

**Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)
Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RM&E) Team Meeting
August 25, 2016**

Facilitator’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 | RESPONSIBLE PARTY | BY WHEN |
|---|-------------------|---------|
| Send out draft MF RM&E plan summary | Stephanie & Rich | 8/26 |
| Revise monitoring definitions and provide 2 nd draft to RM&E team via Google Sheets. | Stephanie | 8/31 |
| Draft monitoring ‘umbrella’ statement and add to definitions on Google Sheets | Mike | 8/31 |
| Review and provide edits (via <i>suggestions</i> tool) on Google Sheets | RM&E Team | 9/9 |
| Help with next steps in clarifying the RPA requirements. | DSC & Corps | ASAP |
| Update the prioritization process description to reflect process additions. | Emily and Rich | 9/22 |
| Coordinate Salem location for September RM&E meeting | DSC & Corps | 9/22 |

RM&E Members present for all or part of the meeting: Stephanie Burchfield (NMFS), Ian Chane (Corps), Bernadette Graham-Hudson (ODFW), Mike Hudson (USFWS), Rich Piaskowski (Corps);

RM&E Members on the phone for all or part of the meeting: Melissa Jundt (NMFS), Dave Leonhardt (Corps), Lawrence Schwabe (Grand Ronde).

Facilitators: Emily Plummer & Donna Silverberg; **Support:** Tory Hines, DS Consulting.

Welcome & Review Meeting Summary

Facilitator, Emily Plummer, welcomed the group, noting that the purpose of the day’s session was to promote meaningful and constructive input from the RM&E Team by building common understanding and definitions of terms used by the RM&E Team and refining the prioritization process.

The group approved the edits made to the July 18th RM&E meeting summary and reviewed the action items noted during the July meeting. All of the action items were complete, with the exception of the following ongoing actions that the group will continue to track:

- Potential BPA funding opportunities still need to be discussed at the Steering Team, however, Emily has coordinated with Dan Spear for a report out at an upcoming Steering Team meeting.
- The Corps and NMFS need to work together to clarify monitoring criteria as they relate to the RPAs. It was noted that this is a bigger discussion than just at the RM&E Team level and that it will take time and multiple conversations. Rich Piaskowski (Corps) shared that post effectiveness criteria have been established for Cougar downstream passage improvements; however criteria still need to be developed for other adult and juvenile passage improvements. DS Consulting will continue to help track and facilitate this conversation.

Developing Common Understanding: Monitoring Definitions

As a team, the group reviewed and discussed ideas around types of monitoring, different phases of monitoring and approaches to defining monitoring. Emily reiterated that the purpose of this definition exercise is to help the team have more productive conversations by making sure that they are using common language to discuss RM&E. It has become clear in the group's discussions that there are multiple understandings of what constitute the various types of monitoring, and as a result, when discussing concept papers they often reach impasse.

The group referred to the Pacific Northwest Agency Monitoring Partnership, as well as edits provided by Karl Weist (NPCC) on the draft monitoring definitions from the July meeting. The following questions, concerns, and thoughts were expressed:

- Should the definitions be broad or specific? For instance tied directly to the BiOp, RPAs, or funding sources?
 - The definitions need to capture the needs of the WATER RM&E program.
- Monitoring needs evolve over time, for example, a monitoring effort that starts as post-effectiveness may eventually need to shift into uncertainty research (if information is needed to refine a management action) or shift into long-term monitoring (if post-effectiveness results are adequate), depending on what data suggest.
- There are different scales of monitoring effectiveness, for example at the project level or action level (action effectiveness monitoring can be interpreted as monitoring a suite of projects' effectiveness, where the action is the RPA action).
- RM&E efforts may not always fit into a single category. For instance, baseline monitoring could be obtained by conducting most of the other types of RM&E. Also, baseline monitoring is more about the context for how the information will be used. (Baseline monitoring is usually to describe existing conditions).
 - Baseline monitoring does not necessarily need to be a stand-alone definition, as it seems to be a part of all of the other types of monitoring.
 - Rich clarified that CRFM funds can only fund RM&E that is associated with addressing the RPA, which excludes baseline and long-term monitoring, and includes planning, design, and post-effectiveness monitoring.
- The line between post-effectiveness monitoring and long-term monitoring needs to be more clearly articulated. This is one area that the group has gotten hung-up in the past.
 - The Corps differentiates post-effectiveness evaluations and long-term monitoring according to when an action is considered in-service, as discussed at the June 23 meeting. In-service is determined when a post-effectiveness evaluation is completed (usually when results are acceptable); any additional monitoring after an action is "in-service" would then be considered long-term monitoring.
- Should the RM&E Team cue up a VSP type of monitoring program through this effort? For example a population-scale monitoring effort in order to assess if the RPAs are met?
 - Does NMFS need this level of information? If so, what exactly would be needed?
 - The Corps and NMFS need to further clarify what is needed to 'meet the RPA'; this will help inform monitoring needs.
 - NMFS & ODFW consider additional monitoring beyond post-effectiveness monitoring, as part of requirements to meet the RPAs; the Corps shared that monitoring needs beyond post-effectiveness evaluations have not been discussed before and it is not clear monitoring beyond post-effectiveness monitoring is part of the RPA. Defining these terms and expectations is important to know in order for funding and meeting RPA requirements.
 - The RPA does identify certain kinds of monitoring that should be happening, for example PHOS and spawning surveys.

- The Corps believes aspects of the RPA requiring annual pHOS and spawning surveys have been addressed at this stage in the program. Continuing surveys and studies where there are no actions planned to address pHOS or spawning does not inform implementation of the RPA. Preparing written reintroduction plans for each subbasin and species would allow additional RM&E needs to be identified. .

The group agreed to continue working to define the various types of monitoring. They thought that the definitions should be tied to the RPAs; they should not be tied to specific funding sources (CRFM or O&M), however, can align with the various funding criteria. Rich clarified the Corps would still need to internally review the type of RM&E to determine what funding sources would be considered (e.g. anadromous salmonid passage uncertainty research and post-effectiveness evaluations - CRFM; anadromous salmonid passage long-term monitoring - O&M).

After much review, the RM&E team coalesced around the edits provided by Karl and wanted to incorporate some aspects of the PNAMP definitions into what Karl provided. Additionally, they agreed that there is a need for an ‘umbrella’ statement preceding the definitions, which should describe that monitoring is dynamic and the needs and thus type of monitoring can evolve over time. For example, a long-term monitoring effort can lend itself to effectiveness monitoring, or post-effectiveness monitoring can reveal an issue with the design of a structure and thus require uncertainty monitoring.

- **ACTION:** Stephanie Burchfield (NMFS) will create a second draft of the monitoring definitions, which incorporates aspects of the RM&E edited definitions with PNAMP definitions. She will provide this draft to the group via Google Sheets by Wednesday, August 31st. The group will then provide suggested edits (using the ‘suggestions’ tool) by September 9th.
- **ACTION:** Mike will draft the ‘umbrella’ statement to include as a precursor to the definitions; he will add it to the Google Sheets by the 31st for group edits by the 9th.

To further develop understanding around the meaning of the types of monitoring, the group thought that a worthwhile exercise would be to walk through the FY17 objectives and state which types of monitoring they fall under; this will also help point out anything missing in the definitions.

- **ACTION:** Once the definitions are fleshed out, the team will look at the FY17 objectives and work together to clarify what type(s) of monitoring they fall into.

Developing Common Understanding: Agency Prioritization Criteria

Facilitator, Donna Silverberg, explained that the Columbia River System Configuration Team found it very helpful for the agencies/tribes to share their prioritization criteria in order to develop understanding of each other’s priorities and perspectives. RM&E members provided their agencies’ criteria for *high*, *medium*, and *low* priorities (see attached chart of agency/government prioritization criteria). They reviewed and discussed as a team the similarities, differences and common criteria that the members are using. After reviewing the various criteria, it became clear that there was significant common ground in the way that the individual member agencies/governments were ranking. The table below lists the common criteria across all of the members.

| High | Medium | Low | Do not fund |
|--|--|---|--|
| Informs RPA action, clear link to RPA (downstream passage, reintroduction, etc.) Project needs require immediate funding, informs | Informs RPA action, clear link to RPA. Project needs do not require immediate funding, does not | Not critical to inform implementing the RPAs or not called for in the RPAs. | Information is not needed to implement the RPAs. |

| | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|--|--|
| near term decisions. | inform near-term decisions | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|--|--|

In regards to the individual agency’s criteria, both NMFS (medium) and ODFW (high) listed ‘fish management’ as a prioritization criterion. This has been a sticking point in the past, and Rich asked for clarification as to what they mean by ‘fish management’. Bernadette Graham-Hudson (ODFW) and Stephanie provided some examples.

- Information informing fish management decisions relative to the dams, including:
 - When and where to outplant NOR fish;
 - Decisions around releasing early fry into the reservoirs;
 - When to go to natural origin spawners;
 - How to operate the fish traps to best suit the reintroduction needs;
 - Whether or not to hold adults before outplanting;
 - The number of outplanting sites

Rich noted that the RM&E Team needs further clarification of fish management, how it relates to the RPA, and what the Corps’ requirements are to address fish management in the RPAs. He continued that there is not common understanding of what’s in the RPA regarding RM&E, what’s been done, and what is still needed. For instance, the RPA says to do spawning surveys to evaluate hatchery effects. Research is conducted and the Corps feels that enough information is gathered to meet the need, thus the Corps would consider the intent of the RPA to have been fulfilled. If others do not think that the intent is met, the region needs to work on clarifying this together. Bernadette noted that it depends on how close of a link to the RPA the Corps feels is necessary. Stephanie noted that there is also question as to how much data the agencies think are needed. **This conversation, as noted above, needs to be addressed at the Managers level (G4 and Steering Team) and guidance passed on to the RM&E Team.**

Refining the Prioritization Process

Ian Chane, Corps, joined the RM&E Team to help clarify the Corps’ internal Columbia River Fish Mitigation (CRFM) funding sideboards. He explained that although there is no written guidance that the Corps can provide, he can provide description of the policy guidance that the Corps is operating under. He noted that the CRFM funds are general construction funds, which are congressionally authorized and thus have certain parameters. Additionally, there are individual project authorities that play into the funding process as well. Ian also noted that there are other authorities that the Corps can explore if there is an RM&E need that cannot be funded by CRFM, including, but not limited to Operations and Maintenance funds. Mike asked for more information on the other authorities, noting that if they had a better idea of the flexibility of the funds and the sideboards it would be helpful. Ian thought that it would be better for the RM&E Team to focus on the RM&E needs and let the Corps try to find the right funding source. He noted that some of the other funding sources include the Corps budget, continuing and general investigation authorities, as well as others.

Generally, CRFM funds are used for anadromous salmonid fish passage actions. **CRFM can fund RM&E to determine alternative options and feasibility of modifying facilities for passage.** Once there is sufficient research to move forward with a decision, and there is no longer a need to keep research going to inform the action, then the research no longer fits within CRFM sideboards. The CRFM funds **do not fund**:

- Research for resident fish such as Bull Trout or lamprey.
- Hatchery actions (the Minto and Foster work was tied directly to fish passage; acclimation work was allowed for in the RPA, so this could be funded with CRFM as well).
- Habitat research (CRFM can fund habitat work that informs an RPA action, if there is a strong link to downstream passage).
- Offsite actions that are unrelated to the projects (such as improving passage at Willamette Falls; CRFM could, however, fund research at the Falls that relates to addressing the WP RPA).

Ian noted that it is important that the Corps stays within the funding parameters in order to continue to receive the funds. Rich noted that if there are projects that fall under O&M funds, Tammy Mackey is ready to cue those projects up in that funding cycle, which takes about two years to secure the funding.

The RM&E Team discussed how to proceed with RM&E prioritization in light of the potential funding constraints (CRFM funds are the most easily accessible, however limited in scope) and the RM&E needs in the Willamette Basin. They noted that funding sources and sideboards are important; however, the team should focus their prioritization solely on the RM&E needs to fulfill the RPA, and not limit the prioritization of projects based off of the availability of funds. Ian stressed that from his perspective, it is helpful to have an extensive list of needed projects, so that as funds become available, he can look to the list and quickly take action to secure the funding. He noted that if there is important RM&E work that needs to be done, the Corps is responsible for finding the funding necessary to implement.

- **AGREEMENT:** The RM&E team agreed to prioritize concepts and objectives based off the RM&E needs in the basin. They will maintain a comprehensive and prioritized project list, beyond what will be funded, in case more funds are made available.
 - This list will include project timelines and funding deadlines (when it would need to be funded in order to be relevant in informing RPA actions).
 - Projects will remain on the list until they are no longer relevant, regardless of the priority.

Ian and Rich shared their ideas on how the Corps can increase transparency around Corps' decisions on projects that are funded; RM&E members also contributed ideas. **The Corps agreed that moving forward they will be more transparent about their decisions by:**

- Providing the 'bottom line' of CRFM funds available for the fiscal year.
- Listing the projects that they will fund, including the Corps' rationale for decisions.
- Listing the projects that are 'non-starters' for the Corps (projects that they will not fund), including the Corps' rationale for decisions.
- Identify the Corps' priority projects that they will fund, regardless of a low RM&E ranking, including the Corps' rationale for decisions.
 - Rationale for the Corps' decisions will be provided via a Memorandum for the Record that will be sent to the RM&E and Steering Teams.
 - If there are conflicts with the Corp's decisions, they will be discussed at the RM&E meeting. If not resolved, they will elevate to the Steering Team for resolution.
- The RM&E's comprehensive, prioritized project list will be maintained (with details listed above) for the Corps to turn to if funding becomes available and they need to act quickly to fund a project. They will then report back to the RM&E Team on their actions.

Bernadette voiced concern that this process only requires the Corps to be transparent after the decisions, rather than attempting to resolve differences prior to a decision being made. She pointed out that the WATER Guidelines state that the WATER process is intended to be a consensus-seeking effort, and if the Corps is funding projects that they consider to be high priority, however, the rest of the region considers low priority, this is not consensus seeking. Furthermore, Mike Hudson (USFWS) noted that it is very rare that the Corps will fund something that they feel is low priority, but the fish managers feel is high priority. He continued that if the Corps will only fund what they feel is high priority, it diminishes the role that the other regional managers play in the WATER process, limiting them to an input team. Rich shared that from his perspective, this is the first year that these discussions have come up, as they have funded 90% of the projects in the past. However, now, as a result of where they are in the research, design and implementation, the RM&E Team is experiencing a process transition. He noted that developing longer-term RM&E plans for the sub-basins will help the Team's prioritization, for example like what he and Stephanie have been working on for the Middle Fork. Rich further shared that these differences at times between the Corps and fish managing agencies regarding prioritization relate to differences in

our agencies (missions, roles and responsibilities). The Corps is responsible for funding, designing, and implementing fish passage RM&E to address the RPA and may require more detail or different information for decision making than sought by fish agencies for implementing an action. Fish agencies may seek information to help meet fish management needs, however the Corps cannot fund unless they are necessary to meet the RPA.

The group continued brainstorming on how they can improve the prioritization process:

- Clarify the type of RM&E when possible;
- Prioritize based off the RM&E need, not the funding source;
- Rank concept first, then rank objectives (prioritizing concepts first will allow more space to build understanding and common ground as to what is needed in the Basin; the details of how to best meet the needs (objectives) can then be vetted and prioritized);
- Clarify RM&E members' ranking criteria (see attached chart of agency/government prioritization criteria)
- Combine RM&E members' rankings, not by averaging, but by creating a team list of high, medium, and low priorities.
- Rank concepts by agency from highest to lowest (e.g. 1-25).

The group reviewed the prioritization process;

1. Each agency prioritizes the concepts, including their rationales.
2. Combine/compile RM&E team rankings into joint RM&E prioritized list of high, medium, low priority concepts.
 - a. Do the same for objectives.
3. The Corps discusses prioritized list internally, using the transparency steps (listed above).
4. The Corps reports back to the RM&E Team on their decisions.
5. If there are issues with the Corps' decisions, the RM&E Team will discuss and elevate to the Steering Team if not resolved.

The RM&E Team will use this process moving forward; however, it was not clear if the Team was interested in going back through the FY 2017 projects. It was noted that there are conflicts regarding the RPA, specifically in regards to fish management. The RM&E Team may need guidance from the Steering Team on how to move forward on these issues, as they are sticking points in the prioritization conversation.

→ **ACTION:** Emily will work with Rich to get the prioritization process description updated with these additional steps. DS Consulting will help clarify the next steps in clarifying the RPA requirements.

Middle Fork RM&E Plan

Rich and Stephanie reported that they have been working together to put together a summary description of the draft Middle Fork RM&E plan. They do not yet have a draft plan, however, are prepared to provide the summary to the Steering Team and G4 for review later this week. The RM&E Team will then have an opportunity for review. Bernadette noted that at the August 11th Steering Team meeting, the Corps said that they would provide the draft plan. Providing the summary is not exactly following through with what they said they would do. Bernadette stressed that the WATER Teams are working to rebuild trust, and suggested that they provide the entire draft plan. Rich and Stephanie stressed that the draft plan is no longer accurate due to the progress that they made this week.

→ **ACTION:** The Corps and NMFS will send the Middle Fork summary to the Steering Team and G4 by the end of the week.

Next Steps

The Team will continue work on the monitoring definitions. The Middle Fork RM&E plan summary will be sent to the Steering Team and G4 for review. DS Consulting will draft a meeting summary and provide it to the group for review. They will also work with the region to identify the next steps needed in clarifying the RPA requirements. The next RM&E Team meeting will be on September 22nd. The meeting will be held in Salem to make it easier for other RM&E Team members to join in person. Donna and Emily thanked the group for their undivided attention and great work, and with that, the meeting was adjourned.

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

| | High | Medium | Low | Do not fund |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| Common Criteria for all RM&E Member Agency/Governments | <p>Informs RPA action, clear link to RPA (downstream passage, reintroduction, etc.)</p> <p>Project needs require immediate funding, informs near term decisions (this fiscal year)</p> | <p>Informs RPA action, clear link to RPA.</p> <p>Project needs do not require immediate funding, does not inform near-term decisions (funding required in upcoming fiscal years)</p> | <p>Not critical to inform implementing the RPAs or not called for in the RPAs.</p> | <p>Information is not needed to implement the RPAs.</p> |
| Criteria Specific to Agency/Government | | | | |
| Grand Ronde | <p>Research need contributes significantly to broad sense recovery, e.g. the Big 4, downstream passage, Detroit water control structure</p> | <p>Research need contributes moderately to broad sense recovery</p> | <p>Research contribution to broad sense recovery is relatively low</p> | |
| NMFS | <p>Downstream fish passage, <u>or</u>,</p> <p>RPA measure w/upcoming completion date, <u>or</u>,</p> <p>Middle Fork Willamette uncertainties</p> | <p>Fish management, <u>or</u>,</p> <p>Finish last year funded study <u>or</u>,</p> <p>Efficiency- piggy back on other RME to lower \$ <u>or</u>,</p> <p>Post-construction eval/monitoring, <u>or</u>,</p> <p>Required by RPA but not specifically, <u>or</u>, fish passage, <u>or</u></p> <p>Filling data gaps in models.</p> | <p>Not called for in the RPA, <u>or</u>,</p> <p>Could use “surrogate” data from other sites</p> | |
| NPCC | <p>Monitoring will help inform a critical data need for a planned or contemplated action, or will evaluate an action taken, to address the Council’s program by implementing the BiOp RPAs, interim the timeframe identified by the BiOp</p> | <p>Same as high, but timeframe moves it from the current fiscal year in terms of critically to within the next couple of years (potentially an ill-defined scale, but will also depend upon other actions</p> | <p>Not critical information, though the information would likely support contemplated actions identified in the BiOp</p> | |

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| | and informed by other planning docs the info gathered would be a critical need for the current fiscal year. | contemplated for the fiscal year.) | RPAs | |
| ODFW | <p>Fill critical data need to support reintroduction actions and/or downstream passage measures, <u>or</u>,</p> <p>Provide clear RPA link, <u>or</u>,</p> <p>Support annual fish mgmt. decisions related to Willamette Project Dams, <u>or</u>,</p> <p>Continue baseline data necessary to compare to post-action conditions, <u>or</u>,</p> <p>Inform other ongoing studies, <u>or</u>,</p> <p>Build on or complete past studies</p> | <p>Provide useful data, but not time sensitive (not needed to inform near-term decisions), <u>or</u></p> <p>Could be delayed for future year</p> | <p>Not critical for informing decisions, nor time sensitive, <u>or</u>,</p> <p>But could provide useful info</p> | <p>Info not relevant to RPA or Willamette</p> <p>Not appropriate for RME process</p> |
| USACE | <p>Supports a critical data need for planning, design, or evaluation an action to address NMFS RPA, <u>and</u>,</p> <p>The action has been identified through AA/services consultation in the RPA, or Corps planning document, <u>and</u>,</p> <p>Timeframe of the action requires the data in the next fiscal year</p> | <p>Same as HIGH except timeframe not critical for the fiscal year, <u>and</u>,</p> <p>Identified through AA/Services consultation, but needed in next 3 years</p> | <p>Does support a critical data need for planning, design or evaluation of an action to address NMFS RPA BUT the data is not needed in the next 3 years</p> | <p>Does not support a critical data need for planning, design, or evaluation of an action to address NMFS RPA</p> |
| USFWS | <p>Provide information toward improving downstream passage</p> <p>Those efforts that continue to provide information toward & set WATER up for effective evaluation of those</p> | | | |

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| | improvements e.g. sufficient baseline info, M&E plan, PIT infrastructure | | | |
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