

RM&E Team Meeting
August 1, 2023
Facilitator's Summary
[Edits received from Corps]

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

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

Steering & RM&E Joint Session

***Participants for all or part of the meeting:** Amy Gibbons (Corps), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Fenton Khan (Corps), Cathy Kellon (NPCC), Jim Myers (NOAA), Alyssa Mucken (OWRD), Christine Peterson (BPA), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Ida Royer (Corps), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Dan Spear (BPA), Josie Thompson (NOAA), Arturo Vale (USFS), Kate Wells (NOAA), and Alan Whiting (BPA).*

WATER Partner Updates

- **NOAA:** Kate noted that NOAA continues to coordinate with the Corps on supplemental information to move forward with the BiOp draft; the meetings have been positive and collaborative!
- **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 hoping there will be more opportunities to bring the resources of the Engineering with Nature Program to the Willamette Basin. Mike also raised awareness for the group of a recent paper regarding Willamette River water temperatures. Kelly emailed this paper to the team and noted that it discusses how the Willamette River is warming and could have implications for dam management.
- **NPCC:** Cathy inquired as to the status of the dispensation study by the Corps that was directed by the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) in 2022. Amy noted that Section 8220 of WRDA 2022 directs the Corps to report to Congress on the federal interest in deauthorizing hydropower throughout the Willamette Valley. The Corps has initiated that process and expects to complete the report within the next 12 months.
- **OWRD:** Alyssa will send out a link to the Willamette Basin Reallocation Study Workplan and information on the outreach efforts of the Willamette Intake Facilities Commission (WIFC), which is working on a source water protection plan for the Willamette to secure a reliable water supply. OWRD recently met with several federal agencies (including Reclamation, Corps, NMFS) that are involved in Willamete Reallocation implementaton, EIS and ongoing ESA consultation. OWRD is still determining what can be shared externally with basin partners and stakeholders regarding the implementation. Alyssa noted that there will likely be a significant delay in filing a water rights transfer application on Willamette Valley project reservoirs.

OWRD has received significant state investments in water projects and planning as a result of this year's legislative session. The funding allocated will increase OWRD's capacity by 20-25 positions, which is in

addition to funding received from the 2021 legislative funding. Alyssa will provide a link to an OWRD policy staff document outlining the funding.

- **ODFW:** Kelly noted that ODFW is initiating the 12-year assessment of the Upper Willamette River Recovery Plan for Chinook and winter steelhead; the assessment will take up to 1.5 years to complete.. This will be a check-in on the plan and its benchmarks. The Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program is progressing through the solicitation process. It has conducted the technical and policy review of the proposed FY25 projects. Kelly is meeting with ODFW's director later this month, who will make the final determination; up to 7 projects may be recommended this year.
- **USFS:** Arturo noted that the Bedrock Fire is burning on the southern district of the Middle Fork, near Fall Creek and the Lookout Point reservoir. USFS has initiated emergency consultation with the Services regarding bull trout and Chinook salmon. In the McKenzie River District, USFS is in the final stage of the Finn Rock Stage Eight restoration project which will open up the river to the floodplain. USFS has wrapped up its FY24 Program of Work planning which will include: stream/river restoration projects, culvert upsizing projects on the Detroit District in fire-affected areas, aquatic organism passage projects, road decommissioning and maintenance projects.
- There were no updates from **BPA** and **CTGR**.

WATER Team Updates

- **HTT:** Alan will be leading the HTT and is coordinating with Oregon Watershed Enhanced Board (OWEB) regarding the projects that OWEB's Technical Review Team has recommended for funding. BPA is now reviewing the recommended projects internally.
- **RM&E: Update on need for Willamette Falls PIT Tag Infrastructure** - The RM&E Team updated the Steering Team on discussions regarding the need for improvements to the PIT Tag infrastructure at Willamette Falls to track both juvenile and adult fish passage (See 7-19-23 RM&E Team summary). The adult reader is unstable and is not up to technical specifications required to allow data to be uploaded to the Columbia Basin PIT Tag Information System (PTAGIS) data base. RM&E team members noted that the the adult PIT reader can provide a significant amount of data to support present and future projects and inform management, as it will provide data when tagged juveniles return to the basin as adults. There is also interest in updating the juvenile monitoring infrastructure.

The RM&E Team has discussed a preliminary cost estimate and a subgroup will be meeting to further outline the scope of the funding request with the intention of bringing the funding before the regional managers. Kelly noted that Luke has prepared a preliminary document that ODFW is providing input internally; the document will then be shared with the RM&E team and the sub-group. The team discussed the possibility of convening a Managers Forum this fall to share the request with regional managers. The managers also previously discussed the possibility of taking a field trip to Willamette Falls to understand the limitations and opportunities at the site.

Steering Team members inquired about ownership/operation of the infrastructure and potential funding options. ODFW owns the adult reader and ladder. The juvenile reader is run by ODFW but is on PG&E property. Kelly noted that Luke's program has previously operated the readers; however, it is unclear whether that will be sustainable in the future.

The RM&E Team has identified HTT grants as a possible source of funding. Alan confirmed that HTT will initiate another round of funding in January. The intent is to provide HTT with a funding request in January. Cathy noted that funding of such critical infrastructure through competitive annual or biennial grants is not preferred and she suggested that a strategic request be developed that could be elevated through NPCC.

As a next step, Emily will convene the subgroup (Anne, Luke, Mike, Jim, Josie) to develop a funding request that it will be shared with the RM&E and Steering Teams for additional input. Kelly noted that Jeff Ziller and Jeremy Romer at ODFW also expressed interest in being involved. Luke can extend the invitation to them once the meeting is scheduled. Jim also suggest that NOAA's Clatsop Pit Tag shop may also be helpful to contact for ideas on options.

→ **Action:** *Emily will convene the subgroup to clarify the scope of the request and consider next steps.*

- **EIS Schedule Updates:** Updates are available here: <https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Locations/Willamette-Valley/System-Evaluation-EIS/>
- **Injunction Updates:** Public information about the Willamette Valley Injunction is available here: [https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Locations/Willamette-Valley/Injunction/.](https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Locations/Willamette-Valley/Injunction/)

RM&E Team Meeting

Participants for all or part of the meeting: *Mike Hudson (USFWS), Fenton Khan (Corps), Jim Myers (NOAA), Kate Self (NPCC), Christine Peterson (BPA), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Dan Spear (BPA), Josie Thompson (NOAA),*

Note: *There were no additional updates regarding studies, screwtrapping or the surrogate program since the July 19, 2023 RM&E Team meeting*

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

The next RM&E Team Session is on September 5, 2023

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