



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Fish Passage Task Force

MEETING MINUTES

Salem, OR

Teams Virtual Meeting

Friday – December 6, 2024 @ 0800 to ~1200 hrs.

Members	Representing	Present In Person	Present Virtually	Absent
Kelly Moore	Fishing and Conservation		x	
Denise Hoffert	Fishing and Conservation			x
Terry Turner (<i>Chair</i>)	Fishing and Conservation		x	
Steve Albertelli	Water Users		x	
April Snell	Water Users		x	
Fred Messerle	Water Users		x	
Zak Toledo	Public-At-Large		x	
Ted Labbe	Public-At-Large		x	
Tom Iverson	Public-At-Large		x	

ODFW Staff in Attendance:

Mac Barr, Fish Passage Coordinator
 Greg Apke, Fish Screens and Passage Program Manager
 Katherine Nordholm, Fish Screen and Passage Coordinator
 Courtney Zambory, REDD Assistant Project Leader
 Sharon Crowley, Assistant Fish Passage Coordinator
 Pete Baki, ODFW-ODOT Liaison
 Kevin Rybacki, ODFW-ODOT Assistant Liaison
 Elizabeth Gleneck, NWWD Fish and Wildlife Senior Technician

Members of the Public in Attendance:

Jesse Dillow*, Washington County
 Allen Gillette*, ODOT
 Cash Chesselet*, ODOT
 Joshua Hanson*, ODF
 Arden Guinn*, ODF
 Jill Hrehniy*, OWRC
 Lily Roby*, Courthouse News Service
 Aly*
 Unknown virtual user*

*Attended virtually, *additional members of the public may have joined virtually throughout the meeting.*

Meeting Agenda

Call to Order Fish Passage Task Force Meeting

Chair Turner called the meeting to order at 8:00 am.

Review & Approve Agenda & October 4, 2024 Joint Task Force Meeting Minutes

Chair Turner asked if questions or changes were needed to the draft meeting minutes from the October task force meeting.

Motion: Zak Toledo moved to approve the minutes with the typo fixed. Steve Albertelli seconded the motion. The task force voted to approve. All members in attendance voted to approve. No members in attendance voted to oppose. Motion passed.

Motion: Zak Toledo moved to approve the agenda. Steve Albertelli seconded the motion. All members in attendance voted to approve. No members in attendance voted to oppose.

Task Force Member Issues, Updates & Roundtable (All)

Task Force members shared updates related to their areas of representation.

- Zak Toledo shared that he's sorry to have missed the joint Fish Screening and Fish Passage Task Force meeting in October. He suggests and encourages continuing overlap with the Fish Screening Task Force.
- Steve Albertelli did not have an update for the group today.
- Kelly Moore shared that he was concerned about how we were going to account for Coho salmon in the Willamette, but that he doesn't think it's a critical issue in terms of making modifications to the Priority Barrier list. He's received reports from all the district biologists in the basin that they are spending time checking out what is going on and learning about the fish, and that is a good first step.
- Fred Messerle shared he has two major projects completed this fall. The Haynes Drainage District tide gate replacement and fish passage is now operational, though it took 35 years to get it done. The Coaledo project on Coquille is also wrapping up. Both projects are a good step forward for the landowners and fish passage involved. It is still a struggle with the gridlock, and there has been no response to concerns that went up the chain well over a year ago. He is hoping there will be attention to the issues with permitting and the working lands concept in the new legislative session. How do we get landowners involved and do we create incentives?
- Ted Labbe shared that he has been thinking about the Portland metro area agencies that occasionally do fish passage projects, are interested in wildlife crossings, and are active in building out transportation, regional trails, and connectivity. These are three divisions of thought, and he's interested in how we bring these together. He wants to work with Metro in new year where he sees this problem most acute.
- Terry Turner shared that he caught one of the Steelhead headed up over Pelton Round Butte. It was a good fight right at the Warm Springs boat ramp. A fun thing and a nice picture to share. His Trout Unlimited Chapter completed the North Fork Eagle Creek dam removal. The channel has been restructured and the bank work completed. They still have some planting to do and road mitigation for the landowner, and he will work with Toby Schuyler to get some funds from the grant. The Chapter finished planting 600 conifers in the riparian at the Cub Creek stage 0 restoration in the upper Clackamas as well. They are focusing on another helicopter log drop in upper Cub and Berry Creeks. The long-term plan is replacement of the Cub Springs Bridge which would cost \$12-15 million. They are trying to get funding help from the federal highways for it. Additionally, the Salmon Superhwy was named one of the ten most influential fish passage projects in the country by the White House.

Fish Passage Program shared updates with the Task Force.

- Mac shared a guidance document and application for beaver pond levelers and exclusion fencing will be publicly available in the new year. The program will do some outreach on this and develop additional guidance documents and project or structure specific applications. At present the standard fish passage application is for road stream crossings.
- Greg thanked everyone for attending the meeting and extended his gratitude to the Trout Unlimited team in the Klamath for helping to host the previous Task Force meeting. Greg responded to Fred's update sharing there was a meeting this week with upper leadership from NOAA Fisheries where tide gates and the permitting gridlock were discussed. He has an upcoming meeting with the director's office to get into the weeds and brief the director and her staff on tide gate challenges. He encouraged Fred to continue to push hard on this topic and he will update the Task Force as he has more information. Greg also shared the Governor's budget was released this week and that Fish Division has some serious budget challenges. He will share more about the status of budget challenges and the governor's budget approval process at the next Task Force meeting. Greg shared the agency is gearing up for a busy legislative session and expects bills to come up that intersect both fish passage and screening. The program will keep the Task Force updated on legislative issues and asks that members who are aware of any legislative issues, initiatives, or concepts that intersect fish passage and screening to please let him know. Lastly, Greg shared that as Chinook are returning into the Klamath basin, Joel Watts from our engineering team has met and worked

with the Bureau of Reclamation on improvements to the fishway at Keno Dam, such as the trash rack and radio gate. Operations for cleaning and maintaining the existing fishway are being developed and implemented to improve the condition of the fishway. We are also planning to evaluate the vertical slot fishway at Link River Dam in January or February.

- Sharon shared the ODFW OASIS spawning surveyors have observed Coho salmon and redds above the location of the North Fork Eagle Creek dam that was removed by Trout Unlimited on October 15.
- Greg provided another update: ODFW is anticipating receiving \$8.75 million in late spring / early summer from a sale of lottery bonds. This is part of the legislative process a session ago to help infuse state funds into our program to continue fish passage and screening restoration. We'll be soliciting requests for proposals like we did for drought funds. The \$8.75 million will be coupled with ODOT CRPA funds and other fish passage general program cost share funds. There will be a new release after Christmas to get the restoration community queued up and ready to submit proposals. The funds can be used for fish passage and screening, and we will be targeting high priority restoration projects to get the most mileage out of this package for native fish. A Task Force has yet to be determined but may include having a member or two site on a common advisory subcommittee to help vet and recommend projects we want to fund.

Determine Dates and Locations for 2025 Fish Passage Task Force Meetings (All)

The Task Force discussed proposed dates and locations for the 2025 quarterly Task Force meetings. There was support for shifting meetings to Thursday-Friday when site visits will occur on the second day.

The agreed upon dates for the 2025 Fish Passage Task Force meetings are:

March 7, 2025 – Salem

- In person meeting with possible site visits to locations with beaver coexistence devices.
- The meeting may be moved to the PGE facility in Clackamas or include a site visit to the PGE fishway.

May 29-30, 2025 – Lakeview

- Katherine will ask the Fish Screening Task Force if they would like to make this a joint meeting.
- Interest in site visits to see water diversion structures and check dams that encompass both screening and passage.

October 16-17, 2025 – Coos Bay

- Site visits to include tide gates.
- This will be Terry and Zak's last Task Force meeting.

December 5, 2025 – Salem, optional meeting

Tom suggested either a site visit to the Cle Elum fish passage facility in Washington or to invite someone from there to give a presentation to the Task Force. The irrigators in the Yakama basin teamed up with the Yakama Nation tribe and the state of Washington Department of Ecology to put together a basin-wide restoration plan that benefits agriculture and fish. They built a \$200 million fish passage structure at one of the storage reservoirs that added four feet of water that will be designated strictly for fish. Then they built a fish passage structure that operates at any water level in the reservoir. Greg thought it was a great idea and may be something to consider outside of a Task Force meeting, potentially a Saturday visit.

Tom also suggested adding the Willamette River Corps of Engineers projects and court orders addressing fish passage issues on the agenda at some point. Terry thinks this is a great idea. Greg suggested to the Fish Passage team to reach out to the ODFW hydropower team and potentially add this as an agenda item to the March meeting. Kelly said the issue with the Corps of Engineers is complicated and suggested a trip to Fall Creek on the McKenzie River where there's been some good work done, and then contrast it to what's going at Cougar Dam or Detroit Dam. The lawsuit situation has been contentious for the last eight years and is tied to funding for ODFW research.

Kelly and Tom discussed water recycling and proposed pump storage projects as another agenda topic. Tom said it does not involve fish because it's a closed loop system, but it is an important tool for energy because the services provide electricity. The Yakima Nation is fighting it because the location they chose for this project is on top of very sacred land. Tom shared the perspective that the new wave of renewable energy cannot fall on the backs of the tribes and there needs to be more consideration and sighting for these projects.

Greg suggested the Task Force could head north for the March 2025 meeting and visit the PGE fishway in Clackamas. It is one of the more fascinating large-scale fishways built in the state and this Task Force has never

been to during a Task Force meeting. Mac said he will reach out to colleagues at PGE and the District to potentially move the March meeting to Clackamas.

Update on Draft Statewide Priority Barrier List & Methods Paper (All)

Greg acknowledged Katherine and Courtney Zambory their work on the Priority Barrier list and thanked subcommittee members for their work on the list as well. Lot of stressors associated with bringing this before Commission. Shout out and congrats in advance to Katherine!

Katherine Nordholm gave an update on the Statewide Priority Barrier list starting with a review of the timeframe from when this project began to the present and the opportunities for public comment. The focus of the first public comment period in July 2023 was the desire to incorporate climate change elements to list and four comments were received. Since then, progress updates have been given at each Task Force meeting, and today's update is the last informational meeting. Next steps will be to review the final draft list and paper, which will be posted in February, and seek recommendation from the Task Force to take to Commission. Katherine will be presenting this to the Oregon American Fisheries Society annual meeting in February and is scheduled to present it to the Commission in April. There will be another public comment period before going to Commission. Additional steps will include an updated video online, FAQ document, interactive map, updated website, and discussions on future of the list.

Courtney Zambory introduced herself and presented how we incorporated climate change variables, access to cold water and thermal suitability, into the Priority Barrier list. Cold water areas were identified using data derived from HR-17 stream temperature dataset because it has updated data from NorWest. A 2-degree Celsius threshold was used. NorWest data was substituted where HR-17 data was unavailable (such as in the Klamath). Thermal suitability links stream temperature changes with species presence data. She used maximum weekly maximum temperatures (MWMT) obtained from NorWest and ODFW Fish Distribution layers for life stage of species present using most conservative guild across the state. Courtney cited a paper authored by Kara Anlauf-Dunn that will be published soon. She explained how the methodology highlights areas that are both currently high suitability and highly resilient to climate.

Katherine and Courtney answered questions from the Task Force about the climate change variables and clarified that the climate change variables can only add points to a barrier. The total possible points for climate change variables is comparable to one additional threatened species. There is no case when climate change variables will lower the priority barrier or move it down the list.

Greg reminded the Task Force that this is our first attempt to integrate climate change and in 5 years there will be new science and new data to weave into these data.

April commended staff for their efforts on the Priority Barrier list. She recommends starting conversations with impacted stakeholders much earlier in the process prior to the next 5-year update to the list. Conversations should include the process for the barrier list and how being on the priority list impacts being an owner/operator of an obstruction. She said this new update that includes climate change variables is interesting and fascinating in multiple ways. Having everything on a webpage for the public will be very helpful, and we can hopefully improve outreach communications and education moving forward. How does this priority list fit into a way that helps us as a state have better restoration, recovery, protection, and working with owner/operators to improve habitat where we can and when the barriers cannot be removed? The positive to being on the list is access to funding to help remove the barrier or improve upstream habitat.

Discussion followed about outreach and the role out of the new Priority Barrier list after approval by the Commission. Katherine will be presenting at OR AFS in February and there will be new releases associated with the next public comment period before the Commission meeting. The website will be updated, and staff will push the list out to project partners we've been in communication with through public comments, and possibly a webinar with the launch of the new list. There will be meetings with project and restoration proponents to discuss the list and networking with watershed councils, funding decisions with OWEB, and outreach on how to use the list to strategically bring resources to your project if you own a barrier.

Zak strongly encourages Task Force members to participate on the next Priority Barrier workgroup and reminded everyone it is important to go back to source material of rule and statute for the list. Is the Dept meeting the intent of the statute with this list? Yes, we have made a systemic methodology with clarity and transparency for this list.

Break 10:15-10:30

Public comment period at 10:30

Chair Turner started the public comment process at 10:30 and asked for any members of the public to comment. There were no public comments. Tom Iverson reached out to the tribes, and they said they are working with their local ODFW biologists to look after their interests.

Summary and Discussion of Public Comments Received (*Nordholm, All*)

Katherine provided a high-level review of various iterations of the Priority Barrier list. The size of the list has grown but so has its impact – 17 projects addressed from the 2007 list, 75 addressed from 2013 list, 87 addressed from the 2019 list. She will calculate the number of miles opened up by addressing these barriers for next Task Force meeting. Katherine also reviewed everything currently available on the website: <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/passage/inventories.asp> and will post this presentation on the website as well.

ODFW received five public comments during the November public comment period and Katherine expressed her appreciation for them. There are no proposed changes to the scoring or methods of the equation as a result of the comments. However, Katherine identified areas in the methods document to clarify the scoring formula, function and intention of the priority list. Auto Up and Auto Down tabs were hard to read, and she will make the presentation of Auto Up and Auto Down information clearer in the final publication. A comment addressed consistency and how the model was applied throughout the state in different districts. She tried to address this through the district review this year and removed sensitive species or species of concern points because it was not being applied consistently throughout state. If applied consistently, it would only inflate points throughout the state. To address how points were allocated for different species, different runs of the same species are no longer given additional points. Two areas for flexibility from districts are Auto Up and Auto Down points and placing barriers on the list. This is the first year we've published reasons for Auto Up and Auto Down points for transparency and clarity. Katherine also addressed questions received outside the public comment period. Scores on average for barriers on list are slightly higher this year because climate change variables only add points and districts highlighted the need to identify all species that would benefit from addressing barriers on list. So, there are more species. The barrier groups are calculated using a K-means cluster analysis which places barriers that are similar in priority to others in that group. A change in barrier's group between years does not show shift in priority for the barrier. All barriers on the list are priorities.

Discussion of Draft Statewide Priority Barrier List & Methods Paper (*All*)

Task Force members discussed the barrier groups and whether the top 10 barriers should be pulled out as a separate group or remain in the cluster analysis with all other barriers. It was emphasized that groups are independent for each list and should not be compared between lists. The methods paper will be updated to more clearly explain what the groups are and what they mean. This was the most common question or comment received from the public.

Katherine will be looking for a recommendation from the Task Force at the next meeting. Prior to the meeting, the final draft of the Priority Barrier list and paper will be published. The Task Force was asked to please send any additional thoughts, questions, or additional information they would like presented about the list or methods in order to make a recommendation to move forward to Commission prior to January 1, 2025. Please send directly to Katherine.

The Task Force discussed the future of the Priority Barrier list and the best way to manage it. Issues and opportunities include the fear of a missed opportunity to get a barrier on the list, the update is a very long process, and currently Commission is required to approve changes to the list. Would it be beneficial to update the list more frequently? It would be an opportunity to share some of our success more in real time as we work to update the list. Zak reminded everyone of statute and rule, and that updating the list every 5 years is in statute for enforcement purposes, but 90% of the people look at the list for funding and restoration purposes. He suggested possibly have two lists: one interactive and prioritized for restoration and one for statute compliance.

April commented that five years is a long time, but if you shorten it to an annual update, it can take people by surprise. A statutory change would also need to occur. She likes Zak's idea to package it in different ways for different purposes. It is regulatory but can be used to access funding to take care of barriers and other things people

are looking to do. She encourages ODFW going forward to consider how this could fit into the integrated water resources strategy which does not have any real prioritization, but this list could be used in conversations among agency leaders. Fish passage barriers is a small component of the overall complex water challenges, but this could be integrated into projects. There will now be a permanent place-based planning program at Water Resources Department to support communities as they look at their water issues. This is an opportunity for the Task Force to broadcast the Priority Barrier list and the FAQ as resources to use and ODFW staff to participate in meetings. Also, while it adds to the timeline, public comments and the existing structure of Commission to make the ultimate decision is another way for public to engage.

Greg added that in conjunction with the Task Force recommendation, he would like to have someone from the Task Force be a voice at the Commission meeting in Florence, OR in April when the Priority Barrier list is presented.

Terry encouraged everybody to review the materials before the next meeting so they can vote with confidence.

Chair Turner adjourned the meeting at 11:23 AM.

Public Comments Received:

Public comments were presented to the Task Force during the meeting.