

**Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)
Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RM&E)
February 26, 2018 Conference Call**

http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/tmt/documents/FPOM/2010/Willamette_Coordination/Willamette%20RME/RME.html

DRAFT Facilitator's Summary

ACTION	BY WHOM?	BY WHEN?
Pending Items from January 25, 2018 Meeting		
Provide regional comments on Pre-Spawn Mortality proposal.	Ricardo	ASAP
Update Middle Fork RM&E Study Schedule to reflect the current status as Version 2; send the updated plan to the team.	Rich	ASAP
Summarize existing data available in ODFW archives; share with Toby and Russ.	Jeff	ASAP
Action Items from February 26, 2018 Meeting		
Conduct ResSim modeling regarding surface spill alternative at Lookout Point.	Rich/Corps	ASAP
Draft concept paper considering reduction of turbine operations at Lookout Point as an operational passage alternative.	Fenton	March 19, 2018
Discuss concept paper considering reduction of turbine operations at Lookout Point as an operational passage alternative.	RM&E/Steering Team	March 22, 2018
Follow-up with Jeff Ziller regarding existing adult return data in ODFW archives.	Kelly	ASAP
Send out sub-basin charts to RM&E Team for review and revision.	Nancy	ASAP
Review sub-basin charts in preparation for Joint RM&E/Steering Team meeting.	RM&E Team	ASAP
Schedule separate RM&E Team meeting and for Joint RM&E/Steering Team meeting for March.	DS Consulting	ASAP

Participants on the phone: Leslie Bach (NPCC), Diana Dishman (NMFS), Dave Griffith (USACE), Elizabeth Hall (USACE), Mike Hudson (USFW), Dave Jepsen (ODFW), Fenton Kahn (USACE), Laurie Nicholas (USACE), Jim Myers (NMFS), Rich Piaskowski (USACE), Todd Pierce (USACE), Christine Peterson (BPA), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Dan Spear (BPA), Valerie Higdon Walker (USACE), Ricardo Walker (USACE), Karl Weist (NPCC),

Facilitation Team: Nancy Pionk and Colby Mills (DS Consulting).

Welcome, Approval of Meeting Summary and Updates

Nancy welcomed the group and conducted a round of introductions. The team approved the 1/25/2018 meeting summary. Team members provided an updated status on the 1/25/18 action items list (rolled-over “to-dos” are noted in the action list above).

- **Pre-Spawn Mortality Proposal:** Diana reported that NMFS had not provided comments; however, the discussion captured in past RME meeting summaries provided by DSC addressed any concerns raised by NMFS. Ricardo will provide the regional comments on the proposal to the team.
- **Science Review:** Rich noted that there were a lot of great presentations at the Science Review and the presentations will be posted this week.
- **Middle Fork RM&E Study Schedule:** Rich will revise and send to the group.
- **Spring Lookout Point Spill Test:** Fenton reported that they are hoping to do the Spring Spill test by mid-March. The first group of fish was released last week (this first group was already planned as pre-spill) and the next group will be released during the spill test. They will circle back on whether the spill test will be feasible based on spring water levels in the reservoir.
- **Joint RM&E/Steering Team Meeting:** DS Consulting is working on planning a Joint RM&E/Steering Team meeting. Currently, the Joint Meeting is scheduled for March 22, (from 1-4 PM) which is the RM&E Team’s regular meeting day. It is anticipated that the RM&E will need to meet separately to prepare for the joint meeting discussion that could be scheduled earlier that day or at a time convenient for the team.

Lookout Point: Options for Operational Passage Studies

The group discussed potential options for operational passage studies at Lookout Point that maintain the power pool. It was noted that the Corps’ current interpretation is that they do not have authority to do a Deep Drawdown and that the minimum power pool must be maintained. The Steering Team requested that the team look at alternatives for operational passage that do not draw into the power pool. Rich provided the team with a summary table of operations that were considered for Lookout Point. The summary tables were generated from the Operational Measures Evaluation Report and the COP, Appendix D (separate documents provided to the team prior to the meeting). Rich and Fenton noted, that in addition to considering the biological benefits of any option, any options considered must be vetted internally at the Corps and BPA for feasibility and cost.

Fenton noted last fall’s baseline study tested fish passage during drafting of the reservoir and that the data from this study will help the team make decisions about operational passage. The data summary for this study will be available in early March. In the study, fish were released twice last fall during the drafting, and then again, after the reservoir was at the normal pool. Preliminary results show that almost 80% of all fish from both groups moved out after the reservoir pool was low (below 830 feet elevation).

Operational passage alternatives discussed by the group included:

1. Surface Spill (drafting in late summer or early fall): This alternative would entail drafting earlier in the summer (e.g. August), or drafting in September after Labor Day, holding the pool at spillway crest, and using the spillway crest as a surface outlet. Group members questioned whether this alternative could be used as a long-term solution as it is dependent on the particular water year and flow at Lookout Point is utilized to help meet mainstem flow targets. It was requested that the Corps conduct ResSim modeling to determine how frequently this option could be used. It was thought that even if the ResSim modeling suggests that surface spill is possible in the fall, it may not be feasible for this year. It

was suggested that it might be possible to consider this option during a particular water year when it appears feasible.

→ **Action:** The Corps will conduct ResSim modeling regarding the surface spill alternative to determine the potential frequency for summer or fall surface spill across different water years.

2. Reducing turbine operations during drawdown: This alternative would reduce turbine operations during drawdown to minimize entrainment during peak daily passage periods (evenings) or a block period over a series of days. It was noted that Lookout Point is a peaking operation and normally generates power in the morning and evening only. This alternative would consider generating power in the mornings and reducing turbine operations during evenings, and using the ROs at night, when fish are more likely to pass. Peak fish passage generally begins at 6 -7 PM and continues until 12 or 1 AM. It was noted that during the pilot study, the fish were released when the reservoir was already low. It was suggested that the proposed study should also test the effects of elevation (low pool) as well as the rate of drawdown flow.

The group agreed that the next step for considering this option is to draft a concept paper that considers the available fish passage data, including timing of passage, where passage occurred, route of passage, elevation at time of passage, the discharge rate/flows at time of passage, survival, efficiency and effectiveness. It was also suggested that the concept compare the benefit of reducing turbine use during daily periods of peak passage or a block of days, and that it provide information regarding the time period and length of time proposed for turbine operation reduction. Other considerations include the need to coordinate with the spill operation at Dexter. It was noted that a decision on this alternative must be made by the end of March to allow time for preparation of the final proposal, ordering equipment, and issuance of permits.

→ **Action Item:** Fenton will draft a concept paper that considers the option of reducing turbine operations by March 19, for discussion at the Joint Steering/RM&E Team meeting on March 22.

RM&E Team Review of PFFC Concept Paper

Rich requested that this agenda item be deferred to a subsequent meeting as the Corps has hired a new biologist who will be working on the copepods issue. The group supported the Corps seeking a proposal from researchers on how best to study the copepod issue.

→ **Action:** The Corp will solicit a proposal from researchers for studying the copepods issue and provide it to the team for review.

Middle Fork HOR Survival Study Concept Paper

The group considered USGS's updated sample size analysis (a separate PowerPoint presentation). Group members previously voiced concerns about the large sample size needed, the capacity to raise the fish, habitat capacity downstream of the dams to support bypassed fry, the time it takes to complete the study, and the multiple years required for data collection compared to the value of the data that the study would provide. The group agreed to defer proceeding with the study at this time and instead, examine existing adult return data (previously mentioned by Jeff Ziller) and fry survival results.

→ **Action:** Kelly will follow up with Jeff Ziller regarding existing adult return data in ODFW archives.

Next Steps

Update of Steering Team/Managers Forum

The group discussed the update that will be provided to the Steering Team/Managers Forum regarding the operations passage alternatives for Lookout Point. Rich will provide the following update at the Managers Forum:

- The RM&E team is preparing a concept paper for a possible operation in the fall that tests the benefits of turbine reduction;
- The spring free spill test study is in place and funded. The study is dependent on hydrology and will move forward if conditions are feasible.
- The Delayed Refill/Spring Spill is still under consideration by the RM&E team;
- The RME team recommends not proceeding with the HOR Survival study at this time.

Planning for Joint RM&E/Steering Team Meeting:

The group discussed the preparation needed for the Joint RM&E/Steering Team meeting. It is anticipated that the Steering Team will provide guidance on the RM&E needed for FY19 at the joint meeting. As preparation for the joint meeting, Nancy will send out the sub-basin planning charts for review and revision by the team at a separate meeting. Nancy will follow-up to schedule the meetings.

Nancy thanked the group and adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting: The RM&E Team will meet separately in March (date and time TBD) and in a joint meeting with the Steering Team on March 22, 2018, from 1-4 PM.

This summary is respectfully submitted by DS Consulting. Suggested edits are welcome and can be sent to nancy@dsconsult.co.