

**Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)
Steering Team Meeting
August 4, 2020 via WebEx**

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

FINAL Meeting Summary

Action	Whom	By When
Provide updated FY20 and FY21 budgets to ST	Ian	September 1 st meeting

Participants on the phone: Leslie Bach (NPCC), Ian Chane (Corps), Brad Eppard (Corps), Nancy Gramlich (DEQ), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Marc Liverman (NOAA), Anne Mullan (NOAA), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Dan Spear (BPA).

Facilitator & Notetaker: Donna Silverberg & Emily Stranz, DS Consulting.

Welcome, Introductions and Housekeeping

Facilitator, Donna Silverberg, welcomed the group to the meeting and conducted a round of introductions. She reviewed the agenda and noted that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss issues and seek consensus on process, substance, and outcomes for efforts affecting participants engaged in the Willamette system.

The July 7th Steering Team meeting summary was approved by consensus of all Steering Team members present. The April and October 2019 Managers Forum meeting summaries will be considered approved pending the Corps' "thumbs-up"; DS Consulting is in the process of getting approval from Kevin Brice.

Progress Updates

FY20 and FY21 Projects: Ian Chane, Corps, reported that the Corps is on track with all planned research contracts for FY20. Looking forward to FY21, the Corps is working to progress the Cougar downstream passage design to ensure that it is ready for construction when funds become available; thus, additional funds will be needed for the design team in FY21. Additionally, the Cougar 2.0 contract will be extending into January/February of FY21; the team is working to refine the top three alternatives and address aspects of dam safety. The Foster adult fish facility is on track and moving forward with design. This effort will seek to address temperature issues at facility; DDR is planned for FY21. Regarding high-head bypass, the Corps is planning for research this fall and additional support needed in FY21.

FY21 Budget: Ian noted that the FY21 budget is tight and there are several FY20 projects that are carrying over into FY21. Ian reported that the FY21 CRFM budget is the lowest he's seen and that there are restrictions on what the funds can and cannot be used for (for example, no construction design and implementation).

The president's budget allotted \$3.7M for CRFM and included specific line items: \$700K for the Foster Adult Fish Facility and \$3M for RM&E and program coordination. The Portland District is working to shift funds in order to meet the needs of current work efforts. The Corps will seek additional workplan funding for Cougar downstream passage, however, if granted, these funds would not be expected until February or March FY21. Ian noted that they have to move forward with the assumption that, at the start of FY21, there will not be any additional funds. He said that the Corps is currently trying to get a better sense of FY20 funds that could be carried over into the next fiscal year. He cautioned that FY21 RM&E funds will be limited, as CRFM funds will be used to cover the Willamette EIS, Columbia River EIS and other passage efforts.

In response to questions, Ian noted that biological modelling of passage actions for the Willamette EIS are planned to be funded from CRFM funds. He estimated approximately \$500-600K for FY21. Marc Liverman, NOAA, noted that the EIS does not seem like something that would have been included in CRFM funding in the past and felt that O&M would be a better funding mechanism, especially considering how short funds are this year. Marc noted that NEPA is a general need of the system and is not specifically for BiOp implementation. Ian noted that, from the Corps' perspective, NEPA is required on the downstream passage projects and the Corps cannot move forward on construction without the NEPA documents. CRFM funds will also be used to fund parts of the CRSO EIS.

Mike Hudson, USFWS, asked whether the Corps will be ready to implement additional RM&E and design work if additional funds are made available. Ian responded yes; the Corps identifies "capabilities" so that they are staged to take action on projects in case funding becomes available.

It was noted that there has been a lot of interest from Oregon Congressionals to implement the RPA in the Willamette. It is important for the delegation to be aware of the budget shortfall and current basin needs.

Donna noted that, at their June meeting, the WATER Managers were aware of the upcoming budget conditions and asked the teams to focus on critical needs. Ian will bring updates on the FY20 and FY21 budgets to the next Steering Team meeting.

Interim Measures: Ian also reported on the interim measures, noting that the Corps agreed to implement and monitor the interim measures, but no additional funds were allocated for this work. These measures are in addition to what is already in the budget, adding further strain to the program. The main reason the Corps plans to implement these measures is due to a lack of funding for downstream passage efforts. The intention is to utilize completed research to see what can be done in the short term to benefit species. Some of these actions are moving forward now; for example, the Corps is in the process of contracting for screwtraps and expect traps in place by October/November 2020. In response to questions, Brad Eppard, Corps, estimated that it would take 3-4 months to contract and prepare for an active tag study.

Ian noted that, moving forward, there will be conversation regarding additional research via the FY21 concepts. The Corps will express capabilities for research. Still, the current budget is very limited and the Corps is trying to prioritize their current commitments.

The Corps is working on assigning a Project Manager. Once onboard, the Project Manager will be able to provide more detail on the schedule and NEPA needs. It is expected that some operations will need additional NEPA and some will be included in the current Willamette EIS process. WATER teams will be kept apprised of these efforts.

Kelly Reis, ODFW, asked for clarity on the process for how and when WATER teams will be able to share concerns with aspects of the interim measures, noting that ODFW has some concerns on the split gate operation. Ian said that, as the operations are implemented, there will be opportunity for conversation. However, these operations are based off of learnings and assumptions from previous research, which have been agreed on by the Corps, BPA, and NMFS, and so are pretty set in stone. If monitoring shows unexpected results, then there may be ways to adjust. Operations will be watched, monitored, and discussed at the Flow, RM&E, WFPOM and Steering Team meetings. Donna encouraged WATER members to reach out if there discussions are needed and they could be added to the Steering Team meeting agenda.

A rough estimate of the funding needed for the interim measures over the life of the program was provided:

- \$2.5M from CRFM for screwtrapping, pedigree analysis, Foster temperature operations, Green Peter RM&E Plan and some modeling;
- \$750K from O&M for hatchery related efforts; and,
- \$350K from reservoir regulation for modeling.

Funds to cover the lost hydropower revenues have not yet been accounted for, but need to be.

Willamette Mitigation funding conversation outcomes: Kelly Reis, ODFW, reported that the Willamette Mitigation Program’s Wildlife Advisory Group reviewed eight projects for consideration. All eight projects were recommended for funding by the Technical Team, for a total of \$10.9M of funding. BPA has \$9.7M budgeted for 2020, however, has committed to making \$11M available. The Wildlife Advisory Group concurred with the Technical Team and decided to forward all eight projects to the ODFW Director for funding. The next step is for Kelly to brief the ODFW Director and if he concurs, he will make a request to BPA. The acreage for this group of projects just under 1,600 acres.

Regional Updates

Habitat Tech Team: Eric Anderson, BPA, reported that HTT projects were submitted earlier this spring, followed by virtual site tours. The applicants will send their final applications in towards the end of August and the team will decide which projects will move forward for BPA or OWEB funding.

Flow Team: Anne Mullan, NOAA, reported that flows in the mainstem have been above minimums, which is good. There have been some TDG issues and temperature issues in the tributaries due to gate minimum openings and the unit outage at Dexter that the team has been monitoring.

Partner updates: Leslie Bach, NPCC, reported that NPCC currently has a Fish Biologist position open; the position description can be accessed via their website.

There were no other partner updates

Next Steps

The Steering Team and RM&E Team will meet later in the day to discuss and prioritize FY21 RM&E concepts. The next Steering Team meeting is scheduled for September 1st at 12:30pm.

The next Steering Team meeting is scheduled for September 1, 2020.

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