

RM&E Team Meeting
May 2, 2023
Meeting Summary
[Edits provided by Corps]

https://pweb.crohms.org/tmt/documents/FPOM/2010/Willamette_Coordination/Willamette%20RME/RME.html

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

Participants - Grace Goldrich-Middaugh (ODEQ), Jim Myers (NOAA, Mike Hudson (USFWS), Fenton Khan (Corps), Anne Mullan (NOAA), Christine Peterson (BPA), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Kate Self (NPCC), Jeff Ziller (ODFW).

4/4/23 Meeting Summary - The RM&E Team approved the April 4, 2023 meeting summary with no additional edits.

Team Member Updates

- **NOAA:** Anne noted that NOAA has hired a new staff member, Josie Thompson, who will start work next week.
- **ODFW:** Kelly provided updates on behalf of Luke:
 - Winter steelhead number over Willamette Falls are just under 2,000, as of last week, which is low compared to the 5-year average of over 3,000. ODFW has not observed any sea lion predation at Willamette Falls yet this year.
 - North Santiam Capture Efficiency Study: The ODFW team is drafting a report on the study and appreciates WATER partners' input to date.
 - Spring Chinook Fishery: Fishing for spring Chinook salmon has been slow due to high water. Lawrence confirmed this and noted that the season's snow is beginning to melt and reservoirs are starting to fill.
 - Jeff noted that the Leaburg Sorter crew will be in place this spring and ODFW anticipates operating the sorter as of June 1. ODFW is also reviewing the infrastructure for counting fish at Leaburg Dam and hopes to work with Four Peaks Environmental Science & Data Solutions (the contractor that manages counting stations for the Corps on the Columbia River) to update the system. Funding is TBD.
- **BPA:** Christine followed up on whether Habitat Technical Team (HTT) grant funds could be used to fund monitoring (e.g. to fund monitoring/maintenance of the Willamette Falls PIT Tag arrays). She confirmed that monitoring is within scope of the HTT grants, and NPCC has specifically endorsed funding monitoring for RM&E in addition to habitat work. Christine will seek more information on the funding cycle from Jason Karenezis, BPA's HTT coordinator.
- **ODFW:** Mike noted that the Willamette Regional Management Unit for Lamprey's annual meeting will take place on May 3; contact Mike for more information. A couple of acoustically-tagged bull trout, coming out of the Elwha River, have been detected off the Washington coast; Mike noted this is an example of the benefits of increasing connectivity for fish.
- There were no updates from CTGR, NPCC, or ODEQ

Study Updates – Fenton noted that the Corps was not able to tag and release the yearling Chinook salmon for the Foster and Green Peter spring studies as the fish were suffering from disease (see 4-4-23 RM&E Team meeting). Consequently, the Corps was not able to evaluate the Green Peter spill operation; Corps is still conducting the 30-day spill operation, per the injunction requirements. Foster spill is continuing: on May 15, the Corps will transition from the low pool to the full summer pool and continue spill through June 15. PNLL is tagging and releasing the yearling steelhead. The yearling steelhead were still too small to tag in February and March; however many are now getting to the taggable size. Those that are too small were put back in the pond to be tagged and released in the future. There are still more to be tagged and released in May and it is anticipated that the most of those steelhead will be taggable in the next few weeks. Fenton noted that the Corps has not previously tested yearling steelhead. In the past, the Corps evaluated two-year-old

steelhead, as monitoring/studies indicated that yearling steelhead did not really move out until age two or beyond. The injunction required the Corps to test yearlings to see if the spill operations will encourage the yearlings to move out. Fenton noted that the subyearling Chinook salmon slated for the fall Green Peter drawdown and fall Foster spill operation are healthy.

Screwtrapping Update – Fenton noted that the contractor installed the screwtrap on the Middle Santiam above Green Peter on 4/27/23 and is now awaiting the permit from ODFW; the permit from NMFS has been received. Anne noted there may be a possibility that winter steelhead are above Green Peter; consequently, NMFS intends to change its letter to include winter steelhead. ODFW may be waiting on NMFS' modified letter. On the North Santiam, the screwtrap above Detroit is also installed and awaiting the ODFW permit. The Breintenbush screwtrap will be installed once USFWS gives permission for installation. The Hills Creek head of reservoir screwtrap will be installed above Hills Creek when the new trap is received. Regarding the screwtrap above Lookout Point, Jeff talked with contractor staff Rachel Ellison, who reported concerns about non-authorized people in the area. Jeff provided some suggestions to Rachel on new areas for the trap. Anne noted outstanding questions from the permit request regarding the number of fish available for outplanting above Green Peter. She will follow-up with Fenton directly and Fenton will report back to the RM&E Team after consulting with Anne and David Trachtenbarg (Corps).

Jim noted that it is important to understand what kind of residual fish are above Green Peter and there was interest in taking fin clips from the fish caught below Green Peter to see if they represent legacy steelhead or outplanted fish. Fenton will talk to the contractor to make sure they are taking fin clips samples; how those samples will be analyzed is not yet determined. Jim suggested that a portion of the sample could be sent to NFMS (or Katheen O'Malley at OSU?) for testing now or later.

→ **Action:** *Fenton will check with the contractor to confirm that fin clip samples are being taken for fish in the trap below Green Peter, and will follow-up with Jim to discuss options for analyzing the samples.*

Surrogate Program – There were no additional updates

PIT Tag Infrastructure Needs at Willamette Falls - RM&E Team members engaged in a discussion regarding PIT Tag infrastructure needs at Willamette Falls, noting that Willamette Falls is an important site for collecting adult and juvenile data and having more information from this site would support fish management. The team identified two areas of need: 1) Data collection and management and 2) physical infrastructure, and recognized the difference in collecting adult and juvenile data.

Regarding data collection and management, Luke Whitman (ODFW) previously met with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) to explore whether FSMFC might take on this effort. At the 4/4/23 RM&E Meeting, Luke reported that PSMFC representatives stated that it would be highly unlikely that they would be able to take on this site because of their agency guidelines. Anne shared her understanding that PSMFC may be willing to take on data collection and site maintenance, if it received funding and administrative approval.

With regard to physical infrastructure, team members discussed a need for more information on what infrastructure improvements are needed and a rough cost estimate. There is a range of options for how to monitor the Falls, including antennas at the adult ladder, juvenile bypass, or even across the falls. Currently, the antennas at the site are old and not fully functional. While the group was interested in exploring options, it was noted that the WATER partners collectively have a lot of experience with monitoring, and that even a simple array could provide valuable data. Additionally, the system does not need to have 100% detection, as estimates can be derived from passage efficiency tests. Ideally, the

data would be uploaded into PTAGIS, which would require QA/QC, and would include contact information for those uploading so that folks using the database understand any limitations to the data.

Regarding potential funding, Christine confirmed that HTT grant funds can be used for monitoring. It was unclear whether the deadline to apply for this year's grants had passed and what kind of application is needed. If there is still time to apply, the team would need to identify someone to write the proposal. It was suggested that USGS might be able to assist with providing an estimate. Additionally, USGS is currently engaged in research regarding the Willamette Basin as part of its Integrated Water Science effort and it was suggested that it might be helpful to have USGS present on this effort at a future meeting.

Following this discussion, the team identified the following action items to support another conversation at the June RM&E meeting:

- Kelly will brief Luke regarding the RM&E discussion on Willamette Falls infrastructure and ask him to provide more information to the RM&E team regarding PSMFC's concerns. Kelly will also follow-up with Luke about what is needed to pull together a cost estimate, whether it is feasible for ODFW to develop an estimate and if so, when an estimate could be completed.***
- Mike will ask his colleague who is on the PTAGIS steering committee for more information regarding PTAGIS standards.***
- Anne will explore whether there is still an opportunity to apply for HTT grant funds this year and if so, what the process is for applying for funds.***
- Christine will check with Jason to clarify the timeline and deadlines for 2024 HTT grant funding applications.***

The RM&E Team will continue to discuss and coordinate how to move this effort forward collaboratively at future meetings.

Closing and Agenda Planning for May, 2023 - Anne suggested the RM&E team (and interested Steering Team members) review the most recent screwtrap reports in the context of spring operational changes at the May meeting. This is intended to be an informal opportunity for team members to review the reports and share observations, Anne will plan to take the lead. DS Consulting will add this to the June RM&E agenda.

With that, Emily thanked the group and adjourned the meeting.

The next RM&E Team meeting is on June 6, 2023, at 2 PM, following the Steering Team meeting and joint team session.

The DS Consulting Facilitation Team drafts RME Team meeting summaries; suggested edits are welcome. Please send suggested edits to Nancy Pionk at nancy@dsconsult.co