

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

WATER Steering Team

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

September 15, 2021
Final Meeting Summary

Action	Who	By When
Revise graphics to incorporate input from Steering Team	DSC	9/30 Managers Forum Meeting
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	9/30 Managers Forum 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	9/30 Managers Forum Meeting
Clarify Steering Team and RM&E Team meeting dates for fall.	DSC	Last week of September

Participants: Ian Chane (Corps), Brad Eppard (Corps), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Cathy Kellon (NPCC), Anne Mullan (NOAA), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Ida Royer (Corps), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Dan Spear (BPA), 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 was to help prepare for the Manager's conversation regarding the WATER Forum and other regional processes; the Managers Forum is planned for September 30th. More specifically, the agenda focused on reviewing and refining materials and preparing an update on planning efforts concerning potential regional conversations around basin-wide monitoring.

Preparation for September 30th Managers Forum – In response to a request from the Managers at their July 2021 meeting, DS Consulting drafted process graphics depicting the WATER teams, and more broadly some of the tribal, state, and federal authorities and regulatory processes at play within the Willamette Basin. These graphics are intended to support Managers Forum conversations regarding efficient and effective investment of resources within the WATER process and the region, as resources are constrained. The Steering Team provided input on how to make the graphics clearer and more accurate.

- **ACTION:** DS Consulting will incorporate the Steering Team's edits into the graphics.

As part of the conversation, representatives from the Corps and NOAA noted that the Court-ordered injunction is a separate process from the WATER forum. The federal partners are not able to share information concerning the litigation until it is released to the public. As the WATER forum is a requirement of the 2008 BiOp RPA, WATER efforts need to continue until otherwise directed (for example, via a new BiOp).

The Steering Team discussed the role that the WATER forum can and does fill, noting that there is value in coming together to provide updates and support ongoing relationships and conversations amongst the partners. It was suggested that it could be valuable to reflect on the WATER forum's effectiveness and what has worked well in the last 13 years of WATER. Would expanding its scope to better include ancillary or complementary Willamette efforts increase its effectiveness? Finally, it may be helpful to explore what the inter-agency collaboration could look like in the future (instead of considering how to change it now when there is so much uncertainty expected over the next two years).

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Many WATER partners have resources that are stretching thin and so there is interest in finding a good balance between maintaining relationships and connection around WATER issues and efficiently managing staff time spent in meetings. WATER does provide a forum for conversation, and it is helpful for partners to have regular opportunities to talk about the issues that can be addressed in the forum, recognizing that currently, there are other parallel processes that impact and may limit those conversations (i.e. litigation, WVEIS). Generally, Steering Team members were supportive of holding meetings when there is a decision to be made, an issue to discuss and updates to share. Additionally, some felt that using the WATER forum to solicit information that feeds into future documents such as 5-year status reviews is very helpful.

Update on Basin-wide monitoring ad hoc group planning efforts – Mike and Ida provided an update that the Federal Family has met a few times on the topic of a broader regional conversation regarding Basin-wide monitoring and is conducting research on other similar efforts to learn more about what works well, what lessons can be applied in the Willamette, and what funding options could look like. They have reached out to both the Colorado River Recovery Program and Missouri River Recovery Program. The Federal Family plans to meet again on 9/30 to continue conversations. Mike suggested that it might be time to start inviting non-federal partners to the table to weigh in on this concept, and to identify goals and objectives. If so, this would be a message that could be conveyed to the managers on the 30th. Kelly noted that ODFW/ Oregon is interested in participating in the conversation. Kelly was grateful for the work among the Federal Family to lay the groundwork for a productive conversation.

Next Steps – The group discussed the fall meeting schedule for the Steering Team and RM&E Team meetings, noting that there is limited content for the agendas and there may be opportunities to combine all or part of the teams' meetings. Ida noted that the Corps would like to maintain separation of the technical aspects of RM&E and policy aspects of Steering Team regardless. The next RM&E Team meeting is scheduled for September 23, followed by the September 30th Managers Forum, and then the October 5th Steering Team meeting. It was suggested that the October Steering Team meeting may be combined with the October RM&E Team meeting. DS Consulting with follow up with representatives to clarify the best approach and use of time.

With that, Nancy thanked the group, and the meeting was adjourned.

The next Steering Team meeting will be on October 5, 2021 at 2 PM; unless otherwise noted.