

RM&E Team Meeting
July 19, 2023
Meeting Summary
[Edits by Corps & ODFW]

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

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

Participants - Fenton Khan (Corps), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Anne Mullan (NOAA), Jim Myers (NOAA), Christine Peterson (BPA), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Kate Self (NPCC), Luke Whitman (ODFW).

6/6/23 Meeting Summary - The RM&E Team approved the June 6 2023 meeting summary with no additional edits.

Team Member Updates

- **NOAA:** Jim noted that NOAA is busy preparing for fall injunction activities.
- **ODFW:** Luke is gearing up for spawning surveys and planning for monitoring next year. Prespawn surveys have been initiated in the McKenzie Basin for spring Chinook salmon. Kelly noted that ODFW's Fish Division had a preliminary meeting to discuss the 12-year check-in/assessment for the Upper Willamette River Recovery Plan for Chinook salmon and steelhead recovery plan; Kelly will be coordinating with Jim on the effort which is expected to take up to 1.5 years.
- **USFWS:** Mike noted the USFWS Science Application Program's new Assistant Regional Director is Scott Covington, who previously was the HQ climate lead for refuges. Scott has good working relationship with the Corps' lead for Engineering with Nature Program and USFWS is interested in exploring options for engineering with nature in the Willamette Basin.
- **BPA:** Christine noted that BPA has hired Alan Whiting, who will work with Jason Karnezis on estuaries and the Willamette habitat project. Jason will remain POC for the HTT. Christine updated the group on the pile dyke antennas in the estuary, noting that with the conclusion of the spring migrant season, NOAA will be removing the antennas soon. Fish detections for the season can be reviewed at the PTAGIS site. The Science Center will be evaluating the success of the pile dyke antennas and may do additional site testing.
- **Corps:** Fenton reported that the Corps has received approval to share the study design and proposals for the Green Peter and Foster active tag studies in the South Santiam basin; he will send out proposals this week.
- There were no updates from CTGR or NPCC.

Study Updates – Fenton noted that PNNL delivered the draft final report for the 2022 active tag studies for the Green Peter and Foster spill evaluation. Counsel will be transmitting the report to the Court and plaintiffs shortly; Fenton will share the reports as soon as permission from counsel is received and the report will also be posted to the injunction website.

The Corps is preparing for the fall injunction studies which include:

- The deep drawdown at Green Peter which will be evaluated by PNNL. Drafting of the pool has already begun;
- Deep drawdown at Lookout Point this fall, will be evaluated by USGS;
- Foster fall spill operations.

Screwtrapping Updates: Fenton noted that screwtrapping and bulk marking fish releases are ongoing. Anne noted that some planned bulk mark releases were not able to take place because of contracting and timing

issues. Moving forward, more bulk mark releases are expected. Fenton noted that the Green Peter spill operation was prioritized for the bulk marking releases to get some data on the operation, as the spring active tag study could not take place due to diseased fish.

Surrogate Program – Fenton noted that the fish for the fall Green Peter deep drawdown study, the Foster fall spill operation, and Lookout Point deep drawdown study, remain healthy. The Green Peter and Lookout Point studies will evaluate sub-yearling Chinook salmon passage and survival through the regulating outlet. The Foster spill operation will evaluate sub yearling Chinook salmon and 1.5-year-old steelhead passage and survival.

Going forward, due to the low adult steelhead run return rates, ODFW and OSU were not able to collect eggs for steelhead surrogates for future years. Steelhead surrogates are available for this fall (1.5 year-olds) and for the spring 2024 Foster study (two-year-olds); however, there will not be any one-year-old surrogates for 2025 or two-year-old surrogates for 2026. If eggs can be collected in 2024, there will be one year-olds for 2025 and two-year-olds for 2026. Fenton noted that historical data, juvenile steelhead generally move out at age 2 and up. The injunction spill studies are intended to see if there is any benefit to helping yearlings to pass.

Update on Lebanon PIT Detection System Repair: Fenton updated the group on the status of repairs to the Lebanon Dam Pit Detection system which was damaged earlier this year due to high river flows and debris. The contractors have been tasked with installing permanent power on the north side of the dam and replacing the damaged antennas. The utility company is currently working to install underground power lines. The intent had been to install the antennas in August; however, there has been a delay in getting parts due to supply chain issues. Consequently, the contractor is now anticipating installing the antennas in September. As BiOp flows increase in September, the Corps expects that it will need to coordinate with NOAA and ODFW to reduce flows for 7-10 days, as flows need to be reduced to 1,100 cfs to safely install the antennas. Fenton will reach out to the agencies once dates are confirmed with the contractor. There is a contractual requirement that the contractor determine a way to prevent high flows and debris from damaging the antennas in the future. The contractor is planning to install deflectors that are designed to pass debris and flow, within engineering reason, so the antennas remain operational. Anne noted that the timing of the request for reduced flows will overlap with the Green Peter deep drawdown which creates some uncertainty regarding flows. Fenton noted that if the deep drawdown affects the ability to achieve reduced flows at Lebanon Dam, installation may need to be deferred until spring; this will need to be coordinated with the court and plaintiffs.

Update on Pit Tag Repairs at Cougar Dam – Luke reported that the antennas have been installed at the restoration site and ODFW is working to repair the second array in the tailrace channel. The regulating outlet channel is expected to be operational shortly.

PIT Tag Infrastructure Needs at Willamette Falls – RM&E Team members continued their discussion regarding PIT Tag infrastructure needs at Willamette Falls. Luke reviewed a working document he prepared that described the current issues with the adult ladder antennas and improvements needed, and the juvenile antennae and the sampling trap. He noted that the antennas are very outdated with replacement estimated at approximately \$10,000 per adult antenna, plus additional data hardware and readers. Additionally, while the PIT readers are more recent, they are not tuned very well. PTAGIS still uses these models, however, reader components would need to be swapped out every few years. A newer model is available. Additional costs include updated cell modems, wires and the cell data plan. A newer design would have shielded housing and two antennas to get real-time detection. As there are four antennas that need to be replaced, Luke estimated the total replacement cost to be at least \$50,000.

Luke, and others, also see value in replacing the smolt sampling trap. Regarding maintainance, Luke noted that funding would be needed to maintain the antennas. Whether PTAGIS would maintain the antennas is also uncertain, as PTAGIS previously raised concerns that maintenance of this site was not within their current mandate.

RM&E team members discussed next steps for moving forward. Anne noted the importance counting adult fish, in light of the number of PIT-tagged fish that are being released in the system in the near future and suggested that the RM&E Team could raise the possibility of HTT providing funding in 2024 at the next HTT meeting. Additionally, the WATER managers may be able to provide support for collaboration with PTAGIS. Kelly noted that in the past, the managers had discussed a site visit to Willamette Falls, which could be helpful to provide context. PGE would need to give permission to visit the juvenile bypass system. It was suggested that the cost estimate could be broadened and presented as a bundle which includes funding for the juvenile monitoring, additional new array locations, maintenance costs, and staffing needs. As next steps, a subgroup (Anne, Luke, and other interested members) will meet to clarify the scope of the request and consider next steps for presenting it to the managers.

- *Action: Emily will convene a subgroup to clarify the scope of the request and consider next steps.*
- *Action: RM&E members should contact Emily if they would like to be part of the subgroup.*

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

The next RM&E Team meeting is on August 1, 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