

## Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

### Steering Team Meeting

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

ODFW HQ, Steelhead Room, Salem, 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/)

### FINAL Facilitator's Summary

ACTION	BY WHOM?	BY WHEN?
Send the Corps' presentation on the 2019 High Flow Event to Steering Team Members	DS Consulting	ASAP [ <i>Completed 5/8/19</i> ]
Coordinate with Selena Hart regarding June Flow Team presentation on 2018 Santiam flows and the 2019 high flow event for June Steering Team meeting	Ian	ASAP

**Participants in the Room:** Ian Chane (USACE), Brad Eppard (USACE), Nancy Gramlich (ODEQ), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Lawrence Schwabe (Grand Ronde), and Dan Spear (BPA).

**Participants on the phone (for all or part of the meeting):** Amy Gibbons (USACE), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Kelly Janes (USACE), Marc Liverman (NMFS), Karl Weist (NWPPCC).

**Facilitator:** Donna Silverberg, **Summary:** Nancy Pionk, DS Consulting.

#### **Welcome, introductions, & housekeeping**

Facilitator, Donna Silverberg welcomed the group to the meeting and conducted a round of introductions. She reviewed the agenda with the group. The Flow Team Presentation on Santiam 2018 Flows was deferred until the June 4 Steering Team meeting as Salina Hart was not able to attend the May 7 meeting.

The team reviewed and discussed the edits to 4-9-19 Joint RM&E/Steering Team meeting summary. The summary and edits were approved with the following changes:

- Page 2: last paragraph, second sentence, the word “*conduct*” was changed to “*complete*.” In the third sentence: the word “*allowed*” was changed to “*authorized*.”
- Page 3, paragraph 3, the reference to “*and input from the Willamette/Lower Columbia Technical Recovery Team (TRT)*” was deleted. Marc read aloud to the team the text from the 2011 Recovery Plan (provided by NMFS in a comment with their suggested edits to this paragraph.) The Steering Team agreed, by consensus to include the reference to the TRT and the 2011 Recovery Plan text read by Mark in a footnote to the sentence, with a note that NMFS provided this additional information after the meeting.

#### **Detroit EIS Process – Update on Public Process**

Kelly Janes, Corps provided an update on the Detroit EIS process. The Draft EIS is expected to be released on May 24, 2019, after which there will be a sixty-day comment period. The Corps is coordinating two meetings with City of Salem and Marion County staff to provide information on the DEIS, so City and County staff can assist members of the public seeking to provide comments. The Corps will also be presenting at the North Santiam Basin Summit on May 15, 2019. Three public meetings are planned (May 29, June 4 and 6). The intent of the meetings is to walk through the outcomes and share information with the public on how to provide comments. The format will feature a general presentation with a Q&A session; afterwards, there will be an open house where the public can walk around and view information boards. WATER partners' attendance at the public meetings was requested and appreciated by the Corps.

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### **Managers Forum Debrief**

The group reflected on the 4/30/19 Manager's Forum. Some Steering Team members were encouraged by the visioning discussion and how engaged managers were, while others were not as enthusiastic. Concern was expressed regarding the report on the FY20 President's Budget (FY20 PBUD). The group reflected on Kevin's comments that the Corps is working to implement the COP in order to avoid jeopardy, and the desire of other Managers to envision goals and a regional partnership beyond the Willamette BiOp. Marc noted that as part of the visioning process, it is important to look ahead and consider what is changing in the Willamette Valley and how to keep the coalition together as changes continue to occur over the long-term. Group members also noted that the Managers had limited time to discuss what has been working within the WATER partnership, and more discussion in that regard may help support development of the vision.

Lawrence reminded the group that the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde were not in full support of the COP when it was developed; however, they saw the plan for passage at Detroit and Cougar as a positive step forward. The FY20 PBUD is a concern, as the COP originally anticipated construction beginning in 2019. Dan shared his perspective that Kevin's comments about avoiding jeopardy were aimed at getting support for the budget; i.e. the best way to effect FY20 funding is to support the COP. Dan suggested that a stronger message from the region would be to support funding for the planned construction and note that what is going to be constructed will meet goals for avoiding jeopardy while also supporting recovery efforts. Ian noted that, while other agencies may perceive the Corps as focusing on the minimum to be done, the Corps is expected to be prudent stewards of the nation's resources during a challenging economic period and must choose the alternative that is the least cost to provide the benefit. He and other members agreed that the WATER partners' great strength was working together where their mission and authorities' overlap. There was support for development of a vision statement that articulates this overlap. What can we do within our authorities? What are we doing? What are the measurable objectives we are seeking to achieve?

With regard to the FY20 budget report Kevin provided, Ian reiterated the message that the Corps is moving forward with FY19 work with the assumption that the funding will be in place for FY20. If funding is not in the budget for specific items, there could be a stoppage on 10/1/2019. Right now 27 projects in the Willamette have no funding in the PBUD. An additional nine are not funded to capability. The Corps will pursue funding for any under-funded projects through any funding pots that Congress might make available. The Corps is currently conducting oversight to determine how much flexibility there is to move funds around among projects. Historically, the Corps has used five-year plans that provided flexibility to move funds around; however, this option may not be available for the FY20 PBUD. Dan noted that this is the largest project to be funded in the region to date and is competing with other projects that have multi-state Congressional representation.

The group discussed the next steps for the Steering Team to take between now and the next Managers Forum in early October. Donna shared that the development of the vision statement is an iterative process and she expects to continue the discussion and development of the vision statement with the Managers between meetings and at the next Managers Forum. The October Managers Forum will also be the official Middle Fork RM&E Plan Check-in. A reality-check between the Check-In information and the final budget will be needed and decisions regarding the budget are anticipated.

### **2019 High Flow Snow Event Presentation**

Ian shared information with the group about the 2019 high flow snow event that occurred this spring. He noted that the Willamette Valley experienced a large rain event (beginning April 6) after a significant snow event earlier in the season. This was an unusual 'atmospheric river' for April and the forecast changed within 72 hours. Just prior to the event, the Willamette Valley Project reservoirs were just over half full and below the rule curve. On April 12, after the rain event: reservoirs were 100% full and on average, 20% over the rule curve.

Ian reviewed the downstream impacts of the high flow event. He noted that flows were higher than the high flows observed during 1996. Several downstream control points (Corvallis and Albany) reached Flood Stage and

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Goshen, on the Row River, reached Major Flood Stage. The road used for outplanting in McKenzie sub-basin (previously affected by fire in 2018) is impassable. However, channel capacity was higher than anticipated and more flows were absorbed in more areas.

As for the Project status, there was no major loss of structures; all dams operated as designed and all spill gates were functioning. The spillway was utilized at Fall Creek Dam for the first time since constructed and the spillway at Dorena was operated for the first time since 1964. Minor erosion issues were experienced at Fall Creek and Foster Dams.

Ian noted that there were likely geomorphic processes and effects to habitat that were beneficial to the ecosystem. Fluvial shifts helped with connectivity in areas identified as good habitat. The group discussed impacts to restoration sites and noted that the high flow washed out blackberries and water primrose in some areas. The Nature Conservancy project at the Middle Fork/Willamette confluence functioned as planned.

Ian noted that there were multiple lessons learned related to working with people, facilities and partners when dealing with emergency planning during a real event. One lesson was that the calibration in some places needs to be tweaked. Moving forward, it will be helpful to do additional analysis to determine what hydraulic and geomorphic benefits might have resulted from this flow event.

Group members noted that it will be helpful to hear from the Flow Team to understand the impact on flow targets and what the event means for spawning and incubation flows. Ian noted that, at this point, the reservoirs are more or less full; if precipitation does not occur, the projects will be drafting for flow.

- **Action:** Ian will coordinate with Selena Hart to schedule her presentation on the 2018 Santiam flows for the June 4 Steering Team meeting and ask her to include a discussion of the impact of the 2019 high flow event on flow targets. DS Consulting will send out Ian's PowerPoint Presentation on the 2019 high flow event to the team. [*Facilitator's Note: A PowerPoint document prepared by Ian summarizing the 2019 High Flow Event and Impacts was provided to Steering Team members following the meeting.*]

### **Lookout Point: Update on System Operation Request**

Ian provided an update on the LOP SOR. Because of the high flow conditions previously noted, the Corps spilled at LOP for 10 days (April 8 – April 18) and spilled between 1000 and 6000 cfs. During that time, the turbine at DEX had a maintenance issue and was not operating; therefore, spill occurred at DEX too. Consequently, Mother Nature implemented the spill contemplated by the SOR.

The Corps is moving forward to have the SOR in place for next year and in the Willamette Fish Operations Plan. Ian noted that the Corps is writing up the SOR as an operation and BPA will also be doing further review. He reminded the group that the Corps does not have authority to spill at DEX, so they are considering whether there is an opportunity during the maintenance period. The Corps will share the revised SOR with the WATER partners before going through the approval process to confirm that the operation meets the intent of the request.

Marc noted that the SOR was previously shared by fish managers as a draft request. NMFS intends to finalize the SOR request shortly in order to clarify the record. NMFS plans to finalize other draft requests, such as the draft letter requesting Green Peter outplanting, as well.

### **Regional Updates**

**NMFS:** Marc shared that Diana Dishman has accepted a position in the Protected Resource Division at NOAA and will be transitioning out of her role supporting the WATER RM&E team. The timing of the transition is unclear; it is hoped that she will still be able to participate with the RM&E team in setting the priorities for the FY20 studies.

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**Corps:** Ian shared that he is taking a 120-day detail in Washington, DC, beginning 6/1/19. He will return to the WATER team on 10/1/19. Andy Traylor will be on detail working in Ian's position on the WATER Steering Team during this time. Ian shared the following updates on studies and projects with the Steering Team:

- **Fall Creek pre-spawn mortality study:** Ian reported that, due to a delay with the funding vehicle, this study will not go forward this year and it will be put forward for consideration for FY20. Group members inquired whether opportunities exist to reallocate those funds. Ian and Brad are trying to find other immediate capability projects this year.
- **Foster Fish Weir:** The Corp is working to get the contract awarded and in place to fix the Foster Fish Weir this year. Ideally, the weir would be fixed by spring 2020; however, the timing for the fix is not yet clear. In lieu of the weir, spill is taking place at Foster.
- **Foster Adult Fish Facility:** The Corps modeled surface spill at Green Peter to determine whether the spill could influence the temperature issue at the Foster Adult Fish Facility. The modeling showed that this option would not be effective as the earliest that spill from Green Peter could influence the temperature is July, which is later than needed. The Corps is now looking at a structural solution. Dan suggested that the Corps consider whether the structural fix can be combined with the weir repair.

**ODFW:** Kelly reported that the Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program request for solicitations has closed. She noted that \$9 Million was available for projects; however, there were only 3 requests that totaled under \$4 Million. Kelly noted that last year, the amount requested was also low in comparison to the funds available. The group discussed the possible reasons for fewer requests: this may be the last year of OWEB's Focused Investment Partnerships; projects were not yet ripe for requests; The Nature Conservancy has changed its methods of operation; and challenges with sponsor capacity. Additionally, Karl noted this decrease could be due to economic drivers: during good economic times, it is tougher to purchase property. Kelly said the money that is not distributed will be available to the program at the end of the 15-year lifecycle.

BPA, Grand Ronde, ODEQ, USFWS, NWPC did not have any updates for the team.

### Next Steps

DS Consulting is in the process of scheduling the next Managers Forum for early October. The team agreed that the June 4, 2019 meeting will be a Joint RM&E/Steering Team meeting to rank FY20 studies, preferably in the Fireside Room. Donna also suggested that the Steering Team could schedule time before or after the Joint Meeting to hear the Flow Team's presentation.

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

*A Joint Steering and RM&E Team meeting will be held on June 4, from 12:30 to 4:30 PM, during which the teams will rank FY20 concepts. This summary is respectfully submitted by DS Consulting. Suggested edits are welcome and can be sent to [nancy@dsconsult.co](mailto:nancy@dsconsult.co)*