

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

Steering Team Meeting

Tuesday, June 4, 2019

Corps, Fireside Room, Portland, OR

http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/tmt/documents/FPOM/2010/Willamette_Coordination/

FINAL Facilitator's Summary

[Edits from BPA, COE, NPCC, ODFW]

ACTION	BY WHOM?	BY WHEN?
Create a list of FY19 studies ranked high, not funded, that could begin in FY19; provide the list to the Steering Team for further discussion and consideration	RM&E Team	July 2 nd ST meeting
Send the CRFM funding criteria list that the Corps' provided in the past	DS Consulting	June 25th
Modify the High Head Bypass proposal to add an objective of exploring a passage study at a bypass system that meets NMFS passage criteria.	Fenton	July 2 nd ST meeting

Participants in the room or on the phone: Leslie Bach (NPCC), Brad Eppard (USACE), Amy Gibbons (USACE), Nancy Gramlich (ODEQ), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Fenton Khan (USACE), Lance Kruzic (NMFS), Marc Liverman (NMFS), Anne Mullan (NMFS), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Ida Royer (USACE), Dan Spear (BPA), Andy Traylor (USACE), and Karl Weist (NPCC).

Facilitator: Donna Silverberg, **Support:** Emily Stranz, 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, noting that Selena Hart's presentation on Flow needed to be re-scheduled for the July 2nd meeting. Instead, Lance Kruzic will present on the Willamette HGMP BiOp today.

The group reviewed and approved the May 7th Steering Team meeting summary.

FY20 RM&E Concept Prioritization & Path Forward

Typically, this is the time of year that the Steering and RM&E Teams come together to rank study concepts for the upcoming fiscal year. However, this year, the January furlough slightly delayed the schedule. The RM&E Team has identified FY20 study needs and is working to draft concept papers. They plan to have concepts ready for a late-July joint Steering and RM&E Team prioritization meeting. DS Consulting staff will work to schedule the joint meeting.

That said, there are some additional FY19 funds that could support two concepts that the Corps requested the RM&E and Steering Team prioritize sooner than later. This would allow them to fast track the concepts for funding and initial implementation in 2019: 1) the High Head Bypass (JPL-18-03-HHB) and 2) Foster Holding and Transport (APH-19-XX-FOS) concepts (see the discussion below regarding the Steering Team's ranking of these concepts). Brad Eppard, Corps, noted that these two concepts were "high graded" due to timing and funding schedules, and he was not aware of any other studies being 'ripe' for moving forward with this year's funding. NMFS staff believe there are other, higher priority studies that are ready this year and could be implemented...instead of the Foster holding and transport study, which fish managers ranked very low. As a result of the concern, the Steering Team asked that the

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

RM&E Team meet and clarify what, if any studies were ranked higher, were not funded in FY19, AND are ready to move forward this fiscal year. They asked the RM&E Team to bring a list back to the Steering Team for further discussion and consideration.

→ **ACTION:** The RM&E Team will meet and create a list of studies ranked high, not funded in FY19, and capable of beginning this fiscal year. They will provide the list to the Steering Team for further discussion and consideration at their July 2nd meeting.

Foster Holding and Transport (APH-19-XX-FOS): Due to confusion regarding the purpose and scope of the concept, the Steering Team asked Fenton Khan and Ida Royer, Corps, to provide an overview of the concept. Ida explained that this concept is focused on what to do with natural origin Spring Chinook returns during the summer months as they return to the Foster Adult Fish Facility to reduce pre-spawn mortalities. Currently, these fish are outplanted above Foster Dam as soon as they return, but when water temperatures at the outplanting site exceed 70° F, they are not outplanted due to concerns of heat shock and temperature differentials. Natural-origin spring Chinook are held in the long-term holding ponds at the Foster AFF until water temperature at the outplanting site decreases to below 70° F. The Corps is proposing to review and synthesize available data to inform different strategies for management of these fish (i.e. should they be outplanted in the reservoir, release upstream, hold long-term?).

Note: It was clarified that this concept is not connected to the PDT's work regarding temperature differentials in the Foster ladder and holding ponds. The PDT is currently considering ways to improve temperature in the ladder, and per ODFW recommendations, does not plan to warm the long-term holding ponds. A temperature criterion for the long-term holding ponds has been clarified via the WFOP.

The Foster holding and transport concept was discussed at the RM&E Team during FY19 concept development (see October 2018-May 2019 RM&E meeting summaries). However, it was put on hold and never ranked because the first phase is a paper exercise, which could be done at any time and was not viewed as a priority to implement during the FY19 field season.

NMFS' staff shared the perspective that a lot of information already exists regarding how to handle fish coming upstream and how to outplant once caught; they do not think there is a need for additional synthesis of existing information. However, they would be interested in a study looking at reservoir release and its impacts. Also, a reservoir release study should be done in a different location and conducted with hatchery fish, instead of the wild Chinook/ESA fish coming to Foster. ODFW echoed the concern of putting wild fish in warmer water, citing concerns of stressing the fish, and would not support this action at Foster. The WFOP currently has guidance for what to do with returning fish when temperatures warm. Interests that all members shared are:

- Improve attraction to the ladder;
- Keep the holding ponds cool;
- Find where fish can do best when moved;
- Clarification of whether this is a field study or paper study.

Ida clarified that this concept would include synthesis of data on reservoir releases, in addition to transport. The study is not proposing any field work at this time. If the Corps' were to suggest the study should progress into a 'gap-analysis' phase in FY20, they would refine the concept for presentation and consideration by the RM&E and Steering Teams for input.

Fenton explained that the Corps thinks more refinement is needed on how to handle the fish during holding and transport. The Corps recognizes that regional WATER partners believe the information is already available, but the Corps has not been able to find a report that synthesizes the data and helps

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

inform how to move forward with operations. This concept would support that report being completed. Lance noted there is a lot of information in progress reports and other published sources. He also suggested looking at the cause of the problem (temperature discrepancy above and below Foster Dam) instead of looking at the symptoms of the problem. The Corps acknowledged that the temperature discrepancy needs to be addressed and that work is under way to do so.

Steering Team members were polled for their level of support in moving forward in funding APH-19-XX-FOS in FY19:

- **BPA:** Using the WATER ranking scale of 1-5 (1-low, 5-high), BPA ranked this a 4-5. Noting that this would be useful information for situations in which salmonids are outplanted in reservoir with more than one natal reach for them to return to and that it was not being funded instead of another study.
- **COE:** Using the WATER ranking scale of 1-5 (1-low, 5-high), Corps ranked this a 4-5. Noting that they are preparing to move it forward.
- **FWS:** Not seeing the downside to synthesizing data and hearing that the Corps needs the synthesis in order to move forward, FWS was okay with pursuing the synthesis of information.
- **Grand Ronde** – Not present for ranking.
- **ODFW:** Low priority and recognition that survival is low in warmer water.
- **NMFS:** Using the WATER ranking scale of 1-5 (1-low, 5-high), NMFS ranked this a 1.
- **NPCC:** NPCC did not have concerns with conducting a data synthesis. If the synthesis results in moving forward with a field study, the concept should come back to RM&E and Steering Teams for discussion and processing.

NMFS concluded by saying that this concept has never been a priority for them and remain concerned that it bumps other priority studies off of the funding table. When asked, they noted the genetic pedigree work was a higher priority study that NMFS would like to see funded. It was noted that because the genetic pedigree sampling was included in the HGMP BiOp (see below), it would require O&M funds, not CRFM. Marc asked to have the CRFM funding criteria recirculated; Donna said that DS Consulting would send out the criteria.

→ **ACTION: DS Consulting will send the Corps' CRFM funding criteria that Ian provided the group in the past.**

High Head Bypass (JPL-18-03-HHB): Fenton explained that the High Head Bypass (HHB) study could take place this fall and information gained would inform design of HHB systems for both Cougar and Detroit. This concept has been worked through the RM&E Team and all team members agreed that the concept should move forward to a study proposal.

Kelly expressed appreciation that the Corps met with ODFW, NMFS, and researchers to further discuss this study design. During their conversation, it was suggested that the Corps look into implementing the study at a passage system that uses a NMFS'-approved passage criteria (e.g. Walterville). ODFW would love to see the study happen at an approved criteria-site, as there is a lot of value in testing a system that meets the NMFS fish passage criteria (screening, size of pipes, etc). EWEB, owner of the Walterville system, was amenable to the test; however, they would need an incidental take permit. *[Note: Via edits, Kelly Reis noted that her understanding is that EWEB does not want to be responsible for any "take" of Chinook related to a HHB study at their facility. Additionally, there is question around specific terminology for what permits are needed.]* NMFS and NPCC also noted support for a study at a NMFS-approved system. Currently, the Corps plans to test at Green Peter, which does not meet NMFS' criteria. However, they are open to exploring options for another test at a NMFS-approved system as a second phase to this study. Fenton noted that setting up to conduct a study at a non-Corps property takes a lot of

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

effort and time, and is not likely to happen for the FY19 phase of this study. Steering Team members understand that this likely will occur in year two of the study.

All Steering Team members support moving forward with the proposed concept, with a modification that includes an objective to investigate a future study of a bypass system that meets NMFS passage criteria.

→ **ACTION:** Modify the High Head Bypass proposal to add an objective of exploring a passage study at a bypass system that meets NMFS passage criteria.

EIS Processes: Update on Public Process

Andy reported that the Detroit Passage Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) 60-day public comment period started on May 24th and includes three public meetings. There was a meeting on May 29th in Gates, which included Congressional and local leadership. Tonight's meeting is in Salem, and on Thursday there is a meeting in Stayton. The current Preferred Alternative is Alternative 5: building in the wet. This alternative was chosen largely due to the impact the other alternatives would have on local communities and economies.

There is also a public meeting tonight in Eugene on the Willamette EIS, followed by a meeting tomorrow in Salem.

HGMP BiOps

Lance presented highlights of the HGMP Biological Opinion (BiOp), which was finalized in late May 2019 after years of work from ODFW, BPA, the Corps, and NMFS, who all helped create the HGMPs on which NMFS consulted. The BiOp covers all hatchery programs operating in the Upper Willamette – spring Chinook, summer steelhead, and rainbow trout; however, only considered fish within the DPS. The overall goals for hatcheries are to conserve and protect, reintroduce fish above dams where possible, and lower extinction rates of wild fish by supplementing with hatchery fish. Lance stated that the natural production of spring Chinook runs have been supported with hatchery supplementation.

The latest assessment done for the HGMP BiOp highlighted the benefit of the hatchery program, and showed that hatchery fish lowered the extinction rate of the ESU. One of the new things the BiOp covers is approval for some of the wild fish to be taken for integration with the broodstock program in order to infuse wild genetics into the hatchery program and address some genetic concerns. The BiOp established criteria for this take, although, take will be limited in the near future due to low wild fish returns.

Regarding monitoring and evaluation, some of the work in the past is no longer high priority and new efforts are noted in the Terms and Conditions. Three new areas stand out: 1) Annual collection and analysis of genetic pedigrees is a high priority for management and was added as a Term and Condition; there is a schedule in the BiOp. 2) dam counts for both wild and hatchery fish were added to guide broodstock management, and, 3) spawning-ground surveys, above the dams, to inform pedigree analysis and spawning locations.

In response to a question, Lance noted that the HGMPs outplanting and reintroduction plans have been carried over to the BiOp. These plans set thresholds for when to stop hatchery supplementation and provide triggers, such as numbers of fish, and the ratio of hatchery vs. wild. There are still details that need to be developed for a full reintroduction plan.

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

Lance also reported on the summer steelhead program. Summer steelhead are not native to the Upper Willamette. This program is not for conservation, but rather for fisheries enhancement. As a result, NMFS' evaluation centered on genetic and ecological effects of the summer steelhead hatchery releases. This BiOp got into greater detail than past two BiOps and considered new information about impacts of this program since the 2008 BiOp. NMFS' assessment showed less than 2% gene flow in the North Santiam and South Santiam from summer steelhead populations. Lance pointed to successful efforts since the 2008 BiOp which account for this success. At this point, the analysis is showing that the summer steelhead program is having a low impact on the winter steelhead population. NMFS would like further evaluation on the genetics. Similarly, the rainbow trout program which stocks the reservoirs for trout fisheries was evaluated and showed no real ecological risks. Lance noted NMFS' intention is to schedule a technical meeting for co-managers to talk about more specifics of the HGMPs and BiOp.

Regional Updates

Team updates:

- Habitat Technical Team – the HTT is meeting on Thursday for a briefing on project ranking, led by the Willamette EIS technical team.
- WFFDWG – is in the process of document review and planning another trip to the Cougar models in July.

Partner updates

- **USFWS** – is working downstream of Willamette Falls, in the Portland-metro area to assess the area for “Urban Runoff Syndrome”. This work stems from work done in Puget Sound that looks at the impact of urban runoff on Coho mortality. USFWS is on the front edge of this project, which includes looking at streams to determine impacts from runoff.
- **NPCC** – The Fish and Wildlife Program update will be presented to the Council this month and a draft is expected to go out for public comment in July. The program update will be included as an addendum to the 2014 program.
- **ODFW** – A total of 34 California sea lions were trapped and removed this year at Willamette Falls, including the worst of the repeat ‘visitors’. The traps are still up, but animals have left the area for the season. Researchers will be watching for behavior changes from these removals next year. Also, the Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program has received three proposals for acquisitions using FY21 funds, which will be ranked later this month.
- **ODEQ** – The mercury TMDL efforts is making progress and DEQ is preparing for public comment in the near future.
- **NMFS** – The NMFS team is working hard to complete their Willamette Basin Review BiOp by the end of June. They are also sending staff to the Willamette EIS public meetings.
- **BPA** – Nothing to report
- **COE** – Nothing more to report.

Closing & Next Steps

Brad shared that a COE staff person recently came across a June 15, 1947 Oregonian news article that reported on the Corps' breaking ground to build McNary Dam. This was a multi-page article detailing dams and impacts to salmon. At the time, the fishing industry was protesting the dams. Many of the issues noted are similar to those the region is facing today. Brad offered to share the article once they get it scanned.

The next Steering Team meeting will be on July 2nd and will include the Flow Team's Presentation on Santiam 2018 Flows and 2019 High Flow Event, presented by Selena Hart, Chair of the Flow Team. The Steering Team will also review FY19 concepts that are elevated from the RM&E Team for consideration.

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

DS Consulting will work to find a time for the Steering and RM&E Teams to meet in late July to prioritize FY20 concepts. They have also reached out to Managers to schedule the early October 2019 Managers Forum; schedules do not appear to be lining up, however the DSC team will send another set of dates if needed.

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

The next Steering Team meeting is scheduled for 1:00-3:30 on July 2 in the St Helens room at NOAA.

This summary is respectfully submitted by the impartial facilitation team at DS Consulting. Suggested edits are welcome and can be sent to Emily at emily@dsconsult.co.