

Fish Passage Task Force Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Date: February 9, 2022
Time: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Location: Salem, OR
 In-Person and Teams Virtual Meeting

Fish Passage Task Force Attendance:

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		
William Cunningham	Public-At-Large	x		
Ken Bierly	Public-At-Large	x		

ODFW Staff in Attendance:

Mac Barr, Fish Passage Coordinator
 Katherine Nordholm, Fish Screen and Passage Coordinator
 Greg Apke, Fish Screens and Passage Program Manager
 Pete Baki, ODOT Liasson
 Courtney Zambory, Research, Evaluation, Data, and Decision (REDD) support

Others in Attendance*:

Josh Hanson, ODF
 Allen Gillette, ODOT
 Jon Roberts, ODOT
 Corissia Anderson-Horvath, ODOT
 Thomas Loynes, ODOT
 Peter Morrow, ODOT
 Arden Guinn, ODF
**members of the public may have joined virtually throughout the meeting.*

Meeting Agenda

Call to Order Fish Passage Task Force Meeting

Chair Turner called to order at 9:03 and facilitated a round of introductions.

Review & Approve Agenda & October 13, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Chair Turner moved to the review and approval of the agenda and previous meeting's minutes. Both items were approved by the task force.

Motions:

Cunningham moved to approve the agenda for the meeting. Bierly seconded. Chair Turner called for the vote and the motion passed.

Bierly moved to approve the meeting minutes from the October task force meeting. Cunningham seconded the motion. Chair Turner called for the vote and the motion passed.

ODFW Program Staffing Updates

Apke gave updates on Fish Passage Program staff positions and vacancies. He is currently in an acting position as the Manager. The rotation ends in March, and the position will be filled presently. Mac Barr is also acting role in the Passage Coordinator position, that job rotation and will sunset soon as well. The ODOT assistant liaison position is being recruited for and the NRS 3 passage assistant position is being submitted. Apke also discussed that two members of the task force are terming out.

Task Force Member Vacancy Recruitment Update

Apke shared that they have interviewed five candidates for the two empty task force positions. Apke presented volunteer appreciation awards to recognize Ken Bierly and Bill Cunningham for their time served on the task force. Director Melcher spoke and presented both members with certificates of appreciation. Shaun Clements also thanked the two members for their time and participation. Director Melcher thanked the whole Fish Passage Task Force for the work they do. He gave the task force the opportunity to ask him questions prior to leaving the meeting.

Barr presented additional information on the recruitment process for new members. Bierly asked if there had been any tribal representation interested in the position. Apke answered that one applicant did represent a tribal group. Apke shared that the applicant pool did not show the geographic representation that we hoped to see. Turner and Toledo are the next members that will term out. Fall of 2025.

Task Force Member Issues, Updates & Roundtable

Turner gave members of the Task Force opportunities to discuss issues and interests in their areas of representation.

- Snell spoke about water infrastructure projects with current federal funds that are available.
- Toledo spoke about the Klamath Dam removal and how important it has been for raising awareness about passage.
- Bierly spoke about the Salem floodplain species assessment to reduce potential conflicts with sensitive species. Also mentioned the five-mile dam design on the Silvies River.
- Turner spoke about the NF Eagle Creek project. The project found a new access route and the project will be able to proceed this in-water work period. Also mentioned the

Page Springs weir, RDG has been hired to do the design. Gave an update on the Salmon Superhighway project.

- Cunningham shared update on Mirror Pond dam. Spoke about the new interest in Snake River Dam.
- Messerle shared an update from the Coast which has received significant rain recently. He discussed the impact of the Forest Plan and ability of landowners to find information on how that is going to be implemented and what the impact will be. The task force discussed the issues facing small timber owners and the Forest Practices Act. Josh Hanson and Shaun Clemens offered insight to Messerle's comments.
- Moore shared that recent reports from McKenzie River trust Greenbelt Land Trust were very impressive. Shared that fish counts at Willamette Falls for Coho were the highest ever. Shared that the Coastal Salmon Inventory Group showed that the numbers were good, but that sampling was interrupted by weather, it was either too cold, too wet or too dry to visit within the window.
- Hoffert shared that she was at River Restoration Northwest this week. This conference was well attended and a good opportunity to share information across the region. Shared a finding from the Intensively Monitored Watershed – the number one key finding was that the best bang for the buck was barrier removal. Also shared that large wood projects only show a benefit about half the time.

Public Comment Period (10:00am)

Turner opened the floor for public comments at 10:08 – there were no public comments.

Fish Division Updates by Shaun Clements– Clements gave an update on the federal funding available for fish projects. Gregg Smith has been working nationally with federal agencies to secure funding. He is also working to focus funding to priorities. They have formed a national Task Force to focus funds for fish passage priorities. The agency has had ~25% success rate for securing funds. The majority has been for Fish Passage work. Clements shared that the focus in the Klamath has been on fish screening. His focus for the next year will be on the policy side of the Willamette basin. The Task Force discussed the difficulty of implementing projects on the ground.

Determine May 17-18, 2024 Task Force Meeting Location

Turner opened the discussion about where the May meeting might take place. Greg stated that the location is up to the Task Force and where they want to go. Zak Toledo suggested another coast tide gate meeting, because come May, Zak would be the only task force member that has been on a tidegate site visit meeting. Messerle said the south coast should defer for a year because he has two tide gate projects coming in the next year. Messerle suggested north coast or lower Columbia and then coming to south coast in 2025. He mentioned Beaver Creek (Coquille River around MP 20) has a new tide gate going in this summer – it is unique that it is in tidal but also has 1.125 Miles of channel that is being reconstructed. Cunningham suggest going to the east side at somewhere like Goose Lake that have drought issues and unique species. He also suggested looking at tributaries above Klamath Lake. He thought it would be good to look at unique species in this area. Bierly discussed the Chewaucan and fish passage and that significant passage work has been completed. Snell suggested Goose Lake and the Silvies area. She suggested also the Umatilla or Wallowa area, lots of passage programs and the tribes may

participate. She suggested the Snake Dams area too. Greg suggested that the September meeting we may be able to get to some upper Klamath tribs. Bierly brought up the North Coast chum efforts. There are a lot of tidegate issues in the Nestucca and Lower Columbia. Apke suggests waiting for next year for a tidegate meeting.

Turner suggested the fish passage facility in Clackamas at PGE; the site has meeting facilities. Moore liked the idea of going to the Owyhee. Apke reviewed the locations of previous visits. Turner thinks Lakeview is compelling since the task force has not visited that area. Apke agrees that a 2-day trip to Lakeview could be productive. Turner calls for a motion to support a Lakeview trip. No motion. Snell asked about Prineville as a destination

Motion: Turner asked for a motion to choose Prineville. Snell makes the motion Toledo seconded. Motion passed.

ODOT Waiver Request OR 131 MP 4.9

Baki presented information on a fish passage waiver request from ODOT. Baki introduced the ODOT representatives that were joining the meeting virtually who are on-hand to answer questions. Baki presented the information from the net benefit analysis. The results of the net benefit analysis shows that the mitigation site will have a benefit of more habitat than the impact site in a larger system and benefit more species of fish. Toledo mentioned that he thought it looked like a clear benefit. If you ran each through the barrier prioritization the mitigation site would rank much higher. Bierly asked about ODOT trying to deal with fish passage during emergency situations. Baki mentioned that it's very hard given that most emergency situations occur during high flows.

Motion: Bierly moved to approve the waiver request. Turner seconded. Moore asked about public comments. Turner called for the vote. Taks Force voted to approve.

ODOT CPRA update

Baki gave a high-level update of the ODOT CRPA report. The new CRPA agreement spans 10 years. Baki gave an overview of the new CRPA agreement. The new agreement adjusts the amount for inflation. The new agreement also includes the ability to do work on tidegates if the tidegate is removed. Baki shared the CRPA projects that were repaired in 2023. Bake shared the results of the 2023 RFP for Fish Passage Compensation Funds. Fifteen projects were selected, opening >100 miles of fish habitat. He covered some of the projects completed under ODOT's 10-year list for fish passage.

Statewide Fish Passage Prioritization Planning Efforts

Katherine Nordholm provided an update on statewide Fish Passage barrier prioritization effort. She has started work group meetings with task force members. She has emailed all 18 ODFW Fish District biologist and asked for responses by March 1 with edits and additions. Each district was provided with the relevant public comments. The workgroup is discussing a climate change variable. Nordholm is working on data management and outreach planning. She used Takelma Dam, a project implemented in 2023 in the Illinois watershed (Group 15) as an example of a project where the score would have changed with more known information. She demonstrated the 2019 priority rank equation with graphs and tables. Bierly suggested showing barrier scores for each subbasin and use that information to compare basins. Bierly suggested using a 6th field HUC. Josh Hanson said he could use this for his grant program. Bierly said that the objective

was to compare areas to look at unique fish fauna. He used Harney area versus the coastal area where there are more species which makes them hard to compare.

Bierly said he really liked Nordholm's presentations. She continued by showing more tables and graphs that show how changes would affect ranking on the list. She showed the effect of changing the number of species. She then showed tables and graphs on the habitat quantity score. Quantity value is a multiplier. She then showed the graphs and tables for habitat quality. She then discussed auto up/downs. Toledo asked about how auto ups/downs worked. Apke mentioned that this was really the only professional judgement factor. Nordholm then discussed the passage level aspects. Nordholm then discussed passage level 0. She mentioned these projects don't make the list. It lowers it but doesn't drop it off the list. She discussed how low projects ranking on the list. The lowest scoring barrier on the 2019 list had 24 points.

Next Nordholm discussed messaging for the 2024 update. She plans outreach including a white paper, FAQ sheet and public communication. She asked the FPTF their thoughts on what is most important to communicate through the FAQ. Bierly discussed this as being a uniform method to identify projects and then prioritization follows. He worries about public perception that all the top projects get the funding. He says it's more of a characterization than a prioritization. Apke suggested the FAQ may help disperse some of the misconceptions about how the list is used. Toledo mentioned the statute and the list is a requirement of state law and it is a very powerful tool. Nordholm mentioned having a webinar and a website with information about the new list. She has created a fish passage barriers website. She listed some other prioritizations within the state that have links on the website. Zambory asked about who built the equation and how it was developed. She said that it started with Tom Stahl, then Ken Loffink, and then Kregg Smith. Toledo mentioned that Kregg heavily used GIS to inform prioritization. The group discussed the list, questions around the list, and ways to incorporate climate change in the scoring equation.

ODFW Aquatic Habitat Prioritization

Courtney Zambory from Corvallis Research presented on aspects of the ODFW Aquatic Habitat Prioritization effort. She is focusing on climate change considerations. The AHP report should be available after April. Zambory focused on instream flow conditions including existing and future conditions based on climate change, flow targets, and thermal suitability. She discussed how these data could be used in the statewide barrier prioritization. Bierly asked if she considered using the NHD spring data. Zambory is aware of this data and has used in other applications. She suggested and discussed some other climate sources and models. The group asked questions and discussed different ways these data could be used in the prioritization. Nordholm will continue to look into ways these data could be used.

Program Funding Updates; Drought Funds, ARPA & Lottery Bond

Greg discussed the budget and how restoration funds (ARPA, Drought) were spent. All of the ARPA has funds have been allocated. Greg discussed the expected 8.57 million in lottery funds coming into the program. Conditions of the funding are not yet known. ODFW is expecting the funding in spring 2025. The next RFP is expected fall of 2024. Greg provided overview of how restoration funds were allocated. This resulted in 65 projects (design, implementation, construction) resulting in 500 miles of habitat and 200 acres of wetland. Apke went through some of the projects that were funded. Snell asked about how

well we have messaged this to the public. Apke mentioned more has to be done on that front. Bierly said messaging to legislature will help get additional funding. Toledo mentioned that it's like a micro loan of \$16,000 per mile.

~ 12:20 pm --- Lunch ---

Update on Klamath Dam Removal

Apke shared an update on the lower Klamath Dam removal project. As of today, the Klamath River is in a free flowing conditions. It took 17 days to get the rivers drawdown to achieve free flowing conditions. Apke shared the timeline for the projects. Currently there is active restoration going on in the area. Reservoirs are currently being replanted. The confluences are being monitored to insure they establish with new river with proper elevations to facilitate functionality. Apke shared the project schedule. Cunningham asked about the public concern about wildlife being trapped in the mud. Apke showed a couple videos of the dam removal process.

Dept. of Forestry - Sfish Program Update

Josh Hanson (ODF) presented on his SFISH program that resulted from rule revisions at ODF. Hanson explained that it was driver by the Private Forestland report and went into rule that ODF set this grant program up for small forest owners. The program will be used to mitigate for risks from forest activities and roads. ODF received \$6.67 million general fund appropriation. Hanson discussed the committee review and who is involved and asked if someone from the fish passage task force wanted to be on the review team. The review team will recommend on funding that Hanson will take to ODF leadership. The group discussed the requirements for the review team. Bierly offered to be on the review team for the first meeting.

Permitting Challenges and Tide Gates

The Task Force sent a letter to the ODFW Director and governor's office in October and there has been no response. Messerle discussed the difficulties of permitting at Winter Lake. The process is getting less streamlined in the last six months. Many project proponents are getting more with the federal permitting process. The group discussed the difficulty projects have faced with federal permitting and the delays in time and project implementation that it has caused. Different possible solutions were discussed.

Action item: Work on the Guidance Document. Circulate the letter to a wider audience. Improve talking points from the document to a one-pager (Turner will draft and circulate to Messerle). Apke will contact USACE and the tide group.

Cunningham asked if other groups within ODFW (screening) also have the same issues and if there would be a benefit to have additional groups onboard. Turner encouraged Task Force members to reach out to local legislators and representatives. Messerle mentioned that this is leading to a lot of unpermitted work and regulatory authorities are often unable to enforce.

Meeting Recap

Turner reviewed action items and meeting recap. Turner asked about meeting agenda items for the next meeting. Snell had suggested a presentation on tide gates. The group discussed a talk on the Snake River Dams. Snell asked for an update on the time for the next meeting (length of meeting and site visits) for scheduling purposes.

Apke mentioned that ORAFS is in Bend in two weeks and there is still time to register. Cunningham asked if there were any legislative issues in the short session that would be of interest to the Fish Passage Task Force.

Meeting Adjourned

Turner adjourned the meeting at 3:13