

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

WATER Steering Team

http://pweb.crohms.org/tmt/documents/FPOM/2010/Willamette_Coordination/Steering_team/WST.html

June 1, 2021

Meeting Summary

[Edited/Reviewed by ODFW, NPCC]

Action	Who	By When
Draft a statement around basin-wide monitoring perspectives for Steering Team consideration.	Kate and Mike	July 6 th Joint RM&E/ST meeting
Send a Doodle poll to determine whether the next ST meeting should be on August 3rd or September 7 th .	DSC	July 6 th Joint RM&E/ST meeting

Participants present for all or part of the meeting: Eric Andersen (BPA), Leslie Bach (NPCC), Brad Eppard (Corps), Ian Chane (Corps), Nancy Gramlich (DEQ), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Fenton Khan (Corps), Rachel Laird (Corps), Anne Mullan (NOAA), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Ida Royer (Corps), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Daniel Spear (BPA), Karl Weist (NPCC), Kate Wells (NOAA);

Facilitator and Notes: Nancy Pionk & Emily Stranz, DS Consulting.

Welcome & Introductions - Nancy Pionk, DS Consulting Facilitator, welcomed the group and noted that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss issues and seek consensus on process, substance and outcomes for efforts affecting participants engaged in the Willamette system. The Steering Team reviewed and approved the May 4th meeting summary.

Check-in on Current & Future Budgets - Ida Royer, Corps, reported on the FY22 PBUD. The CRFM program received a total of \$3.575M for efforts on the Columbia, Snake and Willamette Rivers. The Corps just received the budget and has not yet had time to discuss priorities internally. The capability for FY22 was \$41M, half of which was intended for the Foster Adult Fish Facility construction. The Corps still can request project funding, however, that is a nation-wide competitive process. Ida assured the team that that Corps is going to do what they can to ensure that priority work does not “fall through the cracks”; she highlighted the IMs and any lawsuit outcomes as high priority. It was unclear if any stimulus monies could be made available.

Interim Measures Implementation Updates - Ida reported that PDT members and Corps staff have been sharing out IM updates and specific details of measures to the various WATER teams; generally, the Corps is moving forward and implementing the IMs as they can. Anne reported that there is consideration of shortening the dates of flow augmentation for fish passage as part of the Foster weir IM; the hope is to be able to time flow augmentation for natural origin return (NOR) spring Chinook. Fenton added for awareness, that the Corps is considering the Foster weir spill closely and currently planning to start on June 16th; he noted that they will keep a close look at the fish counts and once most wild fish are captured they will stop operating the weir. Due to the dry year, they may have to stop spill sooner; however, the intention is to get the fish passed and get broodstock.

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Basin-wide Monitoring - Nancy P. recapped conversations that have taken place over the last couple months of Steering Team and RM&E Team meetings. She noted that last time the Steering Team met, they discussed the value of a basin-wide monitoring program and called out that there will be significant barriers to overcome to establish such a program. The Steering Team developed a list of questions to inform the conversation, those questions were provided to the RM&E Team for consideration from a technical perspective. The RM&E Team's brainstormed responses were provided to the Steering Team (see attached document below - note Steering Team input is included in this version). Nancy P. said that the goal today is to think about what messaging, information, and potential recommendation the Steering Team might coalesce around to provide to Managers at their July meeting.

Some Steering Team members expressed continued interest and value in developing a basin-wide monitoring program to support fisheries management. Others still had questions as to the need for such a significant program at this stage in the process. For instance, it was noted that the limiting factors in the basin are well known and there are plans to address those limitations, however, given the funding circumstances it is challenging. It was noted that basin-wide monitoring is used on the Upper Colorado River and the Columbia River systems for adaptive management and has resulted in tweaks to system operations over time (a recent example offered was the flexible spill operations on the Columbia). Questions were raised as to whether it makes more sense to implement a basin-wide monitoring program after the passage infrastructure is in place? Additionally, some wanted more description of how information derived from the monitoring would inform management actions.

For the Managers, one important question is around funding a basin-wide monitoring program: who can commit to funding? It was clear that funding would be a significant hurdle, as the CRFM program was not thought to be a good option, and the Corps O&M budget is already strained. It was suggested that regional support for a basin-wide monitoring initiative could potentially lead to shared responsibility for coordination and implementation and result in additional funding options and more persuasive funding requests.

As a next step to move the conversation forward, Mike and Kate committed to working together to draft an issue/value statement for the Steering Team to consider for presentation to the Managers. The goal will be to work towards a unified approach or at least outline the various perspectives, they will try to build off what has been discussed thus far at the Steering and RM&E teams.

- **ACTION: Mike and Kate will connect to draft a statement to share back with the Steering Team for discussion. They will seek to bring something back to the Steering Team next month in preparation for the July 27th Managers Forum.**

Prepare for July Managers Forum Meeting - The next Managers Forum meeting is scheduled for July 27th from 9:00-12:00. It was noted that Managers time is very limited right now so it will be important to create a streamlined agenda that addresses the priority issues and concise briefing materials. It was suggested that the agenda could include an update on the year in progress and consider the implications of the smaller FY22 budget. Nancy Pionk noted that the Steering Team's input will be provided back to Donna (Managers Forum facilitator) and that

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Donna will likely join the July Steering Team meeting to review the agenda, discuss agenda needs and topics.

Regional Information Sharing - People shared updates on various teams and work efforts:

- The Habitat Technical Team will be meeting on Thursday from 2-4pm, part of the agenda is focused on revetments; if you would like meeting information, please contact Eric Andersen (BPA).
- The RM&E Team is in the process of reviewing 6 new FY22 concepts that will be prioritized at the July 7th Joint Steering/RM&E Team meeting. Additionally, the contract for the pedigree analysis has been signed; it was uncertain when results of the years of pedigree samples will be analyzed.
- The Flow Team expects to see a bit of a bump in flows from Cougar in the next couple of days. Blue River and Lookout Point will be providing some flow, and there may potentially be enough water for a spill operation at LOP and DET.
- Ida reported that the Corps will provide high-level updates on the EIS process at regular Steering Team meetings; however, it is important to keep the Willamette EIS and WATER processes in distinct lanes. Kelly noted that, while the processes may be distinct, it would be helpful to have more clarity on the EIS process/alternatives given the inter-relatedness of EIS actions being considered and WATER actions.
- USFWS is working on their Coordination Act Report for the Willamette EIS. They also continue their work on the Bull Trout reintroduction plan.
- The Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program will be evaluating potential projects soon. This year the program has \$33M of habitat acquisition proposals, and \$12M to award.

Next Steps – Nancy P. recapped that the Steering and RM&E Teams will continue conversations around basin-wide monitoring in preparation for the July 27th Managers Forum. Additionally, there will be a Joint Steering and RM&E meeting on July 7th to rank additional FY22 concepts. DS Consulting will send a Doodle poll to determine whether the next Steering Team meeting should be on August 3rd or September 7th.

The next Joint meeting will be on July 7th; the next Steering Team meeting will be on August 3rd or September 7th from 2:00-4:00PT.

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

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What is the Purpose of a basin-wide monitoring program?

Purpose: Provides a long-term dataset/continuum of data for regional fish managers, agencies and tribes that would:

- Inform dam operations and management plans
- Inform adaptive management of actions within sub-basins
- Support status and trend monitoring, i.e. the numbers of fish in and out of the basin, including pHOS and other VSP metrics
- Identify and refine understanding of the limiting factors for sub-basin management plans
- Monitor progress of the limiting factors in the basin
- Provides a long-term dataset/continuum of data to inform:
 - Adaptive management of Corps' actions
 - Could also inform actions outside the purview/authority of the Corps and/or other WATER partners

What does a basin-wide monitoring program look like?

Shared responsibility for coordination and implementation of a monitoring program focused on MF Willamette, McKenzie, S Santiam, N Santiam, and mainstem. This could include funding from multiple entities as well.

What could monitoring include?

- PIT detection arrays near sub-basin confluences and at Willamette Falls for both juvenile and adult fish (at a minimum)
- Visual counts at Willamette Falls
- Tagged fish released for baseline and modified operations in all sub-basins
- Additional monitoring points for juveniles and adults that could show response to management actions
- Biological monitoring, however, more finite physical monitoring (such as additional TDG gauges) could be included in study plans
- Could be used to modify operational and structural passage based on data

What could be measured?

- SARs
- Spawning distribution
- Abundance
- Individual and aggregate survival through the system
- Migration timing
- Growth/condition
- Baseline monitoring of water quality (i.e. TDG) and survival movement using PIT
- There may be a need for TDG gauges to help fill assumptions currently being made in high-value reaches
- Studies using acoustic/radiotags targeted at areas of special concern

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Potential Advantages	Potential Disadvantages
<p>A basin-wide monitoring program would provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on individual and aggregate survival and migration timing; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If subsequently handled: information on growth/condition • Improvement over synoptic (snapshot) data and guesstimates • Better adaptive management, leading to higher survival of both juveniles and adults • Broader access to the data in PTAGIS • Information in a longer-term time series <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Habitat quality links to fish growth and survival ○ Habitat quality: does this (also) influence survival? • A standardized, agreed upon approach to monitoring • If established as a shared responsibility, it would demonstrate unity among regional partners 	<p>Monitoring Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual costs of tagging/arrays/upkeep of ongoing monitoring • Whether it is feasible to place arrays in some locations • Coordination would be needed with PGE at Willamette Falls • Could compete for funding in limited budget with O&M and hydro/habitat implementation plans <p>Biological</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May still require some surrogates for reduced populations such as winter steelhead; juvenile collection of NORs is difficult • Adult array (even in subbasin confluence) cannot tell us about spawning distribution or success without further surveys • May require outplanting of hatchery-reared fish for some study areas and could affect the NOR/HOR ratios • Large scale PIT tagging program requires collecting and handling fish - which is stressful to fish • Data will not inform all actions and data needs/gaps
Potential Barriers	Potential Opportunities/Capabilities/Areas of Overlap?
<p>Monitoring Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and support • Need for entity to maintain system • Collecting fish for tagging • Cost <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Annual cost of tags and antenna upkeep • Funding • Authority • Agreement on methodology <p>Biological</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSM cannot be tracked with PIT tag detections from Willamette Falls to the next point upstream (unclear what happens between Willamette Falls and subbasins) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full function adult detection already exists at Willamette Falls • There are arrays and studies being conducted below Cougar • Some infrastructure already exists in other sub-basins • New technologies are available and being improved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WRB fish are 'caught' by barge antennae in estuary <p>Consider funding of various work efforts in the basin and see if there are opportunities to adjust funding to redirect to a comprehensive monitoring approach (pool resources for the greater good).</p>