

**Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)
Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RM&E)
February 25, 2021
CONFERENCE CALL/WEBEX**

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

**FINAL Facilitator's Summary
[Edits provided by: Corps]**

ACTION	BY WHOM?	BY WHEN?
Follow-up on COU Interim Measures and the timeline for the EA completion.	Fenton	3/25 RM&E meeting
Add the issues relating to the screw-trapping multi-year contract and Middle Fork Check-in issue to the Steering Team Agenda for 3/2/21.	DSC	[Completed]
Schedule a meeting within two weeks with the RM&E Team and NWFSC staff.	DSC	In Progress
Provide written comments on the concepts.	RM&E Team members	Following meeting w/ NWFSC
Revise the concepts based on the input received and send out revised concepts to the team.	Fenton & Anne	3/25 RM&E meeting
Consult with OSU and the screw-trap contractor concerning the excess surrogate fish.	Fenton	ASAP
Check for PIT Tag availability.	RM&E Team members	ASAP
Review sub-basin planning spreadsheets and send comments to DS Consulting.	RM&E Team members	3/17
Consolidate everyone's comments into sub-basin planning spreadsheet and send out to the team.	DSC	3/18
Review the consolidated document and bring input for further discussion to the March 25 RM&E team meeting	RM&E Team members	3/25 RM&E meeting
Follow-up regarding the status of the SDM effort.	Fenton	3/25 RM&E meeting

Present for all or part of the meeting: Leslie Bach (NPCC), Andrew Derugin (COE), Brad Eppard (COE), Fenton Kahn (COE), Michael Hudson (USFWS), Dave Jepsen (ODFW), Rachel Laird (COE), Anne Mullan (NMFS), Christine Petersen (BPA), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Jon Rerecich (COE), Ida Royer (COE), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR);

Facilitation Team: Emily Stranz and Nancy Pionk (DS Consulting).

Welcome and Housekeeping

Emily welcomed the group and conducted a round of introductions. Team members approved the January 28, 2021 meeting summary.

FY21 Study Updates

Fenton reported that the pedigree contract is in the approval process with USGS. The contract for the Fall Creek study FY19 APH-19-02-FC (*Fall Creek AFF_yr2*) is also moving forward. Additionally, the contract for the LOP desktop modeling exercise, JPL-19-01-LOP (*Estimating survival of juvenile Chinook salmon fry*)

in LOP reservoir), has been sent to USGS for final signature. [*Facilitator's Note: In summary edits, Fenton noted that USGS has accepted the contract and will begin work on the desktop modeling work.*]

Interim Measures Implementation

Fenton provided an update on the Interim Measures Implementation. The PDT will provide updates to agencies in the monthly WFPOM meetings; however since not all agencies participate in WFPOM, an update from Fenton will be added to the monthly RM&E team meeting agenda. Fenton reported that implementation is on track for the interim measure related to Foster night-time spill; the SOR request is currently being routed for approval. Spill is scheduled to occur from 7 pm to 7 am, beginning 3/1/21. In May and June, spill will start later in the day (8 pm -5 am) due to longer daylight hours.

Fenton noted that the Corps continues to have internal discussions regarding Interim Measures 16 and 17 relating to COU. He noted that more planning and an Environmental Assessment (EA) are needed. Fenton will check back to get a timeline for the EA completion and determine if there are other potential delays to implementing the measures.

→ **Action:** Fenton will follow-up on the timeline for the EA completion and any are other potential delays to implementing the measures.

Wild Fish Surrogate Program

Fenton is working on funding for continuation of the Wild Fish Surrogate Program. He reminded the group of the need to anticipate studies where fish might be needed as there is a significant lead time for OSU to collect eggs and raise the fish. Once studies are identified and prioritized, Fenton will coordinate with OSU. Kelly noted that surrogates will likely be needed for screw-trap efficiency testing and requested that the Corps initiate the process to request additional surrogates. As a next step, the Corps will discuss the needs for additional surrogates for the screw-traps internally.

Willamette Science Review

The Corps continues to have internal discussions regarding possible dates for the Willamette Science Review. Team members suggested holding shorter sessions rather than all-day sessions. The Corps is reviewing all research completed in FY20 and ongoing research to determine where there is key information to present that will inform planning efforts. Fenton hopes to have a better picture of potential content and schedule later in March.

Screw-Trapping Contract Update and Modification Discussion

Contract Update: Fenton reported that the contractor (Cramer) has installed three traps below Cougar Dam, however, they are not fishing yet because the contractor is waiting on permits. Permits by NMFS and ODFW are being approved and the USFWS permit for bull trout is in process. Cramer is also working to get the screw-traps in at Fall Creek. Fenton expects to be able to share the workplan in the next week; he noted that the team will be able to provide input on the scope of the plan for next year's effort.

It was noted that the contracts are currently to be awarded on an annual basis, with a pool of 5 contractors that have already been vetted and could be awarded the contract based on the lowest bid. Some WATER partners expressed an interest in having a multi-year contract with the same contractor instead of having the contractor decided annually. Interests cited in favor of this approach included: efficiencies gained by the contractor from past experience on the project such as continuity in data collection, applying lessons learned, and institutional knowledge, as well as efficiencies in coordination time by agencies. It was noted that there are a lot of nuances and variability in this work that will be valuable for a contractor to track, learn from and utilize from year to year. There was concern that having a new contractor annually will take time to "onboard" and valuable information could potentially be lost in the transfer. It was also noted that the current contractor's costs for future contracts may be lower due to work under this year's contract. It was suggested

that the Corps might need to provide oversight and input regarding the contract if contractors change from one year to the next.

Mike expressed an interest to elevate and explore the issue of a single contractor for the multi-year contract further with the Steering Team. He suggested that it could be helpful to make managers aware of the contracting delays and concerns impacting RM&E.

→ **Action:** DS Consulting will add this issue to the Steering Team Agenda for 3/2/21; Mike will take the lead on raising this issue at the meeting.

Potential Modification: PIT tagging of fish handled below Cougar: Fenton shared information with the group on the potential to modify the current contract to PIT tag fish handled below Cougar. He noted that while it may be possible to modify the contract, the process to modify will depend on whether the PIT tagging effort is considered part of the original scope of the contract. If the Contracting Office does not consider it part of the original scope and instead, considers it to be an additional technical task that is being added, a completely new task order might be needed to add the PIT tagging. Fenton noted that PIT tagging was not specifically identified in the current contract, except as needed to determine trap efficiency. Additionally, the Corps must have scientific justification for adding the PIT tags to the contract; once a feasible study is identified, the Corps can approach the contracting office to determine whether a simple modification is possible. Some team members expressed frustration regarding the process to have PIT tagging added to the screw-trap contract. As a next step, the team reviewed and discussed a study concept related to the proposed PIT tagging (**FY20-xx** (*Enhanced interim Measure Evaluation of Operational Passage in South Fork McKenzie*)). See FY22 Concept Planning discussion below. It was noted that the request for modification and proposed purpose/metrics will also be discussed at the March 2, 2021 Steering Team meeting.

FY22 Concept Planning

RM&E Team members reviewed three draft concepts; Emily reminded the team that the review at this meeting was an opportunity to ask questions and clarify understanding of the concepts. Team members were asked to submit specific comments about the concepts in writing after the meeting.

FY21 JPL-XX-21 (Detroit Dam Juvenile Fish Passage Interim Operations) - Fenton noted that this concept relates to Interim Measures #5 and #7 and was drafted by Jon Rerecich. Jon noted that the concept focuses on Chinook, and steelhead are not included in the concept. It was suggested that the concept explicitly reference Big Cliff. Team members also considered what might be the best methodology for tagging the fish given the expected size. The expectation is that the researchers will provide proposals regarding the methodology for tagging. It was also suggested that the concept highlight TDG; Jon noted that TDG will be considered in Interim Measure #6 related to Big Cliff. Team members noted that potential metrics for Big Cliff include timing migration, behavior through Big Cliff, reservoir residency, passage distribution and efficiency.

FY21 JPL-XX-XX-FOS (Foster Dam Juvenile Passage Spill Operations) - This concept will evaluate the FOS nighttime spill operation and includes evaluation of the spillway for passage. It was noted that it would be good to call out downstream survival in this concept.

FY20-xx (Enhanced interim Measure Evaluation of Operational Passage in South Fork McKenzie) - Anne reviewed the concept paper which proposed to monitor how fish migrate from above COU through available passage routes into reaches below COU, the lower South Fork McKenzie and the mainstem McKenzie River. It was noted that information on the first four metrics listed in the concept will be obtained from the screw-trap contractor. Anne noted that the monitoring could be helpful to evaluate operational impacts on life history choices by fish (i.e. fish that are “movers” or “stayers”). Team members raised questions and

provided comments regarding the draft concept. Anne will work to revise the concept based on these concepts.

The group discussed the path forward for these concept papers. For all three concepts, the Corps sought the group's input on the following metrics: 1) *Where will we measure survival to; and 2) What precision are we looking to measure?* It was suggested that the RM&E Team consult with the NW Fisheries Science Center to inform these questions. DS Consulting will coordinate with Anne to identify who at the Science Center would be available to provide input regarding the metric questions. With regard to the concepts for FOS and DET, Fenton noted that lead time for both studies is needed to plan for surrogate fish and tags. The goal is to have team members provide written comments to the concepts and to have the concepts revised and ready for ranking in April.

→ **Actions:** The next steps for the concept papers were determined as follows:

1. DS Consulting will work to schedule a RM&E meeting within two weeks and include Science Center staff to consider the questions posed regarding metrics;
2. Team members will provide written comments on the concepts following that special session;
3. Concept writers will revise the concepts based on the input received and send out revised concepts to the Team prior to the March meeting.

The team also discussed next steps regarding updating of the sub-basin planning spreadsheets. It was noted that review and updating of the spreadsheets is helpful to identify data gaps and provides an opportunity to consider study concepts outside of the concepts for the interim measures. The Corps indicated its focus is on the interim measures, and due to time constraints, would not be able to prioritize review of the spreadsheets. The other RM&E members agreed to move forward to provide their comments on the spreadsheets ahead of the March RM&E Team meeting.

→ **Actions:**

1. RM&E Team members will review the sub-basin planning spreadsheets and send comments to DS Consulting by 3/17;
2. DS Consulting will consolidate all the comments into the sub-basin planning spreadsheet and send out to the team by 3/18;
3. RM&E Team members will review the consolidated document and bring input for further discussion to the March 25, 2021 RM&E team meeting.

Options for Use of Excess Surrogate Fish

The team discussed potential options for the use of 2,000 two-year-old wild winter steelhead from the North Santiam basin that are available for study purposes. [*Facilitator's Note: In summary edits, Fenton noted that these fish were originally reared for a potential study at Foster assuming the design improvement of the fish weir would be complete and ready for testing in 2021.*] Fenton noted that OSU can hold the fish until the end of March/early April; a decision regarding what to do with the fish must be made in March. He noted that the fish could be released in either the South or North Santiam basins. Fenton noted that in the past, OSU worked with ODFW and PIT tagged extra surrogate fish for release downstream of the dam. OSU does not have PIT tags for these fish. Additionally, the fish are not marked or clipped because they are still considered wild.

The group discussed several ideas for how the fish could be used:

- For a baseline operation to monitor downstream passage: the fish could be PIT-tagged and released above DET/Big Cliff to evaluate passage through Big Cliff. It was noted, however, that there was no study funded to evaluate this.
- Before and after spill to evaluate whether spill attracts or blocks them.

- Consider release under different flow scenarios (i.e. a lot of flow/constrained flow).
- For a baseline with regard to the screwtraps/to test screwtrap efficiency/route survival below DET; it was noted that there are no steelhead above DET.
- Use for re-capture efficiencies for screw-traps in the North Santiam; this would not require a PIT Tag and could be done using an external clip. Information on trap efficiency for this size of fish would be helpful.

It was noted that with regard to the use of PIT tags, the group would still need to determine who will tag the fish, track and get the data; funding would also be needed for this. The run timing of the fish also needs to be considered as the steelhead run tapers off at the end of May/late June in the South Santiam. [Facilitator's Note: In summary edits, Fenton noted that there are no steelhead above DET at this time.]

The group identified questions for clarification by OSU/ODFW:

- Will the fish be clipped when released?
- What options might OSU have for the fish if the RM&E team does not identify a study?

As next steps, Fenton will talk to OSU/ODFW to see what they will do with the fish if there is not a study planned and bring this information back to the team. RM&E Team members will check with their agencies for PIT Tag availability.

→ **Actions:** Fenton will consult with OSU/ODFW concerning the excess surrogate fish. RM&E Team members will check with their agencies for PIT Tag availability.

Planning for FY21 Middle Fork Check-in

The RME team was asked by the Steering Team to consider timing/planning for an FY21 Middle Fork update/check-in. It was noted that much has changed since the sub-basin plan was drafted, including litigation, the ongoing EIS/BiOp process and the Structured Decision Making (SDM) workshops. Given the current situation, there was a question as to whether it will be possible for the Action Agencies to make a decision on downstream passage this year. Additionally, there is a need for an update from the Corps on the status of the SDM process. It was suggested that this question be brought back to the Steering Team to consider this question and clarify the request to the RM&E Team.

→ **Action:** DS Consulting will add this issue to the Steering Team Agenda for 3/2/21; Mike will take the lead on raising this issue at the meeting. Fenton will follow-up on the status of the SDM.

Next Steps and Closing

DS Consulting will work to schedule a special RM&E team meeting within two weeks with the NW Fisheries Science Center.

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

The next RM&E meeting will be a concept workshop, date TBD; following that the next regular meeting is March 25, 2021.

This summary is provided by DS Consulting. Suggested edits are welcome and can be provided to Nancy at nancy@dsconsult.co

Document Review Tracking (Click here for [Master “tracking” Spreadsheet](#))

Document Name	Document Type	Comments Due By	Comments Provided By
DET Pedigree Analysis	Concept Paper	7/29/2020	
	Status: Ranked 8/27/20; RM&E discussed further at 9/24/20 mtg. Fish managers to provide write-up regarding information needs.		
FY19 APH-19-02-FC - Fall Creek_AFF_yr2.	Concept Paper	7/29/2020	
	Status: Ranked 8/27/20; Moving forward		
FY20 JPL-20-01 - Spatiotemporal sources of mortality in juvenile reservoir-reared Chinook salmon.	Concept Paper	7/29/2020	
	Status: Ranked 8/27/20; 2/11/21: Proposal being routed for funding.		
FY21 APH-21-01 - Rapid Genetic Sorting.	Concept Paper	7/29/2020	
	Status: Ranked 8/27/20		
FY21 JPL-XX-21 - Detroit Dam Juvenile Passage_IM#5.	Concept Paper	7/29/2020	
	Status: Ranked 8/27/20; RM&E discussed further at 9/24/20 mtg. Proposal being requested.		
FY21 WQFM-XX-21-BCL - Big Cliff TDG_IM#6.	Concept Paper	7/29/2020	
	Status: Ranked 8/27/20; RM&E discussed further at 9/24/20 mtg		
FY20 JPL-XX-SYS - Interim Passage and Delayed Mortality.	Concept Paper	7/29/2020	
	Status: Ranked 8/27/20; RM&E discussed further at 9/24/20 mtg. Revised concept provided 10/22/20.		
FY21 JPL-XX-21 - Foster Dam Juvenile Passage Spill Ops_IM#9.	Research Summary	7/29/2020	
	Status: No Ranking; RM&E to discussed further at 9/24/20 mtg		
FY21 JPL-XX-21 - Foster Dam Adult Passage Operations_TDG_IM #10.	Research Summary	7/29/2020	
	Status: No Ranking; RM&E discussed further at 9/24/20 mtg		