

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)
Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RM&E)
USACE/ODFW/NMFS Sub-group
July 6, 2016

FACILITATION TEAM'S SUMMARY

The following summary is intended to capture basic discussion, decisions and actions, as well as point out actions or issues that may need further discussion at upcoming meetings. This summary is not intended to be the "record" of the meeting, only a reminder for RM&E members.

ACTION	WHO	BY WHEN
Submit final prioritization ranking to the Corps.	RM&E members	July 12th
Revise concept papers viewed as high priority and resubmit to the Corps over the next few weeks.	ODFW & NMFS; other agencies if desired	Ongoing
Review proposals and provide written comment	RM&E members	August meeting

RM&E Members present: Stephanie Burchfield (NMFS), Tom Friesen (ODFW), Bernadette Graham-Hudson (ODFW), Rich Piaskowski (USACE);

Facilitation Team: Facilitator: Emily Plummer; Facilitation Support: Tory Hines, DS Consulting.

Welcome and Process

Emily Plummer, DS Consulting Facilitator, welcomed the group and noted that the purpose of the day's session was to clarify the management questions and data needs identified as priority by ODFW and NMFS, and to build understanding around what the Corps needs in order to evaluate a concept. Emily asked the group for additional items that they would like to address during the session, the group noted: clarifying what is "monitoring" and what is not; defining criteria for research prioritization, and reviewing prioritization rankings. Emily asked the group to articulate what 'success' looks like for the session; the group listed the following successes:

- Reaching agreement on management questions for some of the concepts.
- Working towards agreement on monitoring needs and a definition of monitoring.
- Focusing the discussion to the above mentioned agenda items.
- Creating an issue list that will be discussed and worked through at other RM&E team meetings.

Formulating Management Questions & Identifying Information Needs for Concept Papers

The group decided to walk through ODFW's concept paper detailing APH 09-01-CGR to discuss how the agencies utilize information gathered to inform management decisions, how to articulate management questions, and what information needs to be included in the concept paper in order for the Corps to fully understand the information need.

For APH 09-01-CGR, ODFW and NMFS ranked this project 4 and 5, while the Corps ranked it with the lowest priority of 1. ODFW noted that Cougar is a high priority due to ongoing questions surrounding reintroduction and how they adaptively manage into the future. They shared that from the ODFW perspective, baseline monitoring should occur every year to maintain a consistent dataset that can be used to inform decisions over the years. The Corps asked that data 'gaps' are identified to help illustrate the need for the study. ODFW and NMFS responded that there may not be specific data 'gaps' that can be pointed to in the dataset, however, if the data was not collected, it would create potentially impactful

gaps. NMFS added that more data is needed to help shape long-term operations and that in this changing environment, a consistent dataset is necessary to adaptively manage for fish.

The Corps explained that APH 09-01-CGR received a low priority ranking because there are multiple years of data with little variability. From the Corps' perspective, the dataset has been used to inform the trap and haul operation, which is now being implemented as best as possible. Moreover, until there is a significant infrastructure change, there is little to learn from spawning surveys above the dam.

As the group discussed the APH 09-01-CGR concept, they coalesced around information needs and management actions which all agencies present expressed value in exploring. They were:

1. Using data collected to refine the expansion count; and,
 2. Using data collected to inform the distribution of releases.
- **ACTION:** ODFW and NMFS will make sure that these two information needs and the associated management questions are included in the concept paper.

Rich suggested that previous year's data could be analyzed by a specialist to see what patterns, trends and additional information can be gleaned from the dataset to inform management decisions. Bernadette noted that this work could be done in-house.

Rich provided insight on what the Corps needs to see articulated in the concept papers in order to evaluate the studies for prioritization and funding:

- What is the relationship between the data, management questions and management actions?
- How is the data applied to management decisions?
- What are the data gaps that need to be filled and why?
- Clarify if the information need is not related to an action or effectiveness evaluation so that the Corps knows if they are overlooking something (the Corps is focused specifically on the RPA actions and effectiveness evaluation).
 - If connected, articulate the link between the information need and the actions or effectiveness evaluation.
- Identify what other data sources have been considered as part of the process to assess the information need (example, did ODFW incorporate the 2% threshold data in their assessment of information needs for APH 09-01-CGR?).

Stephanie appreciated the Corps clarification and stated that fish managers should brainstorm on refining the justifications provided in the concept papers. Bernadette expressed concern over revising the concept papers, noting that it is a significant amount of work with no guarantee that it will make a difference. Rich emphasized that revising the concept papers is necessary in order for the Corps to consider a project and justify funding it. Rich continued that the Corps funds programs as needed and as resources allow; if fish agencies can describe where there is a data gap using the current dataset and highlight the management implication with this data, then the Corps will revisit prioritization. Bernadette also shared that it is at times difficult to determine performance indicators, such as the 2% threshold that Rich mentioned, as fisheries management is very dynamic and takes many factors into consideration. Rich explained that the Corps needs to have some way to measure the effect of the actions.

The Corps also noted that the deadline for final concept paper rankings is July 12, 2016, however, Rich suggested that these prioritization conversations can continue beyond the 12th. The deadline allows the Corps to start the proposal process, however, the RM&E Team can re-prioritize the concepts as they deem fit. Additionally, concept papers can be edited after July 12th if needed.

- **ACTION:** NMFS and ODFW will revise the concept papers they view as high priority and resubmit them to the Corps/RM&E Team.
- **ACTION:** NMFS and ODFW will submit their ‘final’ prioritization list to the Corps by July 12.
- **ACTION:** The Corps will solicit proposals for the priority studies/projects.
- **ACTION:** The RM&E Team will continue discussions around the priorities and details of the concept papers and if needed, revisit the ‘final’ prioritization and papers over the coming weeks.

Next Steps

ODFW and NMFS will revise their priority concept papers to more thoroughly articulate how the data is used to inform management decisions, data gaps, other sources considered in determining the information needs, and rationale behind the needs. All RM&E members will continue with the prioritization process and provide ‘final’ prioritization to the Corps by July 12th. The RM&E Team will continue discussions around the prioritization and adjust the list if needed. The Corps will continue with the process to request proposals and the RM&E Team will review and provide written comment at the August meeting.

The DS Consulting Team will continue to work with the RM&E Team to resolve issues and build understanding. They will help the group work to:

- Clarify what is “monitoring” and what is not;
- Work towards agreement on monitoring needs;
- Reach agreement on management questions;
- Review prioritization rankings; and,
- Define criteria for research prioritization.

The Facilitation Team thanked the group for their hard work and progress, pointing out that they came to general agreement on the value of a couple of information needs and management actions. Additionally, the group agreed on next steps and to continue working together to refine the prioritization rankings as needed.

This summary is respectfully submitted to you by DS Consulting. Suggested edits are welcome and can be provided to Tory at tory@dsconsult.co.