

Steering Team & RM&E Team Meetings

February 7, 2023

Meetings Summary

http://pweb.crohms.org/tmt/documents/FPOM/2010/Willamette_Coordination/Steering_team/WST.html
https://pweb.crohms.org/tmt/documents/FPOM/2010/Willamette_Coordination/Willamette%20RME/RME.html

[Edits provided by Corps]

Facilitation Team: Emily Stranz & Nancy Pionk, DS Consulting.

Steering Team Meeting

Participants: Leslie Bach (NPCC), Brad Eppard (Corps), Amy Gibbons (Corps), Nancy Gramlich (ODEQ), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Fenton Khan (Corps), Cathy Kellon (NPCC), Anne Mullan (NOAA), Alyssa Mucken (OWRD), Christine Peterson (BPA), Ida Royer (Corps), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Dan Spear (BPA), Greg Taylor (Corps), Kate Wells (NOAA), Luke Whitman (ODFW).

Welcome and Introductions: Emily welcomed participants and led the group in a round of introductions. Nancy G. noted that this will be her last Steering Team meeting as she is retiring from ODEQ. Team members wished her well. Steve Mrazik will be the ODEQ POC moving forward. Additionally, Brett Blundon (USFS) has taken another position within the USFS and will no longer be attending as the USFS WATER representative; he will forward information on the new USFS representative when available.

12/6/22 Meeting Summary: The Steering Team approved the December meeting summary with no additional edits.

Budget Updates: Ida provided a budget update and reviewed a budgeting spreadsheet with the group (CRFM FY23 WATER Spreadsheet_07FEB2023, a separate document provided via email prior to the meeting). She noted that the Corps is working on three years of budgeting (FY23, FY24 and FY25) simultaneously.

- **FY23 Budget:** The Corps is currently working to execute the FY23 budget. Congress passed an appropriations bill in December 2022. The Corps originally expressed capacity for \$61 Million in funding for FY23; the revised FY23 capability as of February 2023 is \$47.4 Million which includes appropriations. There is now an opportunity to compete for workplan funds (i.e., funding that did not get allocated). The Corps is in the process of communicating its workplan needs. Ida noted that the President's FY23 Budget indicates the administration's funding preferences, however, the Corp can decide the priorities for funding and distribute the funding accordingly.
- **FY24 Budget:** The President's FY24 Budget (PBud) is expected within the next few months. Once the PBud is released, the Corps will then have to defend the CRFM FY24 Budget.
- **FY25 CRFM Budget:** The Corps is currently compiling the FY25 Budget. Ida noted that the Corps will be budgeting for individual line items to provide transparency and intends to begin these budgeting conversations two years in advance. She noted that some of the budgeting items are uncertain as the EIS process and final BiOp are not yet complete; however, the Corps will use the draft EIS to help anticipate funding needs. The spreadsheet indicates future RM&E projects related to the draft EIS where the Corps anticipates requesting funding.

Steering Team members discussed the line item for future funding for RM&E related to Systemwide Juvenile Outmigration (Row 30 A18). Ida indicated that this relates to any passage or juvenile outmigration monitoring

and likely would involve screwtrapping efforts. Anne noted that there is also interest in capturing returning adults where fish have been tagged and there is a need for assistance to maintain antennas and antenna uploads at Willamette Falls. She noted that BPA receives assistance from the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) for other monitoring work concerning Columbia PIT Tags and inquired whether assistance from PSMFC for Willamette Falls might be possible.

Dan noted that BPA has a long-term contract with PSMFC regarding the Columbia PIT Tag process and the Willamette Falls antenna may need to go through a separate process. He noted that it is unlikely that BPA could approve funding for a Willamette Falls antenna as the research is Corps-funded and the Willamette River is outside the PTAGIS charter. Brady Allen (mballen@bpa.gov) is the BPA POC for the contract. Dan will also double-check with the policy and legal team.

Fenton noted that the injunction studies at Green Peter and Foster for FY23-24 will include both active tags and PIT Tags. He noted that data will still be available via the active tags, which are the primary tool for the studies, and the radio telemetry extends to Willamette Falls.

- **Action: Anne and/or Luke will follow-up with Brady Allen regarding the PSMFC Contract.**
- **Action: Dan will follow-up with BPA's policy and legal team regarding the possibility providing funding the Willamette Falls antenna under the PSMFC Contract.**

The next Steering Team Session is on April 4, 2023

Steering & RM&E Joint Session

Participants: *Leslie Bach (NPCC), Brad Eppard (Corps), Amy Gibbons (Corps), Nancy Gramlich (ODEQ), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Fenton Khan (Corps), Cathy Kellon (NPCC), Anne Mullan (NOAA), Alyssa Mucken (OWRD), Christine Peterson (BPA), Ida Royer (Corps), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Dan Spear (BPA), Greg Taylor (Corps), Kate Wells (NOAA), Luke Whitman (ODFW).*

WATER Partner Updates

- **OWRD:** Alyssa noted that OWRD is working with other state agencies to provide comments on Willamette draft EIS. OWRD continues to move forward on the Willamette Basin Review and has engaged U.S. BOR regarding the need to transfer storage rights to multi-purpose uses. She anticipates doing future stakeholder outreach to understand stakeholders' concerns and issues. OWRD is also beginning conversations with ODFW regarding conversion of minimum perennial stream flows. OWRD intends to conduct a scoping process and a public process is also anticipated. Alyssa noted that the process will also involve the Corps as Oregon must contract with the owner/operator of reservoirs to meet requirements for perennial stream flow. Alyssa will provide a more detail presentation on the process at the April 4th Steering Team meeting.
- **NPCC:** Leslie noted that, at request of the Corps, the Independent Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB) is reviewing the technical aspects of the 4 models used in the EIS and associated Biological Assessment to evaluate the effects of operations and alternatives on fish. The review is expected to be completed by February 28th and will be posted on NPCC's website.
- **ODEQ:** Nancy reported that ODEQ is in the process of updating temperature TMDLs which will be issued by rule. The Corps and ODFW are involved in the TMDL committees. This is a statewide process with the Willamette TMDL expected to be complete by February 28, 2024.

- **USFWS:** Mike noted that Kassina Lee was appointed the Oregon State Supervisor for Ecological Services. Hugh Morrison was appointed the new Regional Director.
- **NMFS:** Kate noted that NMFS is moving forward to backfill her former role and is looking to hire a biologist with experience/knowledge relating to hydrology, dam operations, fish passage, storm water management and the regulatory process. Anne continues to work with the Corps regarding the ESA consultation and EIS process.
- **BPA:** Dan noted that Eric Andersen took a position with USFS. Jason Karnezis will take over Eric's role with the Habitat Technical Team in the interim; and should be added to the WATER team's meeting invites.
- **ODFW:** Luke noted that Kelly is working on pulling together Oregon agencies' comments on the draft EIS. ODFW has approached PTAGIS and asked for support to help maintain the PIT antenna at Willamette Falls. Luke would appreciate any guidance WATER partners have on how to navigate the administrative process (see conversations noted on pages 2 and 4).
- **Corps:** Greg noted that he attended the EIS public meetings in January. The participants included members of the sport fishing community who expressed concerns about operations that could affect river levels. Regarding system operation, as of February 1, the system is starting refill operations except for Cougar, Fall Creek and Foster, which will be doing delayed refill as part of the injunction operations.

Fenton provided an update on repairs to the Lebanon Dam antenna which developed a water leak during a high flow event. The contractor is working on a fix for the antenna; however, the repair cannot take place until flows are lower. The south ladder and juvenile bypass are still operational. The Corps has begun the Delayed Refill operation at Foster Dam; injunction spill started on February 1 and the first group of tagged fish were released. The Willamette Fisheries Science Review will take place in-person on April 5 and 6 at Oregon State University; an option to participate via WebEx will also be available.

- There were no updates from **CTGR**.

WATER Team Updates

- **WATER Teams:** There were no updates from the Flow Team or HTT. Jason Karnezis will be stepping into Eric Andersen's role on the HTT.
- **EIS Schedule Updates:** Updates are available here: <https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Locations/Willamette-Valley/System-Evaluation-EIS/>
- **Injunction Updates:** The next biannual report is due on February 28. Public information about the Willamette Valley Injunction is available here: <https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Locations/Willamette-Valley/Injunction/>.

RM&E Team Meeting

Participants: Leslie Bach (NPCC), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Fenton Khan (Corps), Anne Mullan (NOAA), Christine Peterson (BPA), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Luke Whitman (ODFW).

Meeting Summaries: The RM&E Team approved the December 6, 2022 RM&E Team Meeting Summary with no additional edits.

Study and Screwtrap Updates: Fenton noted that the Green Peter spill operation will commence as soon as the reservoir is a few feet above spillway crest (sometime in March). The operation will last for at least 30 days and a study will evaluate nighttime spill for two weeks and 24-hour spill for two weeks. The Foster spill operation will continue until June 15. The pool will stay low until May 15, after which stored water from Green Peter will be used to fill Foster to the conservation pool level, with refill anticipated to take 5 days. Once filled, nighttime spill

will continue until June 15. The screwtrap operation is ongoing. Fenton appreciated NOAA's and ODFW's efforts to issue the permits for studies.

Surrogate Program Updates: Fenton noted that OSU was able to get eggs for steelhead surrogates for the next two years for Foster spill operation studies. 1-year old steelhead surrogates are available for the FY23 spring study, 1+ year-old surrogates for the fall study and 2-year-old surrogates for the FY24 Foster spring study. He noted that OSU was not able to get steelhead eggs in 2021; as a result, there were no 1-year-old steelhead surrogates for FY22 studies; however, 2-year-old surrogates were available.

Update on FY23 Concept Paper: RM&E Team members discussed the status of the FY23 Concept paper provided by ODFW/NMFS: *Capture efficiency of spring Chinook fry in the North Santiam River*. Luke appreciated the feedback provided by WATER partners. He noted that originally it was estimated that there would be 20,000 fish for release - this has increased to 200,000. The intention is to keep the same study plan and to release 100,000 fish at Detroit and 100,000 at Mehama Boat Ramp above the screwtraps. The fish will be marked with Bismarck Brown dye and a group of fish will be held to track when the dye is faded. Fenton noted that the dye only lasts 30 days or less and inquired whether there were plans to adipose clip the fish, as the screwtrap operators will not be able to identify the fish after the dye fades unless they are clipped. He noted that ODFW requires Corps screw trap contractor to clip adipose fins on all fish, including fry, used to test screw trap efficiency. Luke responded that the study does not currently contemplate clipping the fish as the fry are small and could be harmed by clipping and clipping the large number of fish would require more staff resources. Anne noted that the fish used for testing screw trap efficiency are larger than those that would be released in the study. Fenton noted that the screw trap contractor is required by ODFW to clip all fish including fry used for trap efficiency testing, regardless of size. One question raised was how the lack of clipping might impact the data. As next steps, Luke and Fenton will follow-up internally within their agencies regarding the question of clipping the fish and will update the RM&E Team accordingly.

→ **Action: Luke and Fenton will follow-up internally regarding adipose clipping the study fish and will provide an update the RM&E Team on this matter when available.**

PIT Tag Infrastructure Willamette Falls: Luke inquired whether RM&E Team members would be willing to provide a letter of support concerning the need for PIT Tag Infrastructure at Willamette Falls. RM&E Team members were willing to review a letter drafted by Luke to consider whether their agencies could indicate support.

→ **Action: Luke will draft a letter of support concerning the need for PIT Tag Infrastructure at Willamette Falls and circulate it to RM&E members for review.**

Process Check-in regarding meeting needs/cadence – Emily asked team members to inform DS Consulting of any meeting needs or suggested changes in the meeting process and cadence.

→ **Action: RM&E Team members will inform DS Consulting of any meeting needs or suggested process changes.**

Team Updates and Coordination: There were no additional updates from team members.

Reminders: The deadline for comments on the draft technical report by Kathleen O'Malley (OSU), et.al. titled "*Evaluating Spring Chinook Salmon Releases Above Cougar Dam, On the South Fork McKenzie River, Using Genetic Parentage Analysis*" is February 11, 2023. Please email comments to Rich Piaskowski at richard.m.piaskowski@usace.army.mil.

The deadline for comments on the draft technical report by the University of Idaho titled "*Decision Support Modeling For Outplanting Adult Chinook Salmon In The Santiam River Basin.*" is February 13, 2023. Please email comments to Rachel Baird Rachel.D.Laird@usace.army.mil.

The next RM&E Team Session is March 7, 2023

The DS Consulting Facilitation Team drafts Steering and RME Team meeting summaries; suggested edits are welcome. Please send suggested edits to Nancy Pionk at nancy@dsconsult.co.