

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

Steering Team & RM&E Team Meetings

August 2, 2022

Meetings Summary

[Edits provided by Corps, NOAA, ODFW, OWRD]

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

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

Steering Team Session

Participants – Eric Andersen (BPA), Leslie Bach (NPCC), Ian Chane (Corps), Nancy Gramlich (ODEQ), Cathy Kellon (NPCC), Fenton Kahn (Corps), Anne Mullan (NOAA), Alyssa Mucken (OWRD), Jim Myers (NOAA), Christine Peterson (BPA), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Dan Spear (BPA), Jeff Ziller (ODFW).

6/7/22 Meeting Summary - The Steering Team approved the June meeting summary with an additional edit clarifying Alyssa Mucken’s new position at OWRD. Alyssa clarified that her role is specific to the Willamette River Basin and does not include the Deschutes River Basin. The RM&E Team previously approved their portion of the summary at their July 5, 2022 meeting.

Budget updates – Ian Chane reported no new budget updates since the July Steering Team meeting. Cathy noted that the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) bill is pending in Congress and that language relating to a feasibility study for deauthorization of project purpose had been removed from the latest version of the bill. Steering Team members did not have additional information to share on the reason for this change; however, Ian noted that the WRDA bill process is ongoing and once final there may be more to discuss.

The next Steering Team Session is scheduled for October 4, 2022

Joint Steering & RM&E Session

Participants – Eric Andersen (BPA), Leslie Bach (NPCC), Ian Chane (Corps), Nancy Gramlich (ODEQ), Cathy Kellon (NPCC), Fenton Kahn (Corps), Anne Mullan (NOAA), Alyssa Mucken (OWRD), Jim Myers (NOAA), Christine Peterson (BPA), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Dan Spear (BPA), Jeff Ziller (ODFW).

WATER Partner Updates

- **ODFW** - Jeff updated the group on ODFW’s efforts to sort wild and hatchery fish in the McKenzie River upstream of the Leaburg Hatchery. So far this season, ODFW has sorted nearly 2,000 fish. Of these, 1,200 wild fish were passed upstream, 437 hatchery Chinook salmon were trucked back to the hatchery, and 279 hatchery steelhead were recycled back downstream. Ten bull trout also passed upriver. There are approximately 50% wild fish and 50% hatchery fish coming through and ODFW’s sorting effort has successfully kept the percent of hatchery origin fish under 5% upstream of the dam. In response to inquiry, Jeff noted that this cohort of fish was not affected by the Stage Zero effort.

Emily shared an update from Luke Whitman who was not able to attend the meeting.

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

Luke and his crew are installing a new, fixed PIT array in the RO channel below Cougar Dam. Once the array is tuned and running, Luke will ensure detection data are available to the USACE and other researchers. This will be a permanent PIT array that will be on year-round.

Luke shared his appreciation for Anne Mullan (NOAA), Yamen Hoque (USACE), Jeff Ziller (ODFW) and others for their efforts in coordinating flows out of Cougar Dam to accommodate ODFW's study in the McKenzie restoration area and the installation of the new PIT array. Additionally, Luke noted that as of July 11th, ODFW is conducting pre-spawn mortality surveys in the McKenzie River and so far, pre-spawn mortality has been minimal.

Regarding fish passage numbers, video counts at Upper and Lower Bennett show a total of 7,100 Chinook salmon passed. A record 459 spring Chinook passed one night in early July. As of July 31st, a total of 30,532 adult spring Chinook salmon have been counted at Willamette Falls. This is above the 5-year average of 28,029 fish and just below the 10-year average of 31,538. Passage slowed down considerably towards the end of July, however, a few more spring Chinook salmon may still pass this season. *[Facilitator's Note: In summary edits, Anne and Luke noted that the spring Chinook salmon run count totaled 37,057 total adults, as of Aug 15, which is higher than the 10-year average of 31,538.]*

- **NOAA** – Anne noted that NOAA continues to be busy as activities in the Willamette transition from spring passage activities to summer and fall operations. She noted that the Cougar refill was successful and temperature management is ongoing. Plans are currently in place for outplanting above the Middle Santiam/Quartzville. NOAA is working on the permit request related to the spawners' survey. NOAA is also having discussions with the Corps and USGS regarding temperature management in the North Santiam. NOAA is soliciting nationwide for [grants](#) that will be funded from the Infrastructure Law funding; some grants will specifically target underserved communities.

Jim noted that the spring run has been encouraging with a lot of natural origin (NOR) fish on hand. NOAA is considering what options the additional NOR fish might present and welcomed WATER partner suggestions. Anne noted that NOR fish are sometimes used for broodstock. She also noted that a recent Willamette Fish Passage O&M Coordination Team (WFPOM) discussion considered whether this might be an opportunity to reconsider the recycling effort at Cougar Dam. Jeff noted that ODFW would like more information on the actual adult-to-adult return rate and is hesitant to remove the stipulations until replacement values are closer to 1.

- **CTGR** - Lawrence noted that CTGR recently acquired 71 acres of Wiseman Island, located on the North Santiam; it includes 3.5 miles of North Santiam River habitat. ODFW also owns acreage in this area, which is considered great flood plain habitat.
- **ODEQ** - Nancy Gramlich shared that the Corps conservation meetings regarding water temperature have been helpful and she appreciated the coordination
- **NPCC** - Leslie shared information on an NPCC Fish and Wildlife Program presentation that will provide a retrospective of the Program and review the program's history and context in which actions were implemented. Leslie noted that the Program has been updated every five years and covers a diversity of actions. NPCC is considering the program's history as part of its efforts to develop performance indicators for the program. The presentation is scheduled for August 16 at 12:30 PM and is open to the public.
- **OWRD** - Alyssa noted that OWRD is reviewing 4 grant proposals submitted to its Water Project Grants and Loan program which provides grants to support economic, environmental, social, and cultural benefits. One project being reviewed is the City of

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

Stayton's aquifer storage and recovery project which would provide a redundant water supply in case of harmful algae blooms or toxic spills. OWRD's will make recommendations on funding the grants later this fall.

Alyssa attended a recent meeting of the Council of Water Leaders and provided an update on the process of the conversion of minimum perennial stream flows. Several WATER partners indicated interest in hearing Alyssa's presentation at a future WATER team meeting. The Council of Water Leader's meeting agenda also included updates on the Willamette EIS, the City of Salem's efforts on channel maintenance and Geren Island, and the Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center provided information on fire impacts and educational efforts.

OWRD has hired a project manager and has begun the scoping project for an update to Oregon's state water plan (Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy). OWRD is responsible for development and implementation of this plan which provides important guidance on how the State will meet instream and out-of-stream water needs.

- **Corps:** Ian noted that despite the slow start, this year's water conditions resulted in a favorable flow year and agencies were not faced with making difficult decisions this year regarding flow.
- There were no updates from **BPA** or **USFWS**.

WATER Team Updates

- **HTT** - Eric Andersen noted that the next HTT meeting is scheduled for August 3, 2022. Eric also noted that the invasive emerald ash borer has been detected in Forest Grove and is considered extremely destructive to ash species. This raises concerns for the native Oregon Ash, which is used in riparian plantings, and other ornamental ash species in Oregon which are very susceptible to the borer. Eric shared links on the [Oregon response and readiness plan](#) and a [fact sheet](#) on the emerald ash borer from the Oregon Department of Forestry.
- **RM&E** – Fenton noted that the screwtrapping work is ongoing. [*Facilitator note: In summary edits, Fenton noted that the Foster active tag study this fall is on schedule to evaluate the fall spill operation.*] Once the budget for the new year is confirmed, the Corps will begin implementing FY23 injunction-related studies. The PIT antenna installation at Lebanon Dam is moving forward, with contractors currently working on antenna design. The antenna is anticipated to be installed in September, and will be operational this fall after testing is completed.
- **EIS Schedule Updates** - The public virtual room can be accessed via <https://gather.cdmsmith.com/v/V6zaxVGM1eZ>
- **Injunction Updates** - Public information about the Willamette Valley Injunction can be accessed via: <https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Locations/Willamette-Valley/Injunction/>.

RM&E Team Session

Participants –Leslie Bach (NPCC), Fenton Kahn (Corps), Anne Mullan (NOAA), Alyssa Mucken (OWRD), Jim Myers (NOAA), Christine Peterson (BPA), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Jeff Ziller (ODFW).

7/5/22 Meeting Summary: Emily noted that DS Consulting received differing fish count numbers for the summary and will follow-up with ODFW and NOAA to confirm the correct numbers and will then seek to have the summary approved by RM&E members via email or the next scheduled meeting.

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

Surrogate program – Fenton noted that the surrogate program is currently raising Chinook salmon for future studies at Green Peter and Foster. OSU was able to collect eggs this spring to raise steelhead surrogates for Foster studies in 2023. The Spring 2023 study at Foster will be conducted with one-year-old steelhead and the Fall 2023 study will be conducted with one plus-year old steelhead. The Chinook salmon and steelhead surrogates will be active tagged and PIT tagged for both spring and fall studies.

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

Deadlines for Draft Technical Reports:

- Comments are due on **August 12, 2022** for the draft technical report; “Assessment of Habitat Availability for Juvenile Chinook Salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) in the Willamette River, Oregon.”
- Comments are due on **August 26, 2022** for the draft technical report Prespawning Mortality of Fall Creek Willamette Chinook Salmon: Evaluation of the Effects of a New Trap at the Adult Fish Collection Facility."
- Comments for both reports can be provided to Rich Piaskowski at richard.m.piaskowski@usace.army.mil.

September 5, 2022 RM&E Team Session: The RM&E team agreed to cancel the September 5, 2022 meeting and provide any team updates via email.

The next RM&E Team Session is scheduled for October 4, 2022