

**WATER Steering Team Meeting  
Tuesday, May 5, 2020  
Via WebEx/Phone Conference**

[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 from ODFW]**

ACTION	BY WHOM?	BY WHEN?
Follow-up with Kevin Brice, Corps, for final approval on Managers Forum summary.	Ian	ASAP
Send detailed project spreadsheet to Steering Team Members.	Ian	ASAP
Work with Chris Allen (USFWS) and Anne Mullan (NMFS) regarding draft BiOp for FY21 for NEPA work at Cougar Dam.	Dave	?
Follow-up with RM&E Team Members to bring additional items for funding to the upcoming RM&E meeting.	Steering Team	May 27th
Follow-up with RM&E facilitators to add ‘fish passage data collections at the Foster Weir during interim ops’ to the next meeting agenda.	Donna	5/5 (done)
Contact all managers re: scheduling/agenda items for Managers Forum meeting at the end of May.	Donna	ASAP/ongoing

**Participants on the phone:** Barbara Adams (USFS), Eric Anderson (BPA), Leslie Bach (NPCC), Brett Blundon (USFS), Ian Chane (Corps), Brad Eppard (Corps), Nancy Gramlich (DEQ), David Griffith (Corps), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Marc Liverman (NOAA), Anne Mullan (NMFS), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Dan Spear (BPA), Karl Weist (NPCC).

**Facilitator & Notetaker:** Donna Silverberg & Colby Mills, DS Consulting.

**Welcome, Introductions, & Housekeeping**

Facilitator, Donna Silverberg, welcomed the group to the meeting and conducted a round of introductions. She reviewed the agenda and noted that the main purpose for the meeting was to review project progress reports, budget updates, and to discuss COVID-19 impacts on WATER and FCRPS efforts.

The April 7 Joint ST / RM&E Summary was approved by consensus of all Steering Team members present. The April and October 2019 Managers Forum summary was approved by NOAA, however, the team awaits final approval from the Corps.

→ **ACTION:** Ian will connect with Kevin Brice, Corps, for final approval on MF summary.

**Progress Reports**

Ian Chane, Corps, provided an overview of FY20 budget and project updates, focusing on challenges that particular projects are facing.

→ **ACTION:** Ian will distribute the detailed project spreadsheet to Steering Team Members.

Highlights include:

1. **Foster Adult Fish Facility:** the project will continue through this year and into next, and is projected to wrap up in FY22. Meeting schedule is moving forward.

2. **Cougar Downstream Fish Passage:** plans and spec work will wrap up this year. The project will be shelved until Congress provides funds for construction.

In response to questions, Ian noted that the FSS design team is working on this, developing designs for the collector, trap, and transport. Dave Griffith, Corps, reminded the group that, in regards to NEPA work at Cougar Dam, while they don't have a signed FONSI at the moment, it would help to have a draft BiOp (especially RPMs for construction) ready for FY21 in the event that funding becomes available.

- **ACTION:** Dave will continue working with Chris Allen, USFWS, and Anne Mullan, NMFS, regarding a draft BiOp for FY21 for NEPA work at Cougar Dam.

3. **Cougar 2.0 - Downstream Passage Alternative:** the team is making progress, and the project may extend into FY21, dependent upon upper level management decisions. Currently, the Corps and BPA are assessing feasibility and DDR ideas, including assessing a variety of impacts and possibilities that might exist at this project. They will provide information to managers so they may decide how to proceed.
4. **Fall Creek Adult Fish Facility:** there continues to be liner issues at the project. Work to correct those issues will be extended into the fall and funding can carry over as well.
5. **High Head Bypass Prototype Study:** the fall study is funded, as planned.
6. **CRSO Funding for Willamette Projects:** there has been no contract for work at the Obermeyer weir this year. The \$3.5 million has been released; so, instead, the Corps will fully fund FY20 pedigree work ASAP. They expect to have contracts with USGS and OSU within a month (or so).

Ian noted that this is the time that money becomes available, and the Corps wants to be ready if they have more money with which to fund projects.

- **ACTION:** Steering Team Members will encourage their RM&E Team Members to bring additional items for funding to the upcoming RM&E meeting.

7. **Foster Fish Weir EDT:** since there is no contract, this project has moved back to the DDR phase for the rest of the fiscal year. Instead, BPA has an operation in place for fish that spills at night with no hydro. In response to questions, the Corps confirmed that there might be an opportunity to collect data on fish passage during this interim operation. Donna suggested they add this topic to the next RM&E meeting agenda.

- **ACTION:** Donna will ask RM&E facilitators to add 'fish passage data collection at the Foster Weir (associated to interim operations)' to their next meeting agenda.

## **WATER Team Updates**

- **FPOM:** is working through water supply issues at the McKenzie Hatchery in order to support brood stock work. They are hoping to implement fish counts at Leaburg and Lebanon Dams this season.
- **Flow Team:** regional flows are currently in a deficit. Specifically, Hills Creek and Lookout Point are low this year. The region will need to keep tracking the water level; currently summer is concerning for many.
  - **Radar!** The region may need to have flow conversations later this year.
- **Hydro:** Cougar and Detroit Dams are tracking to meet temperature needs based on current modeling. The two projects are on track for fill and spill (Detroit) and Water Temperature Control Tower (Cougar) operations.

- **Hatchery:** Fall Creek Hatchery fish are coming back earlier this year (usually 1% return rate in April). One reason could be that all tributaries are above the temperature threshold (50 degrees F). Also, ODFW reported the first female at Minto this week – the earliest the manager can remember, another trend that shows fish are returning earlier this year. Grateful for a better steelhead run than in recent past years.

### **FY 2021 Budget Review**

Ian reported that, similar to FY20, the Corps has more capability than currently funded in the PBUD. The Corps will need to reallocate and shift funds from the \$3.7 million FY21 total. Ian is working with Walla Walla and the Division in regards to the overall FCRPS and Willamette budget. The region won't know until next spring about final budget numbers. Ian will continue to provide budget updates at each Steering Team meeting.

### **WATER Managers Forum Agenda**

Donna reviewed information on the proposed agenda she had discussed with chair Kevin Brice for the upcoming Managers Forum meeting at the end of May, and sought input from Steering Team members. Meeting information included:

- A 90-minute call, with managers and facilitator only
- Agenda items discussed with Kevin Brice:
  - Budget situation (and possibility of a stimulus bill)
  - Advice to teams in light of budget
  - Lessons learned from tribal efforts with lamprey funds
  - Updates on: EIS, litigation and round robin

Steering Team members present had nothing to add to the agenda.

→ **ACTION:** Donna will continue to reach out to all managers regarding agenda items and scheduling.

**COVID-19 Impacts** – team reported on impacts each of their governments or agencies had been experiencing and what they anticipated in the future:

- **COE:** FCRPS tagging and fish transport have had issues due to social distancing. The Detroit physical model also is impacted because personnel must work from home.
- **ODFW:** is finding that sea lions can't be removed easily with social distancing in place. Other statewide concerns include declines in the state budget and lottery funds that support aspects of ODFW, as well as OWEB's Willamette projects via their grant program. Hiring freeze in effect.
- **CTGR:** although projects have seen stalling and delay, they are slowly pushing forward.
- **USFWS:** doesn't have much work going on in the Willamette. Lamprey work and other fieldwork have been impacted, and it is unclear how the PLT will be impacted. The bull trout project is in a report-writing phase, so it is not impacted.
- **NPCC/HTT:** as noted, the state budget is affected which means a hiring freeze, reduced lottery funds, and general funds are down. They are tracking OWEB funded projects and suspensions due to lottery fund losses which may impact Habitat Technical Team work.
- **NOAA:** fish sampling and checking on fish habitat areas will start as soon as able. It remains unclear if it will be as soon as June 1, but they anticipate it will start.

The group also discussed how soon their offices might be reopening, and noted that there is a lot of uncertainty around the issue of “how” and “when”. All noted that their respective managers are working on safety plans, and starting dates ranged from May 15, 2020 to 12 months.

Donna confirmed that the group should not anticipate in-person meetings for quite a while, since it is clear they can do good work together in this alternative meeting format. Coordination and collaboration can continue via conference calls and webinars, when needed. Given the group’s input, future Steering Team meetings will be held over conference call, and video calls will be instituted only for webinar-style presentations. The group may also have a video happy hour, just to stay in touch.

With that, Donna thanked the meeting participants for their focus and the meeting was adjourned.

**The next Steering Team meeting is currently scheduled from 12:30p to 4:30p on June 2<sup>nd</sup>**

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