

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

Steering Team & RM&E Team Meetings

April 5, 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 provided by Corps]

Steering Team Session

Participants: Leslie Bach (NPCC), Brad Eppard (Corps), Nancy Gramlich (ODEQ), Salina Hart (Corps), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Fenton Khan (Corps), Cathy Kellon (NPCC), Rachel Laird (Corps), Anne Mullan (NOAA), Christine Peterson (BPA), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Ida Royer (Corps), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Dan Spear (BPA), Kate Wells (NOAA), Luke Whitman (ODFW).

2/2/22 Joint Meeting Summary: The Steering and RM&E teams approved the summary with no additional edits.

2022 Water Year Forecast and Reservoir Status: Salina Hart, Flow Team Chair/Corps, presented on the 2022 Water Year forecast and reservoir status. She noted that due to dry conditions in the basin, the Corps is managing for tributary minimum operations per the 2008 BiOP and is prioritizing temperature management for the mainstem instead of mainstem flow targets. The basin is experiencing below normal water supply conditions for precipitation and the percentage of snowpack is very low. Earlier in the winter, snowpack was above the historic record; however, the conditions have since become drier and the snowpack has started receding earlier than normal. This is a concern, as the snowpack is needed to support summer inflows. Drought conditions for 2022 are also concerning. The seasonal temperature and precipitation outlook for the region for the period of April – June 2022 was below normal. Salina noted that the ESP10 Natural Water Supply Forecast for 2022 looks to be even worse than the 2021 forecast. Salina reviewed the RESSIM Model Assumptions for the projects, which included flow management for injunction operations and current reservoir status (See PowerPoint Presentation previously emailed to team members).

Corps Budget Update: Ida reported that the Corps FY22 Budget appropriation is \$74.3M, which includes \$36M of Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding and \$38.3M in additional CRFM funding (this includes the FY22 PBUD of \$3.5M). The infrastructure funding is subject to budgetary guidance requiring that the funds be used for Willamette injunction requirements. Ida noted that, with the FY22 Budget, the Corps is fully funded for the known capability for the Willamette injunction measures, which is \$73M. The FY22 Budget will be prioritized for Willamette injunction requirements, including the rebuild of the DEX adult fish facility. Any excess funds will be applied to ongoing projects on the Columbia.

Kelly noted that ODFW has concerns with the DEX adult fish facility design and would like to provide input to the Corps, recognizing that it would likely mean extending the injunction timeline. Ida noted that the injunction schedule is mandated by the court. She offered to relay ODFW's interest in providing input and support for an extension of the schedule with the Corps' legal team.

→ **Action:** Ida will share ODFW's interest in providing input on the DEX adult fish facility design and support for an extension of the schedule with the Corps' legal injunction team.

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

Updates/Coordination on Ad Hoc Process: Mike noted that the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and State of Oregon have been brought into the conversation and the group is meeting on a bi-weekly basis. The group is working on a more extensive purpose statement to provide to leadership and other stakeholders. Emily noted that she is working to schedule a May Managers Forum which could be an opportunity to share the purpose statement with the managers. WATER partners expressed appreciation for the opportunity to continue the conversation.

Next Steering Team Session: June 7, 2022 at 2:00 PM

Joint Steering & RM&E Session

Participants: *Leslie Bach (NPCC), Brad Eppard (Corps), Nancy Gramlich (ODEQ), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Fenton Khan (Corps), Cathy Kellon (NPCC), Rachel Laird (Corps), Anne Mullan (NOAA), Christine Peterson (BPA), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Ida Royer (Corps), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Dan Spear (BPA), Kate Wells (NOAA), Luke Whitman (ODFW).*

WATER Partner Updates

- **NOAA:** Kate appreciated Salina's presentation to the group. Anne reiterated the forecast for a historically dry year in 2022 and the opportunity to learn from 2021 experiences. Kate noted that NOAA continues to work with the Corps on the DEIS process.
- **USFWS:** Mike noted that USFWS has been developing a national climate change action framework. The region has produced a regional action plan for FY22 that covers 37 actions across all programs that will be implemented in FY22. Actions range from reduction of disposable plastics to climate risk assessments for facilities and includes innovative ways to think about climate adaptation. USFWS continues work on the draft Reintroduction Plan for Bull Trout in the North Santiam. The agency has met with partners to review the draft and is in the process of revising the draft for final review, with an expected completion by May 2022.
- **ODEQ:** Nancy noted that ODEQ is working with 179 entities in the Willamette to create and update improvement plans related to mercury. ODEQ is working with USFWS to create more stringent standards for the temperature TMDL. The first draft of revisions is expected in 2024.
- **NPCC:** Cathy noted that Ida Royer's 2/15 presentation to NPCC's Fish and Wildlife Committee Meeting on progress and next steps for the Willamette BiOp was well received. Louis Pitt, Jr. Director of Governmental Affairs for the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, has been appointed as the new Oregon member of the Council. He will serve as the Fish and Wildlife representative.
- **Corps:** Ida noted that the Corps is transitioning to a hybrid work environment in May. She inquired whether other partners were interested in resuming in-person meetings? Oregon agencies reported that they are also returning to the office in May; NOAA is expected to return in late June or July; USFWS has returned to the office on a half-time basis and will begin a hybrid schedule in May. Emily suggested that the team continue to meet virtually for now and reconsider having in-person meetings once more agencies have returned to the office.
- **ODFW:** Kelly appreciated the invitation and opportunity for ODFW to visit outplanting sites with BLM and the Corps, as well as the opportunity to provide input on the Hatchery Transition Plan as part of the EIS process. She noted that the Private Forest Accord, passed by the Oregon Legislature, will result in several new positions at ODFW and include positions related to stream flow, GIS and beaver biology. ODFW is also receiving dedicated conservation funding for fish passage projects to be completed by June 2023. Kelly reported that she attended the USFWS' Climate Academy Training, and highly recommends it. In fish news, Luke noted that 2,500 Steelhead have been observed over Willamette Falls to date, and the spring Chinook fishery has started to pick up. Luke appreciated the Corps' efforts to get PIT tags added to the screwtrap contract and ODFW hopes to add PIT infrastructure where feasible (they are working with Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission to explore options for infrastructure).
- There were no updates from BPA and CTGR.

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

WATER Team Updates

- **HTT:** Eric Andersen was not able to attend the meeting; however, he shared an update via email. The HTT Technical Committee will hold its next meeting on April 7. HTT is still soliciting applications for habitat projects; the deadline to submit applications is May 2 and can be submitted via OWEBs online application system ([Home Page - OWEB Grant Application \(state.or.us\)](#)). Contact Eric at ejandersen@bpa.gov with any questions.
- **RM&E:** There were no updates.
- **EIS Schedule Updates:** The public virtual room can be accessed via <https://gather.cdmsmith.com/v/V6zaxVGM1eZ>
- **Injunction Updates:** Public information about the Willamette Valley Injunction can be accessed via: <https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Locations/Willamette-Valley/Injunction/>.

RM&E Team Session

Participants: Leslie Bach (NPCC), Brad Eppard (Corps), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Fenton Khan (Corps), Rachel Laird (Corps), Anne Mullan (NOAA), Christine Peterson (BPA), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Jeremy Romer (ODFW), Lawrence Schwabe (CTGR), Luke Whitman (ODFW), Jeff Ziller (ODFW).

FY21/FY22 Studies Updates: Fenton noted that the Foster active tag study was implemented in March and will be ongoing until June. The Green Peter study will test nighttime-only spill and a continuous 24-hour spill. Nighttime spill operations will occur during April 2 – April 15; the 24-hour continuous spill operation will occur during April 16-30. *[Facilitator’s Note: In summary edits, Fenton noted that the Foster active tag study is being conducted by PNNL to evaluate spillway operations and PNNL is also evaluating the Green Peter injunction spill operations. He noted that PNNL tagged and released the first groups of fish for the nighttime spill treatment during April 2-3. PNNL will tag and release the second groups of fish on April 16-17 for the 24/7 spill treatment.]*

Screwtrapping Updates: Fenton noted that the Forest Service road leading to the Cougar head of reservoir screwtrap has been closed by for maintenance; the researchers are working to find a different road to access the screwtrap at head-of-reservoir at Cougar. Additionally, the contractor has not been able to operate the screwtrap below Green Peter on 24-hour/7 days-a-week basis due to high flows and lots of woody debris passing the spillway into the river downstream. *[Facilitator’s Note: In summary edits, Fenton noted that the contractor is trying to operate the screw trap as much as feasible, but the safety of staff and potential damage to the screw trap is preventing 24-hour operations.]*

Anne noted that, as there currently is no screwtrap above Detroit, it would be good to have PIT-tagged fish released above Detroit to understand the benefits of spill. Brad noted that the plan is to have a screwtrap above Detroit in 2023. He suggested Anne contact Greg Taylor regarding NOAA’s interest in PIT-tagged fish above Detroit.

Luke noted that ODFW is working to coordinate screwtrapping efforts downriver. They are working to trouble-shoot the PIT tag monitors at Willamette Falls. Luke noted that the readers are out-of-date, and the monitors have not been running continuously. The antenna on the adult ladder is working, as is the juvenile bypass antenna; however, it is out-of-date, and the data is not sufficient to incorporate into PTAGIS. Mike suggested that it could be helpful to adopt standard operating procedures for handling PIT tag data in the basin. It was suggested that the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission has some protocols which might provide some guidance.

There was a request to review the screw trap and active tag data at a future RM&E Team meeting. Fenton noted that active tag data is not reported in real time. The researchers have to get the data from receivers, process the data, and will need to perform QA/QC on the data before a draft report is ready. Fenton sends out the bi-weekly screw trap reports to the RME Team. Additionally, aside from the bi-weekly screw trap reports, the Corps is not able to share data outside the biannual reports to the Court. However, the previous screwtrap operator, Cramer, will be presenting a summary of the screwtrap data that was obtained prior to the injunction at the Willamette Fisheries Science Review next week. Fenton

Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

was encouraged to share any general data that he is able to share regarding the active tags at Green Peter (for example: whether the tags are working, if data is being received and how the effort is going).

Surrogate Program: Fenton did not have any updates on the surrogate program. Anne noted that some of the winter steelhead going over Willamette Falls are making it up to Minto, which suggests the potential for future take of winter steelhead for the surrogate program.

Willamette Fisheries Science Review: Fenton noted that the annual review will be held virtually on April 12 and 13, from 9 am -12:30 pm each day. He will email more information about the review.

Reminder: The deadline for comments on the draft technical report: "*High-Head Bypass Fish Passage Investigations: Year Two*" from the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) is April 25, 2022. Comments can be provided to Fenton at Fenton.O.Khan@usace.army.mil.

The next RM&E Team session is on May 3, 2022 at 2:00 PM.