

## Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)

### Steering Team Meeting – Planning Call

November 29, 2016

[http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/tmt/documents/FPOM/2010/Willamette\\_Coordination/](http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/tmt/documents/FPOM/2010/Willamette_Coordination/)

#### Facilitator's Summary

<i>Action</i>	<i>By Whom?</i>	<i>By When?</i>
Revise the purpose paragraph of the MF RM&E plan into a 1-page summary for the Managers' Forum meeting	Joyce, Marc, Rich, Stephanie	11/30
Draft a MF RM&E flow chart which includes all three passage options, work and studies that will be done, by when, decision points and other actions	Dan	ASAP
Coordinate a 'potential operation changes' workshop with project operation staff and the Steering Team regarding Middle Fork passage and operations issues	Ian and DSC	TBD
Next Steering Team meeting- 12/19 1-4 pm at DSC	ALL	December 19 <sup>th</sup>

**Participants on the Call:** Leslie Bach (NPCC), Stephanie Burchfield (NMFS), Joyce Casey (USACE), Ian Chane (USACE), Chris Fontecchio (NMFS General Council), Bernadette Graham-Hudson (ODFW), Nancy Gramlich (ODEQ), Eric Hein (USFWS), Marc Liverman (NMFS), and Rich Piaskowski (USACE).

**Facilitator:** Donna Silverberg; Support: Emily Stranz, DS Consulting

#### Welcome, Introductions, & Follow-up

Facilitator, Donna Silverberg, welcomed the group, noting that the purpose of the day's call was to touch base on how the Steering Team would like to address the draft Middle Fork RM&E Plan at the December 1<sup>st</sup> Managers' Forum meeting. She noted that the original goal had been to present the draft plan to Managers. However, given that issues still needed to be resolved, she wondered whether the Steering Team might hold off on presenting the plan to allow more time for conversations and collaboration. Marc Liverman, NMFS, said that NMFS and the Corps had continued to make progress in drafting the plan. They would be able to report to the Managers how their staff expects to complete the tasks, including an anticipated timeline.

The Steering Team discussed the purpose and needs of the conversation planned for the Managers' Forum, including what information should be shared and what questions need to be answered. The following suggestions were made:

- Include some substance of the plan, but keep it at the conceptual level.
- Identify the issues that remain and give the Managers a chance to weigh in on those issues.
  - Highlight recurring issues that create impasse for the WATER teams. For example, the different approach to passage in the Middle Fork: what is the feasibility of passage versus what is the best way to achieve passage.
- Ask for the Managers to weigh in on their agencies' commitment to provide passage.
  - Question for Managers: what is the commitment for work in the Middle Fork?
- Work with the Managers to clarify:
  - What are the management questions that have to be addressed through this process?
  - Who makes decisions regarding those questions?
  - What is the timeline for key decision points?
- Create a 1-pager to present to the Managers.

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Joyce Casey, USACE, noted that WATER does not have a cornerstone document that everyone has bought into and which describes the decision making process, overarching vision, and fundamental questions. This lack of clarity and agreement on direction is indicative of the larger picture issues that WATER faces, as much as it points out issues for the current MF RM&E plan. She suggested that perhaps the Steering Team could share the Middle Fork RM&E Plan as a real life example of what is needed for the broader process. Some group members noted that the agencies may be closer to agreement on some issues than it seems, however, more discussion is needed and adequate tracking is vital to ensure a transparent process.

The group agreed that a 1-page explanatory document should be created which outlines the current agreements, issues, questions and the path forward. Stephanie Burchfield, NMFS, noted that the purpose paragraph in the introduction could be revised to get at what the Steering Team is looking for. The group agreed that a smaller group should work to revise the purpose paragraph for the Managers' meeting.

- **ACTION:** Joyce, Marc, Stephanie and Rich will meet to revise the purpose paragraph with the intention of clarifying decision dates, management questions, and collaborative approach. They will provide a draft to the group for review before providing it to the Managers.

The group briefly discussed the issues surfacing within the RM&E plan:

NMFS staff noted concern that the current plan focuses the study path on one presumed style of passage, which could preclude other, possibly more effective, options. Stephanie explained that the COP included a lot of assumptions and no one had a good understanding of which option was best. At this point, NMFS wants to gather as much data and the best biological information to inform future passage decisions. She noted that RM&E plan makes the assumption that at-dam-passage is the most likely to succeed. If the RM&E plan focuses on only one option which turns out to be difficult to pull off, it would take more time to explore other options. As such, NMFS would like to explore multiple options from the get-go. Additionally, NMFS (and others) are concerned that the AAs are only looking at the feasibility of providing passage, not dedicated to actually providing passage.

Joyce noted that 2019 is a 'Managers' check-in' at which point they hope to be able to refine the decision for a 2021 decision in the Middle Fork. She suggested that it may be helpful clarify the questions the Steering Team wants the Managers to be able to ask and answer in 2019 to assure that staff gathers all of the necessary information.

Dan Spear, BPA, noted that the passage effort at Cougar is scheduled to be done in 2021 and it can inform the Middle Fork effort. He asked the group whether they need to focus on the questions and data that are needed in order to assess all of the options? The group agreed that a flow chart which denotes all three potential passage options (head of reservoir, at-dam, and operational), as well as the decision path and timeline, would be useful. It would help gauge: what is being done and when; what are the gaps, interconnections, and decision points; when information will be available; and what information will not be available for the 2019 check in.

- **ACTION:** Dan will work internally to get a flow chart drafted for the Steering Team to review.

Ian Chane, USACE, offered to reach out to the project's operational staff to set up a workshop to discuss potential operational changes that could be made. He noted that the end goal would be to create a document that can be used to inform and make decisions.

- **ACTION:** Ian will coordinate a workshop with project operation staff and Steering Team to explore potential operational changes.

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In order to help quell concerns around agency intentions in the basin, group members clarified their agency perspective on study results that suggest that replacement is not attained. **BPA, the Corps, ODFW, NMFS, and NPCC all agreed that the work is not over if replacement is not realized. They will need to continue efforts to determine why they are not meeting replacement and/or consider alternate approaches.**

Bernadette noted that the Steering Team still needs to address issues that have been left out of the Middle Fork discussion, such as implementing studies required in the BiOp, however, not currently being funded by the Corps.

### Next Steps

Moving forward, the small group will get together to revise the purpose paragraph into a 1-pager for the Managers' meeting. All Steering Team members will work with their Managers to prepare them for the questions that they will need to answer during their meeting, including:

- What is your agency' commitment to work in the Middle Fork?
- Is collaboration the goal or something else?
- What does collaboration mean to you/your agency?

The Steering and RM&E Teams will continue working together to develop shared understanding about the path forward. Specifically, they will work on resolving why studies required by existing plans, such as HGMPs and the BiOps, are not currently being funded. They also will explore creating joint re-introduction and RM&E plans for all of the sub-basins.

With that, Donna thanked the group for their efforts and the meeting was adjourned.

*This summary is respectfully submitted by DS Consulting. Suggested edits are welcome and can be sent to Emily Stranz at [emily@dsconsult.co](mailto:emily@dsconsult.co).*

**NOTE: The next Steering Team meeting is December 19<sup>th</sup> from 1:00-4:00 at the DS Consulting Office.**