

WATER Joint Steering and RM&E Teams' Meeting
Tuesday, April 7, 2020
Via WebEx/Phone Conference

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

DRAFT Facilitator's Summary of Actions	BY WHOM?	BY WHEN?
Coordinate with Rich to provide an update on SWIFT at the next RM&E meeting.	Fenton	5/28/20 RM&E meeting
Follow-up with Rachel to develop a progress timeline	Nancy P.	ASAP
Follow-up conversation concerning in-season flow management decisions and opportunities.	Kelly and Dan	ASAP
Call managers re: shorter Managers Forum/managers-only call in May	Donna	End April

Participants on the phone or WebEx video (for all or part of the meeting): Leslie Bach (NPCC), Brett Blunden (USFS), Brad Eppard (USACE), Nancy Gramlich (ODEQ), Suzanne Hill (Corps), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Fenton Kahn (Corps), Dave Jepsen (ODFW), Marc Liverman (NMFS), Rachel Neuenhoff (Corps), Anne Mullan (NMFS), Christine Peterson (BPA), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Dan Spear (BPA), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), and Karl Weist (NPCC).

Facilitator & Notetaker: Donna Silverberg & Nancy Pionk, DS Consulting.

Welcome, Introductions, & Housekeeping

Facilitator, Donna Silverberg, welcomed the group to the Joint Steering and RM&E Team meeting and conducted a round of introductions. She reviewed the agenda and noted that the main purpose for the Joint meeting was to review FY21 Sub-Basin RM&E priorities.

FY21 Sub-Basin RM&E Priorities

In preparation for identifying FY21 RM&E priorities, the RM&E Team, prior to the Joint meeting, reviewed the FY20 sub-basin RM&E charts and considered the questions posed by the Steering Team regarding each sub-basin (Note: the questions are listed in the Agenda and by sub-basin below). At this Joint meeting, the group reviewed, basin-by-basin, the Steering Team questions and RM&E planning needs for each sub-basin. The group's discussion related to each sub-basin is provided below. A list of the planning needs, organized by sub-basin, is also provided at the end of this summary.

Middle Fork

The group considered the following Steering Team questions:

Maintain the path to a 2021 decision point.

- *What next steps are needed?*
- *Are there additional RM&E needs to support the RM&E Plan?*
- *Is there anything outside of the Structured Decision Making (SDM) workshops on which we need to remain focused? If so, what?*
- *Are there assumptions in the SDM that need validating and can be tested via research, literature review, etc.?*

Group members reviewed a presentation from the Structured Decision Making (SDM) workshops regarding uncertainties in the Middle Fork (a separate document titled *Addressing Uncertainties*). This presentation was previously reviewed by the RM&E Team at their 2/27/2020 Meeting. Rachel noted that the SDM workshops are part of the path forward for the Middle Fork.

Mike noted that many of the planned or ongoing activities listed in the sub-basin planning tables for the Middle Fork are subject to the SDM effort, which is ongoing. He questioned whether there was a need to wait for the outcome of the SDM effort or if there were RM&E activities that the team could begin planning for in FY20. He noted that timing for future studies is a concern as the Steering Team is expecting to have information to inform Managers' decisions regarding downstream passage at Middle Fork by FY22.

Brad noted that, while some of the questions regarding information-needs may be driven by the SDM process, it is possible to start developing some concepts now. Future work will be dependent on funding. Rachel agreed that the team could develop concepts before the SDM work is complete. There is a risk of having imperfect information if the group moves forward with research before the SDM workshops are complete; however, it is likely that the SDM process will have enough information by July to clarify the level of that risk. As such, decisions regarding studies could be made at that time. She noted that the SDM simulation model relies heavily on all the RM&E done to date. The Corps encouraged WATER partners to participate in the SDM workshops and to provide information to inform the modeling effort to ensure that all needs are identified, as soon as possible.

Regarding research projects: Fenton noted there may be a need for another year (year 3) of fry survival studies for LOP. The Corps is intending to fund a modeling exercise by USGS this year (FY20) to inform whether a third year of field study of fry survival is needed (20-01-LOP *Sources of reservoir mortality in juvenile Chinook rearing in Lookout Point dam*). This modeling study is currently on hold for funding and is expected to begin in late FY20 and will extend into FY21. This modeling exercise, as well as the SDM modeling effort, will help to inform what further studies are needed for the Middle Fork.

- Anne noted that there also is a need to understand how fry and yearling behavior is affected by alternative dam operations such as spill or drawdown. Studies regarding these operations could potentially be done this fall. (note: all members of the teams agreed with this).
- Mike also noted that there will be a need for monitoring related to court-ordered interim operations.
- Anne, Mike, Kelly and Lawrence supported taking advantage of opportunities with regard to monitoring alternative or interim operations to inform data gaps.

It was also noted that there is a need to understand how climate change affects operations and may affect downstream passage. Rachel noted that the researchers are not currently considering climate changes as part of the SDM process because no one has raised that issue for them. She encouraged WATER members to raise concerns and provide information about unmet data needs concerning climate change in the workshops. Brad noted that the expected end-result from the SDM process is a working model that can analyze certain scenarios (such as climate change) from which concept papers could be developed in the future. Rachel anticipates scheduling the next SDM workshop in May.

In addition, it was noted that operations changes that stem from litigation decisions could impact species from a predatory perspective. There will be a need to better understand the nature and severity of this impact.

North Santiam

The group considered the following Steering Team questions:

- *There currently is an effort to implement a new spill pattern to spread the spill and monitor TDG with existing gauges. Is there any additional monitoring needed?*

The group agreed it would be helpful to identify monitoring needs that maybe associated with interim operations that are identified from litigation. Additionally, it would be helpful to identify any opportunities to address data gaps during alternative operations.

South Santiam

The group considered the following Steering Team questions:

- *What is currently known about the potential for spawning, production, etc. upstream of Green Peter? What do we still need to know and by when?*

Anne noted there is a need to identify ideal above-dam outplanting sites and the number of fish to put upstream. She clarified that this is part of the RPA: RM&E in year one could identify outplanting sites and then technical plans would be developed in year two. She reminded the group that steelhead and Chinook are seriously declining in the South Santiam and desperately need an uplift. Marc explained that NMFS is anticipating an increase in abundance and production from this habitat, hopes that it will support enhanced resilience, and provide a better refuge for fish from increasing temperatures. Brett noted that there is commercial mining, timber sales, and recreation in this area and the Forest Service would need at least a month's notice of any fish transport in order to prepare and submit an ESA consultation.

[Facilitator's Note: Following the meeting, Brett Blundon, USFS, provided this additional clarifying information: "The Quartzville area is a heavily used mining area and the Forest Service requests that the team utilize the proper process to ensure that these groups are adequately notified. Given Oregon Law, mining would be prohibited once Listed Fish species are transported above Green Peter and this will likely be a major issue for all parties if substantial planning is not performed before fish are transported".

Dan noted that there is an existing population of Chinook upstream of Green Peter; one question for future consideration is: how might the existing population interact with new wild or hatchery-origin fish? Kelly noted there are observations of afluvial spring Chinook at other areas upstream including Hills Creek and possibly at Cougar.

Similar to the Middle Fork: the group agreed it would be helpful to identify any monitoring needs that may be associated with interim operations or structural modifications identified from litigation, and to identify any opportunities to address data gaps during alternative operations.

McKenzie

The group considered the following Steering Team questions:

- *Given HHB, COU 2.0, and trap and hauls< is there anything we are/can be doing to inform passage decisions?*

Similar to the Middle Fork: the group agreed it would be helpful to identify any monitoring needs that may be associated with interim operations and to identify any opportunities to address data gaps during alternative operations.

- Anne noted that the RPA includes direction concerning interim operations (such as drawdown). Interim operations should be used to gain insights, regardless of whether they are linked to litigation. For example, in years where there is lower-than-expected elevation in the reservoir, this could provide an opportunity to hold elevation and monitor RO passage to better understand how reservoir elevation could be optimized for better RO passage.
- Brett noted that the Forest Service will be tagging fish and working with OSU to do some monitoring in this area.
- It was also suggested that more PIT tag detectors would provide better information for modeling when there are changes in operations or flows.

Systemwide

The group considered the following Steering Team questions:

- *Where is SWIFT and what needs to, or can be done next to provide information about mainstem flow and adaptive management?*

The Corps noted there are some results from SWIFT; however, they are currently undergoing ground-truthing. It was requested that Rich provide an update on SWIFT at the next RM&E meeting. Is the time ripe for development of adaptive management strategies?

Also for systemwide:

- Kelly would like to identify opportunities to improve infrastructure for monitoring in the mainstem so as to take advantage of monitoring fish under different flow conditions as they arise.
- Nancy G. encouraged the group to think “big picture” and consider what the monitoring needs are for projects.
- Anne encouraged the Corps to complete the pedigree analysis as soon as possible.
 - Fenton noted that the Corps expects to fund the pedigree analysis later this year and will provide a timeline for completion once it is identified.

Steering Team members reflected on what other information would be helpful to help guide RM&E planning priorities:

- Marc noted that the reintroduction plans may help guide planning. The reintroduction plans are currently in review and are expected to be shared with the Steering and RM&E teams in late April.
- Nancy G. noted that it would be helpful to have a complete list of the RM&E actually being done, including progress on each.
 - Rachel suggested that it might be helpful to identify the period of performance in the sub-basin planning tables to provide a general sense of when deliverables are expected or, alternatively, to develop a timeline to show the progress that is being made.
 - Donna offered that DS Consulting would work with Rachel to develop a timeline/progress report to help Steering Team and Managers.

Kelly was interested in understanding more about how BPA makes in-season reservoir and flow management decisions and whether there might be opportunities learn from a variety of situations (for example, if there is a low flow year and the project will be dipping into the power pool, is there information we can be collecting to inform decision-making?). Dan noted that these decisions are part of the flow management team process. Dan and Kelly will follow-up on this question offline.

- **Action:** Fenton will coordinate with Rich to provide an update on SWIFT at the next RM&E meeting.
- **Action:** DS Consulting (Nancy P.) will follow-up with Rachel regarding development of an RM&E progress timeline.
- **Action:** Kelly and Dan will follow-up with each other concerning in-season flow management decisions and opportunities.

May Managers Forum Meeting

Steering Team members considered whether to schedule a Managers Forum meeting in May and what type of format would be most useful. Members did not recommend scheduling the usual four-hour Managers’ Forum meeting. They noted that there are a lot of current, external factors (such as COVID-19,

funding concerns, litigation) that are outside of the WATER partners' control. For example, with regard to the litigation, Marc noted that the judge cancelled the scheduled hearings and will be ruling from the bench. Non-federal partners might be interested in a more specific update; this could be done through a written update or via a call.

Steering Team members see value in maintaining the social connection and engagement among managers and supported the idea of a shorter (one-hour), managers-only conference call. The agenda might include a discussion on what advice managers have for actions in light of the reduced budget, a discussion about what partners might do to improve funding, including how best to leverage advocacy by non-federal partners for funding. One idea: have a presentation on how the lamprey fund for the Columbia was increased, with lessons learned from the tribes' lobbying approach. The call could also be an opportunity to get alignment on interim operations amongst the managers.

→ **Action:** Donna will reach out to managers, share this recommendation, and help to determine how they would like to proceed.

With that, Donna thanked the Steering and RM&E Team members and the meeting was adjourned

The next Steering Team meeting is scheduled from 12:30 to 4:30 on May 5th
The next RM&E Team meeting is scheduled from 9:00 – 1:00 on May 28th

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

Planning Needs by Sub-basin (aka The Whiteboard!)

Middle Fork

- Fry and yearling behavior under alternative operations scenarios
- Year 3 of fry survival study?
- Downstream passage: placeholders for SDM workshop results
- How climate change affects operations and downstream passage
- Impacts of predation
- Identify any opportunities to address data gaps or monitoring needs during alternative or interim operations

North Santiam

- Identify any opportunities to address data gaps or monitoring needs during alternative or interim operations

South Santiam

- Identify ideal outplanting sites and the number of fish to put upstream above Green Peter
- How might the existing fish population upstream of Green Peter interact with new wild or hatchery-origin fish?
- Identify any opportunities to address data gaps or monitoring needs during alternative or interim operations

McKenzie

- Explore opportunities for more monitoring infrastructure (such as PIT tag detectors) to provide better information for modeling when there are changes in operations or flows.
- Identify any opportunities to address data gaps or monitoring needs during alternative or interim operations

Systemwide

- Consider whether it is timely to develop adaptive management
- Identify opportunities to improve infrastructure (such as PIT tag detectors) for monitoring in the mainstem so as to take advantage of monitoring impacts of flows as they arise
- Complete the pedigree analysis
- Consider information from reintroduction plans
- Identify any opportunities to address data gaps or monitoring needs during alternative or interim operations
- Identify any opportunities to address data gaps in the course of in-season flow management