

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

WATER Steering Team

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

August 3, 2021

Final Meeting Summary

[Edits from ODEQ, ODFW, USACE]

Action	Who	By When
Send the manager's questions regarding the basin-wide ad hoc group process to Mike Hudson so that he can start coordinating next steps.	Emily	8/6
If you have not already, connect with your manager regarding the WATER forum, what is working well and where there are opportunities for efficiencies (see below).	ST members	End of September MF meeting
Coordinate with partners to respond to manager's questions on the basin-wide ad hoc group; plan to provide more detail to the managers at their next meeting.	Mike & Team	End of September MF meeting

Participants: Eric Andersen (BPA), Brett Blundon (USFS), Brad Eppard (Corps), Nancy Gramlich (ODEQ), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Cathy Kellon (NPCC), Anne Mullan (NOAA), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Ida Royer (Corps), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Dan Spear (BPA), Karl Weist (NPCC), Kate Wells (NOAA);

DSC Facilitation Team: Nancy Pionk, Emily Stranz, Donna Silverberg, 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 June 1 Steering Team and July 6 Joint Steering/RM&E meeting summaries.

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. Of that, \$2M was allocated for Willamette RM&E. Ida explained that the final budget for FY22 will be passed by Congress, and it is uncertain what the final amount will be, as there are talks of earmarks for Columbia River Fish Mitigation (CRFM) related projects. Additionally, the Corps is looking to implement as much as possible of the FY21 funds to limit carryover per guidance of the OMB. Ida will keep the Steering Team updated as things progress.

The Corps has gathered a list of fish passage-oriented projects to submit for Infrastructure Bill funding if CRFM projects qualify. There are still a lot of unknowns, however, the Corps will be ready to act if possible.

As background information, Ida provided a summary of the Corps' budget process (see below). She noted that the federal budget system is a rolling process, and the Corps identifies the capability and anticipated cost 2-years out (a given year's budget is submitted 2-years prior to that fiscal year, e.g. the FY22 budget was submitted in 2020). This presents some challenges: for example, if they receive a BiOp and

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the BiOp actions were not included in the budget proposal 2-years prior, the Corps cannot ask for project money for the BiOp actions.

Ida explained that the Corps falls under the “Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies” and within that, the CRFM lives under the “Construction General” category. These funds are allocated for efforts to determine how to construct, the best way to construct, and the effectiveness of construction. For example, the RM&E studies at Cougar determined how fish move in the reservoir. That research is utilized to develop the best possible design for construction, and then post- construction assessment would be conducted to see if the design is effective.

Further, Ida noted that the budget can have restrictive language tied to it, which was the case for the 2020 and 2021 budgets which did not allow for funds to be used for design work that was intended for construction.

In response to a question, Ida noted that both the pedigree and screwtrapping contract are funded out of CRFM. The intention is to execute the screwtrap contract this year, the Corps is in the solicitation process now. The contracts will be multi-year contracts and will have a base award that will cover the first year; out years will an option in the contract. Brad Eppard, Corps, added that yesterday, they received bids from contractors and those bids are being reviewed. He noted that a change in scope now would take too long to coordinate, and the contracts would not likely be funded this year. The Corps did not want to hold up the award of the contract by waiting for the decision on whether to PIT tag fish that are handled in screwtraps. If the decision is made to PIT tag fish, the contract will be modified (modifications take a couple weeks to a month). Within that timeframe, the Corps will write up the change, send it to the contractor and give them a week or so to respond with a cost.

Interim Measures Implementation Updates – Ida reported that there are no updates on the IMs since her last update regarding having to modify some measures due to the low water levels.

Managers Forum Report Back – Nancy Pionk reported that the Managers Forum meeting was held on July 27th, during which the managers discussed the WATER Forum, were updated on the Middle Fork Structured Decision Making (SDM) process and discussed the Steering Team’s suggestion for a basin-wide ad-hoc group. The Steering Team reflected on what they heard at the Managers Forum and what their managers shared back with them following the session.

WATER Forum Reflections -

- There are several new managers in the group, and this is an opportunity to reflect on and reconsider the purpose and structure of the WATER forum generally.
- Due to the new members, there is a need to provide information about the WATER teams and process, as well as how the various processes and groups in the basin interact (or don’t).
 - There was a request to create a graphic illustrating the various forums/processes and relationship to each other. DS Consulting and the Corps are both working on graphics to share at the next Managers meeting.
 - The Steering Team provided insights on the forums/processes within the basin that are working to address: ecosystem needs, water, BiOps, recovery, flora, fish, dams, and water quality/quantity issues via a Google “Jamboard”. The Jamboard

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is active and can be added to at anytime using the following link:

https://jamboard.google.com/d/1Q7TiQTGjGRuygEHqH91EmK9FHa_q8zBL-LLurveZE-U/edit?usp=sharing

- There was support for a reexamination of the WATER teams to determine which are working well and where there are opportunities for efficiencies.
 - Managers took the task of connecting with their WATER team representatives to gather more insight on:
 - What is the best use of the WATER forum overall?
 - Are there opportunities to revise to better meet the current needs?
 - Where is collaboration useful?
 - Where are there gaps?
 - It was noted that giving power to the teams for decision making might make teams more effective (for example, within the flow and HTT teams).
 - It was also suggested that it may be more effective and efficient to combine the ST and RME team.
- The managers, and specifically Liza's, approach to being as transparent as possible (given litigation) was appreciated and is helpful.

Structured Decision Making -

- The presentation was at a good level for managers and well-presented. There was some confusion around how the SDM fits into the broader context of decision making on passage in the Middle Fork.
- The managers asked good questions and were engaged.
- The final presentation was not provided to the Steering Team ahead of the managers meeting, so folks were unable to fully brief their managers on the content. The final presentation will be included in the Manager Forum meeting summary.
- There was some conversation around the risk of delaying a decision on passage in the Middle Fork. It was noted that the delay in decision-making is reflected in the population modeling.

Basin-wide Monitoring Statement -

- The statement and Ida's description was a good introduction to the concept - the seed was planted!
- The managers were looking for more information on what this group/process would look like and provided some questions for the Steering Team/leaders to consider around purpose, need and intended outcomes.

Managers provided the following questions for consideration as the ad hoc group moves forward in developing their ideas:

- How does the team envision pulling a broad regional group together? Who should/will serve as its lead convener?
- What partners are being considered? Is there potential integration with partners focused on other interests/challenges in the basin such as invasive species, agricultural water use, human activities, or forestry?
- How could you focus the goal so that you could bring diverse stakeholders together on a common goal?
- Provide examples of the anticipated major work efforts. What issues would be addressed?

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- How will we ensure that the work being done is furthering the work WATER is trying to do?
- Would fish monitoring still be a focus?

Regional Information Sharing –Team members provided the following updates:

WATER Team updates:

- The Flow and Water Quality team are going well and have done a lot to coordinate in this dry year. Flows are really low this year (do the rain dance!)! And Mary Karen Scullion (Corps) has retired!
- The next HTT meeting is on Thursday, August 5. They completed virtual site tours in early July and revised applications are due August 20. The Technical Review meeting will be on September 29 and decisions on funding awards are expected in October (for BPA and non-BPA funds). This is the last year of funding from the Meyer Memorial Trust and OWEB-focused investment partnership. With those two funds sunseting, BPA is only funder left and the budget will go from \$2M to 800K annually. The group is working to try to “right-size” the technical groups. There will be more discussion on that later this fall.

Willamette EIS Update: Ida provided tentative dates for the WEIS process. A draft EIS is expected for public review in June 2022. It is expected that the Corps will hold public meeting in October/November 2021 to discuss the draft alternatives. Also, Steering Team members had expressed interest in what would be included in the Effected Environment, Ida noted that that information will be provided to the public via the DEIS. Kelly Wingard, Corps, is the new Project Manager on the WEIS.

Partner Updates:

- ODFW – Bernadette Graham Hudson has accepted a new position as the Wildlife Division Administrator and Mike Harrington is the new Fish Division Administrator. The Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program Wildlife Advisory Group recommended projects for FY23 and some FY24 funds at their July meeting. Those proposals will then be considered by the ODFW administrators before ODFW’s director makes a final recommendation to BPA for approval.
- USFS – There are multiple fires in the basin, specifically in Sweet Home, the Middle Fork Ranger District (Fall and Salmon Creeks), and one on southern end of the Mt. Hood Ranger District. The Mt Hood Ranger District fire will put lines in the Detroit area.
- ODEQ – The State is working with local municipalities on an uplift of stormwater management plans aimed at addressing Mercury TMDLs. Much of the work is centered around sediment runoff into the river, treating sediment, and attenuating the flows. NOAA will share their guidance on stormwater runoff with ODEQ for consideration as part of this effort.
- BPA, CTGR, and USFWS did not have any additional updates.

Nancy Pionk thanked the group for their participation and noted that the next session will be on October 5th. She offered to provide process support to the Steering Team if needed between now and the end of

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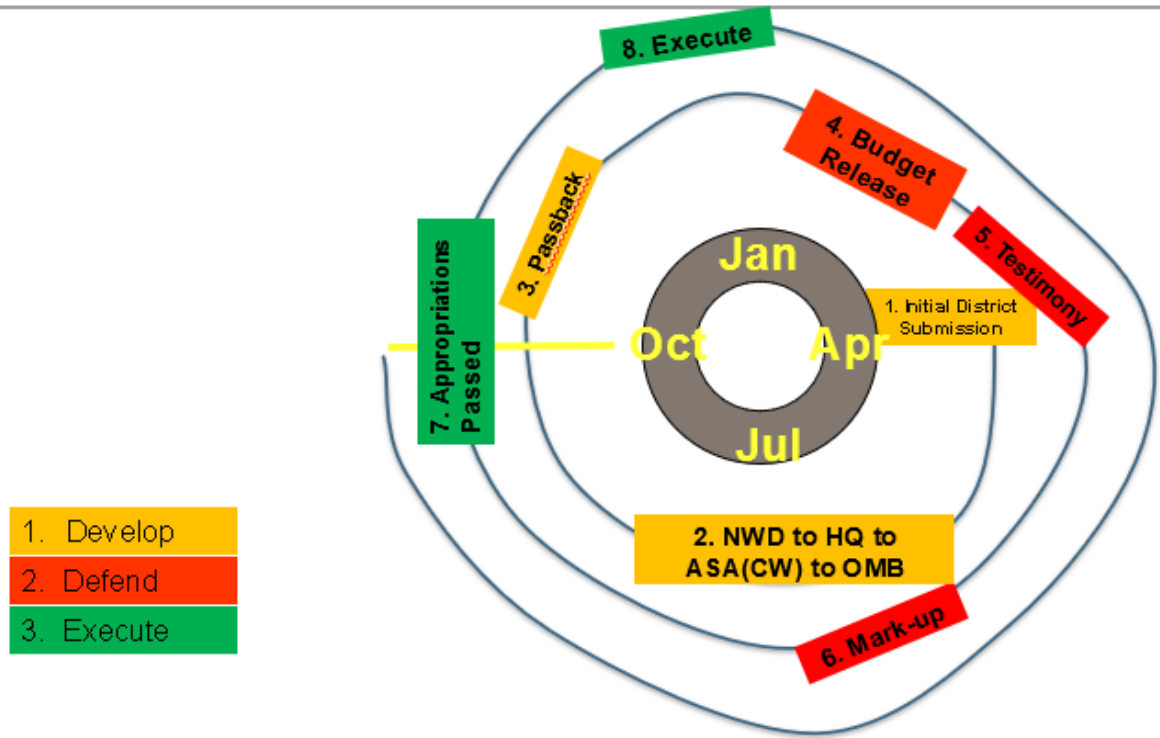
September/beginning of October Managers meeting if needed for discussions around the basin-wide ad hoc group. And with that, the meeting was adjourned.

This summary is respectfully submitted by the DS Consulting Facilitation Team. Edits are welcome and can be send to Emily Stranz (emily@dsconsult.co).

Attachment 1: US Budget Process

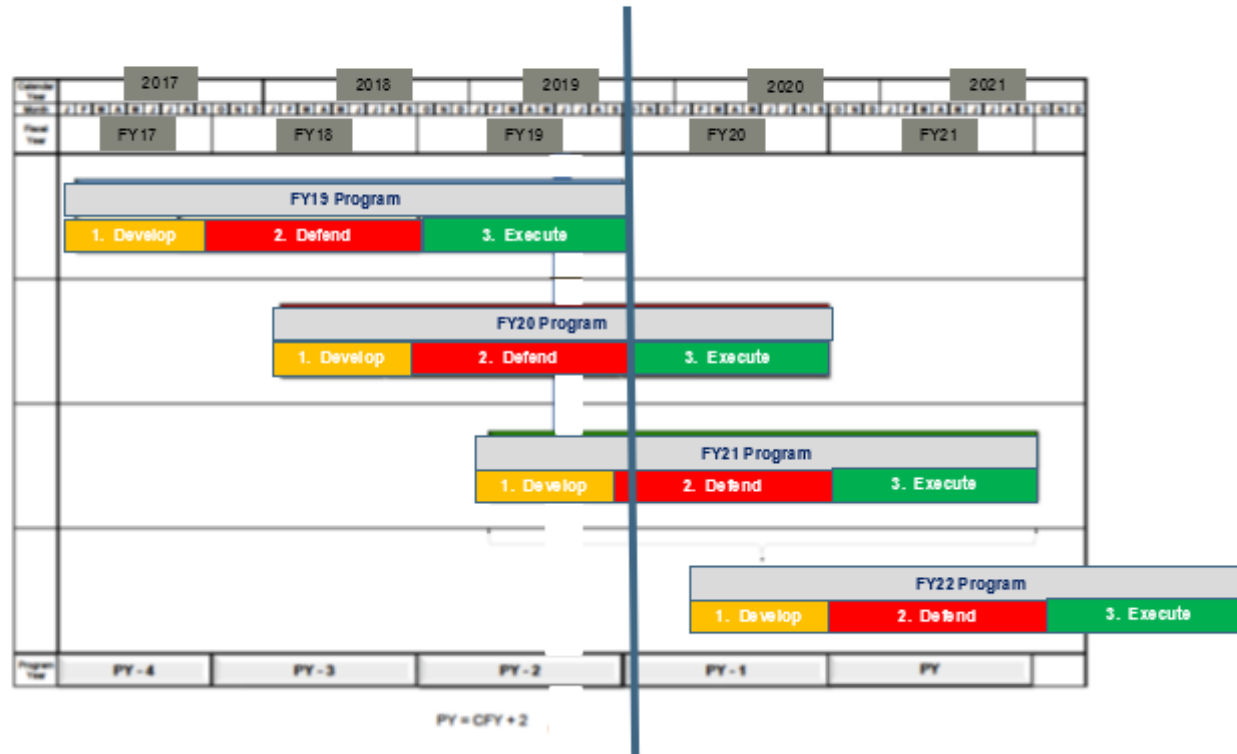
The annual appropriations process generally involves three major milestones: President's budget request, congressional deliberation and enactment of appropriations, and Administration development of a USACE work plan. **The process begins with the release of the President's budget request, typically in early February** (i.e., roughly eight months before the start of the fiscal year addressed by the request), although it is sometimes delayed. **Congress may consider the President's budget request**, stakeholder interests, and other factors when creating an annual Energy and Water Development appropriations bill that includes USACE civil works activities. **The length of the congressional appropriations process varies from year to year.** Following enactment of the Energy and Water Development bill, **the Administration develops a USACE work plan**, which identifies the amount of additional funding provided to specific studies and projects.

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER) CIVIL WORKS PROGRAM / BUDGET TIMELINE



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CIVIL WORKS PROGRAM / BUDGET TIMELINE



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FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS BILLS (REGULAR)

1. Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
2. Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
3. Defense
- 4. Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies**
5. Financial Services and General Government
6. Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
7. Homeland Security
8. Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
9. Legislative Branch
10. Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies
11. State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
12. Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

Energy and Water Appropriations Accounts:

- **Investigations (I)**
- **Construction (C)**
- **Operations and Maintenance (O&M)**
- **Regulatory Program**

CRFM = Construction General
