

**Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)
Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RM&E)
September 23, 2021**

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

Facilitator's Summary

Present for all or part of the meeting: Brad Eppard (COE), Fenton Kahn (COE), Michael Hudson (USFWS), Dave Jepsen (ODFW), Anne Mullan (NMFS), Jim Myers (NMFS), Christine Petersen (BPA), Kelly Reis (ODFW), Luke Whitman (ODFW);

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

Welcome and Housekeeping - Emily welcomed the group and conducted a round of introductions. The RM&E team approved the July 6, Joint Steering/RM&E Team Summary, and reviewed the June 26th RM&E meeting summary. The Corps requested additional time for review; Fenton will provide edits to DSC by September 27. Pending review (and no substantive edits) by the Corps, the summary will be considered approved.

Wild Fish Surrogate Program Update

Fenton noted that the OSU surrogate program is in the process of collecting Chinook salmon eggs for potential studies next year, including screw trap efficiency testing. OSU was not able to collect winter steelhead eggs for 2023 because of low adult returns this spring. The surrogate program does, however, have 2-year-old steelhead for potential studies at Foster in FY22. Fenton noted that the surrogate program may not be able to rear fish for any additional studies, including the interim measures because of capacity and resources. The screw trap efficiency fish will take up a lot of capacity. Kelly suggested prioritizing OSU rearing surrogate fish for studies and maybe using the hatcheries for fish for screwtrap efficiency testing.

Update on Injunction Impacts on WATER RM&E Process

Fenton reported that per the September Court ruling, the Corps is working to implement the injunction order. The injunction order identified an expert panel composed of experts from the Plaintiffs, NMFS, Corps and two ad hoc experts from USGS/USFWS. [For transparency, it was noted that some WATER RM&E team members are/may be on the Injunction RM&E panel.] The expert panel is currently considering what research, monitoring and evaluation studies may be needed related to the injunction measures. An Injunction RM&E plan is due to the Court in early December. Fenton noted that the Corps is obligated to do what the expert panel and Court requires, and funding and surrogate fish will be prioritized for those studies. The Corps is in the process now of planning for surrogate fish that may be required for Injunction RM&E studies. Fenton added that they are working with OSU to assess capacity for raising fish for the court-ordered studies and may have to shift the screw trap fish back to the hatchery to allow for raising fish for the injunction studies.

Because of the nature of the court ordered Injunction RM&E process, it was clarified that the WATER RM&E work is separate, and the WATER Teams will not participate in vetting the Injunction RM&E studies. Some WATER RM&E members thought that once the Injunction RM&E studies are made public there could be benefit in discussing the studies for awareness and to inform WATER RM&E. Additionally, Anne explained that the RPA requiring the WATER process is still in effect and being implemented. Further, the injunction order specifically addresses Interim Measures 5, 6, 7, and 20, however, other interim measures (such as 2020 IMs 1 and 2) that are not part of the injunction order may

have study needs associated with them that the WATER RM&E Team could deliberate on. Jim added that there may be opportunities to piggy-back on Injunction studies (once details are public), for example, if a PIT tag array is installed, the infrastructure might be available for other studies. Mike added that there is more to be done within the WATER process, outside of what is mandated by the court, to bridge the gap between the 2008 and 2024 BiOps, including sub-basin planning and reintroduction efforts.

Brad and Fenton noted that the Corps' funding and resource priority is to address what is required under the injunction; if there is excess funding, then other WATER RM&E studies could be considered.

Meeting Efficiencies

Emily noted that there had been requests at the Manager and Steering team levels to consider what meeting efficiencies might be helpful for the teams at this time. It was suggested that the October Steering and RM&E team meetings be combined into one meeting date, while maintaining the distinction between the two teams. RM&E Team members agreed with this approach. DS Consulting will send out a Doodle Poll with the goal of scheduling a joint meeting for late-October.

And with that, Emily thanked the group and adjourned the meeting.

The next regular meeting of the RM&E Team is October 28; however, this date may be changed depending on Doodle Poll results for a Joint RM&E/Steering Team meeting.

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