

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

Steering Team & RM&E Team Meetings

May 3, 2022

Meeting Summary

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.

{Edits received from Corps, ODFW}

Steering Team Session

Participants - Eric Andersen (BPA), Brad Eppard (Corps), Nancy Gramlich (ODEQ), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Fenton Khan (Corps), Cathy Kellon (NPCC), Anne Mullan (NOAA), Christine Peterson (BPA), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Ida Royer (Corps), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Dan Spear (BPA), Greg Taylor (Corps), Kate Wells (NOAA), Luke Whitman (ODFW).

4/5 Joint Meeting Summary - The teams approved the April meeting summary with no additional edits.

May 19 Managers Forum Preparation - The Steering Team coordinated on the upcoming Manager Forum agenda. The following topics will be included on the agenda:

- **WATER Team Updates** - Steering Team members identified the WATER Team updates (Steering, RM&E, HTT, and Flow Team) to be provided to the managers for the May 19 Managers Forum. The updates are compiled in the attached draft *WATER Teams Update to the Managers Forum*.
 - **Action:** Steering Team members will review the draft Update and provide any edits to DS Consulting by noon on May 12. DS Consulting will incorporate edits and include the final Update with the Managers Forum Meeting materials.
- **Budget Update** - Team members noted that budget information is usually included in Managers Forum agendas. It was suggested that it would be helpful to provide current budget information within the context of previous years' budgets.
 - **Action:** Emily and Ida will coordinate regarding the budget update for the managers.
- **Update on Willamette Partnership for Conservation and Recovery (formerly known as the Ad Hoc Process)** - Mike will provide an update to the managers on these discussions, which were initiated by the federal family and expanded to include CTGR and the State of Oregon. These partners are continuing to meet and are working on a foundational document for the forum. Mike noted that the intent is to move these discussions away from the WATER forum process to allow for broader regional involvement.

Next Steering Team Session: June 7, 2022

RM&E Team Session

Participants - Brad Eppard (Corps), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Fenton Khan (Corps), Anne Mullan (NOAA), Christine Peterson (BPA), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Luke Whitman (ODFW)

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FY21/FY22 Studies - FY22 – Fenton updated the group on the Foster and Green Peter studies. He noted that spill operations were completed at Green Peter on April 30. Foster spill operations will continue until June 15. Refill of the reservoir to full summer conservation pool will begin on May 16 and it is expected the reservoir will be full by Memorial Day. PNNL researchers will release groups of tagged fish after Memorial Day to evaluate spill operations with a full reservoir. The reservoir elevation at Cougar will continue to be low to allow for the interim operations. Fenton noted that the screwtrap operations are going well, and the Corps continues to provide bi-weekly screwtrap reports to WATER partners.

Surrogate Program - Fenton appreciated NMFS' efforts to issue a permit for ODFW to collect eggs from steelhead at Minto to support the surrogate program. ODFW has now collected sufficient eggs for OSU to use to raise one-year old surrogates for potential Spring/Fall injunction studies at Foster in 2023, and two-year old surrogates for studies in 2024.

Lebanon Dam PIT Antenna Status - The Corps is on schedule to install new PIT antennas at Lebanon Dam by October 2022. The antennas will not be fully operational until March 2023 as the contractor must perform several months of efficiency testing at different flow ranges, write a report, and dial in the antennas. The PIT antennas are semi-permanent and will be underneath the spillway; the intent is to keep them in place for the next few years. Fenton noted that a requirement of the antennas' design is that they can withstand high flows and debris.

Team Updates - Team members provided the following updates:

- **NOAA:** Anne noted that one of the next decisions in the basin will relate to Cougar refill. She noted that weather conditions have made refill possible, and Cougar is benefitting from high flows and snowpack.
- **ODFW:** Kelly noted that Oregon offices opened to public this week and ODFW's offices are available for in-person meetings.

ODFW sorter staff have been hired and will start in June. Luke noted that the winter steelhead run over Willamette Falls is over 2,700, which is the 5-year average. The 10-year average is 4,100. Spring Chinook fishing has been strong so far this season.

Luke discussed trapping and PIT tagging activities for this spring and summer. Contractors for the Corps will be PIT tagging juvenile Chinook caught in the RST below Big Cliff Dam. An ODFW crew will be running an RST at Geren Island, downstream on the North Santiam, and will make sure to scan all juvenile Chinook for tags applied upstream. These data will be uploaded and shared through PTAGIS. Additionally, ODFW has a contract with USFS to tag 2,000 juvenile fish this summer to study the response by spring Chinook to USFS' Stage Zero efforts in the South Fork McKenzie River below Cougar Dam. PIT arrays will be installed at the upstream and downstream ends of the restoration area in June to observe fish movement. Finally, ODFW has a grant to tag bull trout and juvenile Chinook and will be installing a flat plate PIT array on the base of the Cougar RO. ODFW was able to re-tool some of the old monitoring equipment previously used at the Lebanon Dam.

- There were no updates from CTGR, BPA or USFWS.

Willamette Fisheries Science Review: Team members reflected on the 2022 Willamette Fisheries Science Review presentations. Highlights included study results regarding juvenile Chinook habitat use in the mainstem and development of steelhead modeling. The Corps is seeking presenters' permission to post the presentations and will post them once permission is received.

The next RM&E Team session is on June 7, 2022

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(draft) WATER Teams Update to the Managers Forum

Spring 2022

Steering Team Update

Per the WATER Manager's September 2021 guidance, the Steering Team has been meeting every other month and has streamlined regional coordination and communication through joint sessions with the RM&E Team. This approach has been effective in ensuring that partners stay updated on the Corps' budget, WATER technical team's work, and other regional efforts.

Technical Teams Updates

- **Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Team (RM&E)** - The current RM&E occurring in the basin is directed by the Willamette BiOp Injunction. The injunction studies are ongoing, and results have not yet been evaluated. The first Bi-Annual Status Report on injunction RM&E measures was provided to the Court on February 28, 2022. More information and preliminary results are expected to be available Summer 2022 as part of the 2nd Bi-Annual Status Report. Future efforts will be identified and included in these status reports and made publicly available as they become final.

The following RM&E studies are currently being implemented as part of the injunction measures:

- Screwtrapping above and below various projects throughout the Basin.
- Active tag studies at Foster and Green Peter Dams to evaluate interim spill operations.

Planning is underway to implement additional RM&E required by the injunction.

Additionally, the annual Willamette Fisheries Science Review was held virtually in April and detailed results and learnings from various RM&E efforts conducted over the last year. Once available, presentations can be accessed via the Corps' website:

https://pweb.crohms.org/tmt/documents/FPOM/2010/Willamette_Coordination/WFSR/

- **Habitat Technical Team (HTT)** - 2021 marked the last year of funding from the Meyer Memorial Trust and OWEB-focused investment partnership. With the sunset of those two funds, BPA is only funder remaining and the HTT budget decreased from \$2M to 800K annually. The decrease in funding is expected to result in changes to the types of projects that cooperators submit, as well as challenges with the funding timeline; the HTT is considering options to increase flexibility for cooperators. For FY23, the HTT received one project application, which is less than the number of applications anticipated or realized in the past.
- **Flow & Water Quality Team (Flow)**- Following a dry and worrisome winter, April precipitation greatly contributed to filling Willamette Basin reservoirs and the water supply outlook is now good. Due to the increase in water, mainstem and tributary BiOp flow targets are currently being met and water storage for the conservation flow season also looks good. Additionally, the Corps has been able to implement operational injunction measures, including delayed refill at Cougar Dam and filling to the spillway crest at Lookout Point and Dexter Dams.
- **Fish Facility Design Working Group (WFDWG)** - No Update.
Willamette Fish Passage O&M (WFPOM) - No Update.

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[Note: This is the Final Version provided to Managers on May 19, 2022]

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER) WATER Teams Update to the Managers Forum Spring 2022

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- **Habitat Technical Team (HTT)** - BPA has made available \$800k in FY23 for habitat restoration projects that meet the Action Agencies mitigation obligations under the 2008 BiOp. Through the HTT project selection process, 1 application for a habitat restoration project was received from a third-party sponsor and is currently under review for technical merit. Historically, leveraging of non-BPA funds has been common and multiple funding sources utilized. OWEB general funding, and other funding sources, are still available to be leveraged for FY 23 Willamette Basin projects. Nonetheless, limited sponsor staff capacity and project readiness appear to be the significant factors influencing the current number of applications submitted rather than availability of funding.

HTT Program Actions (since 2008)	Amount Completed
Riparian acres improved (to improve riparian habitat, such as planting native vegetation or control of noxious weeds).	3,663.22
Miles of enhanced or newly accessible habitat (by providing passage or removing barriers).	8.19
Miles of improved stream complexity (by adding wood or boulder structures or reconnecting existing habitat such as side channels).	9.47

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- **Flow & Water Quality Team (Flow)**- Following a dry and worrisome winter, April precipitation greatly contributed to filling Willamette Basin reservoirs and the water supply outlook is now good. Due to the increase in water, mainstem and tributary BiOp flow targets are currently being met and water storage for the conservation flow season also looks good. Additionally, the Corps has been able to implement operational injunction measures, including delayed refill at Cougar Dam and filling to the spillway crest at Lookout Point and Dexter Dams.
- **Fish Facility Design Working Group (WFDWG) & Willamette Fish Passage O&M (WFPOM)** - No Updates.