from NMFS' perspective.
    - The goal of this presentation is to provide context and perspective as the Corps, BPA, and NMFS go into re-initiation.
- Regional messaging – Steering Team members will share the draft messaging ideas developed at the August Steering Team meeting with their managers to start the conversation on regional messaging.
  - Ian will report back any input from Kevin on the direction and intention of the messaging.
- Project Updates:
  - TDG Below Big Cliff: update/issue follow-up from previous Managers Forum meeting;
    - include mention of the current RM&E concept moving towards proposal.
  - High Head Bypass Status – Clarify path forward, including key check-ins and the updated timeline. (Note: the Corps is working on the timeline and hopes to have a draft ready to share with the Managers.)
  - DET Public Process: update on public process, input, and outcomes
  - What did we accomplish this year?
    - Ian will share his report on the accomplishments with the Steering Team ahead of the Managers Forum meeting.
- Five year plan highlights - COE
- Budget Update - COE
- Litigation Update – COE/NMFS
- Willamette Falls/California Sea Lion Update - ODFW

The group clarified the materials that would be provided at the Managers Forum:

- Posters from the Detroit public meetings, and
- 2018 RM&E Prioritization effort posters will be posted around the room for Managers to view.
- Ian will provide handouts of the 5-year budget and tracking.

Lawrence noted that Mike Wilson will be representing the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde at the Managers Forum. Mike was involved in the Willamette BiOp in the past and is interested in re-engaging on it.

- **ACTION:** Ian will talk to Kevin and provide any specific direction/intention for the regional messaging back with Steering Team members.
- Everyone will connect with their Manager to share initial messaging ideas from the Steering Team with the intention of preparing for discussion at the Managers meeting. (note: draft messages can be found in the August meeting summary).

To finalize preparations for the Managers Forum meeting, there will be a Steering Team call at 2:00 on September 18<sup>th</sup>. Materials that will be presented at the Managers Forum need to be to DS Consulting by noon on the 18<sup>th</sup>. DS Consulting will plan to order lunch (Thai food) for the meeting; please bring \$10 to help cover the costs.

- **ACTION:** Send any materials to DSC by noon on September 18<sup>th</sup>. The Steering Team will finalize plans for the Managers Forum on a **2:00 call on the 18<sup>th</sup>**.

## Updates

**FY18 Research:** Ian provided a list of all FY18 funded research, noting that there were some FY17 funded projects that were ongoing in FY18; this will be similar for FY18/19 project funding. There was a

total of \$8.75 million for research in FY18; specific RM&E funding was clarified in a handout from Ian detailing CRFM funding. \$5.9 million was allocated to downstream fish passage; however, project costs are higher due to project design needs, specifically at Detroit.

**FY19 Budget:** Ian noted that Willamette CRFM funding is going up and the Columbia CRFM funding is decreasing. This is a significant change to the program, and is still subject to change. Currently on the Columbia, the FCRPS BiOp and Fish Accords are expiring, requiring consultation on a new BiOp and Accords negotiations. Agencies are also in the process of a NEPA EIS on the Columbia River System Operations. All of these might impact the budget, especially when others see the proposed dollar shifts.

***Detroit Updates:***

- **Detroit Downstream Passage Design:** The Corps is currently funding a redesign effort at Detroit aimed at finding a solution for at-dam construction of the downstream structure. This is due, in part, to streamflow and water supply concerns caused by drawing down the reservoir during construction. Ian noted that this change does not impact the FSS structure or the NEPA timeline, however, it may impact the overall project schedule, or at least the DDR and plans/specs review timeline (review is no longer expected to be in December 2018).
- Detroit water temperatures will be cooling, as the warm water slug is on its way out; the reservoir is down to the spillway crest and so deeper, cooler water will now be released.

***Cougar Updates:***

- The Corps has stopped outplanting fish upstream of Cougar Dam due to a forest fire burning in the area.
- Cougar DDR review will be in November and will be a 15-day process. This is a shorter review time than normal. The Environmental Assessment is also expected to be released in November, so he encouraged the group to plan for these short reviews.

***Lookout Point Update:***

- In regards to Middle Fork RM&E and Lookout Point operations, the RM&E Team continues to explore options to test operational passage. One option that the Corps has modelled for the RM&E team is a delayed spring refill and spill operation. The intention of this operation would be to encourage fry to consolidate near the dam while the reservoir is low, and then flush them downstream with surface spill.

WATER team members are still interested in testing the operation, if possible, in case spilling the fish is a good passage solution that can be utilized when appropriate.

Rich Piaskowski explained the Corps conclusion that this operation is not a long term solution for fish passage. Refilling Lookout Point Reservoir each year is dependent on spring precipitation, and forecasts are inadequate to predict spring precipitation on February 1, when a decision to delay refilling until March 1 must occur annually. Therefore water availability to provide surface spill each year is unpredictable when delaying reservoir refill. If surface spill cannot be provided, dam passage survival of juvenile Chinook will be very poor because the majority of juveniles will move downstream through the turbines in the fall, after the reservoir is drafted. RES-SIM modeling results presented to the RM&E Team demonstrate the reservoirs will not refill sufficiently to provide surface spill each year with a delayed reservoir refill to March 1 (RES-SIM results presented to the WATER RM&E Team, July 27). Rich explained that therefore managers must be willing to risk year-class failure for Chinook salmon in the Middle Fork each time a delayed operation is employed.

The Corps further explained that not refilling also has impacts on mainstem flow targets. If LOP is not refilled, other projects would have to operate to hit mainstem targets, which could lead to other negative impacts. Also, paired release studies have indicated that fry have poor lifecycle survival.

Rich also shared that a second operation has been evaluated for spring spill at LOP, which was presented to the RM&E Team. Model results indicate this looks feasible and beneficial as surface spill is predicted to occur in nearly all years. There are some additional questions to evaluate, including downstream temperature effects, and impacts to meeting downstream flow targets, but the next step would be for the Corps and BPA to complete an internal review of the operation, and if approved for testing, then plan for a study in as early as 2019 to evaluate the benefit of this operation for downstream passage of Chinook salmon at LOP and Dexter dams.

USFWS, NOAA, and ODFW urged the Corps to continue the research path to gather more information on whether or not the delayed refill is a good option some of the time. Mike noted that this is a piece of information that can help inform management decisions. Without it, Managers will not be able to consider all the options. Rich asked that managers discuss what management decisions evaluating a delayed refill would inform, sharing that if it was for an operation in association with a structural solution then should be evaluated after such a structure is found not to be adequate? Diana noted that she is looking into the information available to get a better idea of the risk and probability of the operation, and said she is talking with Anne Mullan about allowing downstream flow target deviations when a delayed refill leads to less storage available for meeting those targets. She also would like to discuss the modeling further with Mary-Karen at the Corps to understand if there are modifications to the operation that would increase the probability of surface spill with a delayed reservoir refill at LOP.

#### ***Team Updates:***

- **Flow Team:** The Flow Team is tracking flows and may need to make decisions in the near future regarding spawning and incubation flows in the South Santiam. Additionally, flow targets for Albany required augmentation from Fall Creek, which caused concerns regarding fish passage. This will be discussed at the upcoming Flow Team (WFPOM) meeting.
  - Please make sure your representatives attend Flow Team meetings.
- **RM&E Plans:** The draft RM&E sub-basin plans are currently ready for Ian's review; after his review, the plans will be sent to the WATER teams for review.

#### **Next Steps**

- The next Steering Team session will be a conference call in preparation for the Manager Forum meeting; this will take place on Tuesday September 18<sup>th</sup>.
- The next regular Steering Team meeting will be on Tuesday October 2<sup>nd</sup>. At that meeting, the Steering Team will have an update on the RM&E and Reintroduction plans, as well as a check in on HGMPs.

Donna thanked the group and the meeting was adjourned.

*This summary is respectfully submitted by the DS Consulting Facilitation Team; suggested edits are welcome and can be provided to Emily Stranz at [emily@dsconsult.co](mailto:emily@dsconsult.co)*

