OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Fish Passage Task Force

MEETING MINUTES

Red Lion, Coos Bay, OR

Conference Room

Thursday – October 16, 2025 @ *0800 to ~1200 hrs.*

Members	Representing	Present In Person	Present Virtually	Absent
Fish Passage Task Force				
Kelly Moore	Fishing and Conservation		x	
Denise Hoffert (*Chair*)	Fishing and Conservation		x	
Terry Turner	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
Katherine Nordholm, Fish Screen and Passage Coordinator
Sharon Crowley, Assistant Fish Passage Coordinator
Kevin Rybacki, ODFW-ODOT Assistant Fish Passage Liaison
Greg Huchko, Umpqua Watershed Manager
Greg Apke, Fish Screens and Passage Program Manager
Edward Hughes, Fish Habitat Restoration Biologist/WOSRP
Christopher Claire, Coos-Coquille Watershed Habitat Protection Biologist
Pete Baki*, ODFW-ODOT Fish Passage Liaison

Members of the Public in Attendance:
Jim Harbeck*, retired fish biologist for Nez Perce
Laurie Green*, Board of Directors of the Siuslaw Watershed Council
Liz Ransom*, Trout Unlimited
Daniel Malmon*, Waterways Consulting Inc.
Annie Merrill*, Pew Charitable Trust
Julie Huff, Coquille Watershed Association
Allison Tarbox, Coquille Watershed Association
Greg Stone, landowner/water user
Rex E. Miller, Ross Slough Drainage District
Abigail Richards, Coos Soil and Conservation District
Sabrina McNeely, Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians
Caley Sowers, Coos Soil and Water Conservation District
Doug Soules, Landowner
Dave Smith, Landowner
Denis Beetham, DB Western
Cam Perry, Member of the Public
Alex Hardison*, Central Oregon LandWatch

Valerie Greenway*
Carrie Sandstedt*
*Attended virtually, *additional members of the public may have joined virtually throughout the meeting.*

Meeting Agenda

Call to Order Fish Passage and Fish Screening Task Force Meeting
Mac Barr Introduces newly appointed Chair Hoffert, and she calls the meeting to order at 8:00 am.

Review & Approve Agenda & May 29, 2025, Fish Passage Task Force Meeting Minutes
Motion: Toledo moved to approve the Fish Passage Task Force meeting agenda. Albertelli seconded the motion. All members in attendance voted to approve. Motion passed.
Motion: Labbe moved to approve the Fish Passage Task Force May 29th minutes. Toledo seconded the motion. All members in attendance voted to approve. Motion passed.

ODFW Passage Program Updates *(Apke/Barr)*
Barr provided program updates, beginning with a reminder of the upcoming Joint Fish Screening and Passage Task Force meeting on December 5th at ODFW Headquarters in Salem. That meeting will include a follow-up agenda item to review key takeaways from today and to continue the discussion on tide gates. Another agenda item will be electing a new vice chair to Denise Hoffert. It is anticipated that there will be two new Task Force members at the upcoming meeting to replace Zak Toledo (Public-At-Large) and Terry Turner (Fishing and Conservation) who have completed their eight-year terms. Barr recognized each for their voluntary service to the Department, specifically noting Turner's time representing the Task Force by providing testimony to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission and Toledo's contributions to adopting updates to the state's fish passage Oregon Administrative Rules in 2022. Service awards for each will be presented in December.

Apke thanked Task Force members and welcomed the public in attendance and emphasized the importance of open dialogue and learning from stakeholders about the complexities associated with tide gates. He noted that ODFW was pleased to have public participation and valued the opportunity to hear a range of perspectives. Apke described the meeting as a chance for Task Force members to listen, learn, and build a more informed understanding of issues associated with tide gates and tide gate projects. He reiterated that the Task Force would not solve these complex challenges today, but the goal of the meeting is to gain a better understanding of tide gate issues and how the Task Force might collaborate with landowners who own and manage tide gates.

Task Force Member Issues, Updates & Roundtable *(All)*
Task Force members shared updates related to their areas of representation.

- Ted Labbe, representing public at large introduced himself as a property owner with land in Wallowa and Curry counties and the Hood River area, including an anadromous stream with a barrier on it. Labbe is a fish biologist by trade, working with Oregon, Washington and the tribes in the past. Labbe also mentioned going through a leadership transition in the nonprofit he helps run and that has given him more time to spend with friends, family and the outdoors.
- Tom Iverson, representing public at large, expressed regret for not being able to be in person for this meeting due to a conflict. Iverson introduced himself as having worked in salmon restoration in the Columbia Basin for 35 years and currently works for the Yakama Nation in Central Oregon.
- Kelly Moore, representing fishing and conservation, also regretted not attending in person. Moore discussed visiting Winter Lake with Bruce McIntosh and Steve Denney (ODFW biologists at the time), being part of the public meetings, witnessing the controversy and seeing all the work the Messerle's put into replacing the tide gate at Winter Lake. Moore recalled negative feelings about the project at the Commission and lawyers challenging the data that went into justifying the project. Moore spoke to the data from earlier monitoring efforts demonstrating the value of off channel habitats to quality rearing. He was nervous about expanding the data to something the size of Winter Lake but acknowledged it was using the best science, and he was pleased to hear that the district is finding lots of fish utilizing the habitat associated with the tide gates and the Winter Lake complex.
- Terry Turner, representing fishing and conservation, introduced himself as the outgoing chair and Trout Unlimited (TU) volunteer leader. Turner reported both TU and Salmon Superhighway (SSH) have been able to navigate the pauses in federal funding for this year and hopefully next. Tuner mentioned SSH's

involvement in a future tide gate project. Turner reflected on his experiences as a member of the Task Force and recognized Denise as a great successor as chair.

- Zak Toledo, representing public at large, also reflected on his time at the Task Force being positive and expressed the importance of the field visits and recalled his first field visit being to Coos Bay. Toledo, who is native to the Oregon Coast, acknowledged the challenges of tide gates as being more complex than fish passage issues such as culverts, bridges and dams. He stated that the site visits were eye opening in recognizing the habitat that lies above them and the reasoning behind their high prioritization. Toledo added that tide gate issues are not easy to solve and there is not enough money or alignment for regulatory agencies. Toledo reminded Task Force members that when advising the Department, to focus on the resources, the law, and the science, acknowledging that it isn't always easy. Finally, Toledo recognized ODFW Fish Passage and Screening Program staff, including Katherine Nordholm and always being impressed with their dedication and professionalism.
- April Snell, representing water users, introduced herself as being from Salem and working with irrigation districts and agricultural water suppliers. Snell thanked Zak and Terry for their service as volunteers on the Task Force. Snell also mentioned the importance of the field site visits and regretted missing the last in-person meeting in Lakeview. Snell acknowledged the public in attendance that, even though the drainage districts on the Coast are not ones she represents, she sees them as being part of the family. Snell echoed Toledo's remarks on the complexities of tide gates from both an engineering and fiscal standpoint.
- Steve Albertelli, representing users and an employee of PacifiCorp, expressed his excitement to be here and learn. Albertelli gave some updates from his area including that Chinook salmon have been getting up and over Keno Dam and being at Link River Dam and that PacifiCorp still have two nonoperational hydro facilities on either bank of Link River and are working on decommissioning them.
- Fred Messerle, representing water users, introduced himself as living local to the Coos Bay area and appreciated everyone coming to Coos Bay to tell the tide gate story. Messerle has been vocal regarding the problems users face and acknowledged that the Task Force are not the ones with the solution. Messerle echoed the complexity with tide gates and the how it involves entities ranging from local to the federal government. Messerle reminded the Task Force about when the rules advisory committee met, there was supposed to be a tide gate, along with other guidance document that has still not been received. He also reminded those in attendance that there was a letter written in 2023 to the director, the governor and legislature regarding the gridlock in permitting and the ability to get projects on the ground and have not heard anything back. Messerle discussed the challenges getting projects implemented including needing approval from eleven regulatory agencies and needing considerable time and money. Messerle also expressed the importance of good quality habitat associated with many tide gates and how improving habitat access for fish is advantageous to all stakeholders. He recognized that we have tools, understanding and technology that we did not have 20 years ago when Winter Lake was being completed and the biggest issue we have today is not doing a good job of telling the story. Messerle concluded with a lesson learned from Winter Lake project to never quit communicating and looking towards viable solutions.
- Chair Denise Hoffert, representing fishing and conservation introduced herself as a partnership coordinator at the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. Hoffert noted that she worked on one tide gate project before moving to OWEB and it was longer and more complicated than any project she worked on, including many dam removals. Hoffert also echoed the complexities associated with tide gates and offered empathy for those working through them.

Tide Gates and Fish Ecology (Hughes, Claire)

Ed Hughes and Chris Claire presented on the function and ecology associated with tide gates with particular focus on scope, technology, design, engineering and tide gate project implementation. Hughes began by outlining the scope of two tide gate projects, using visuals from Winter Lake to show conditions before project implementation and following heavy rain events in March 2025. He noted that the Coquille and Coos Bay estuaries rank 15th and 17th, respectively, in total tidal wetland area among 424 West Coast estuaries. From a statewide perspective, Coos County contains 20.3% (212.3 miles) of Oregon's levee miles, and the Coos Bay and Coquille basins account for 42% (275) of all inventoried tide gates in Oregon. Hughes shared some maps demonstrating different wetland types (emergent, scrub-shrub, forested) and tide gates and the agricultural lands that exist proximal to tide gates. He also presented data showing growth rates from coho salmon at different locations where he summarized substantially higher growth rates for fish rearing in tidally influenced off channel wetland habitat as opposed to mainstem tributaries. Hughes described tide gate technological advancements over time. Apke explained that the state's fish passage tide gate design criteria were developed to maximize the time the tide gate is open to allow

tidal exchange and fish passage without causing unintended consequences such as unwanted flooding and saline intrusion as well as being sized appropriately to minimize water velocities through the tide gate structure. He went on to say that no tide gate allows full fish passage and noted an overarching goal is to find the balance between fish passage and habitat access and the needs of landowners to manage their lands. Snell asked a few questions regarding cost of these new tide gates and whether there were an inventory of tide gates and their condition. Claire clarified that he has been involved in projects that have ranged from $14,000 to $3.5 million. Hughes presented slides demonstrating how water pressure differential works on tide gates and fish passage and there was some discussion on effectiveness of tide gates at various tidal and river conditions. Claire began the project design and engineering portion stating that when these projects are complete there is a net benefit to the landowner as well as the fish. Claire explained the factors that go into designing a tide gate project including where to set the invert elevation of the pipe and corresponding tide gate, of the land area behind the tide gate, culvert size, and how these align with state's fish passage design criteria. Claire demonstrated graphically how hydraulic modeling is often used to determine project specific designs. He shared and explained some designs and aerial photos from projects the Task Force will be visiting Thursday and Friday during site visits including the Winter Lake and Coaledo tide gate projects. He explained how Winter Lake is unique in that it has vertical slide gates as well as duplicate side hinge mounted gates on its bays. It is the only one of that kind and the largest tide gate in the Pacific Northwest and how the Coaledo project is a three-bay ten-foot-wide tide gate with concrete wings walls for support. Claire graphically explained the water management plans, noting that post-project operations allow more tidal exchange and improved fish passage within water users' acceptable elevation ranges. Lastly, Claire discussed project implementation and shared some images including isolating work areas, framing and pouring reinforced concrete, applying the actual tide gate infrastructure to the box culvert and the mechanical features that open and close the tide gate doors. Apke noted how the newer tide gate project components are scalable, and not all projects will be large and as expensive as the those demonstrated in the presentation. He also circled back to April Snell's question on tide gate inventory and discussed the state's inventory of approximately 1,200 tide gates in the state. He also commented on an ODFW tide gate prioritization scheme that exists and is based on ecological uplift. Hughes credited the Nature Conservancy for their assistance with a prioritization process that looked at a cost-benefits prioritization scheme. Hughes noted that these prioritizations efforts are not complete, and additional work is necessary.

Palouse Tide Gate: A New Design, Engineering, Implementation, and Future Restoration (Tarbox, Coos Watershed Association)

Allison Tarbox presented on the Palouse Tide Gate Replacement Project, beginning by emphasizing the ecological importance of the Palouse system. It is one of the region's highest producing coho streams for its size with approximately 13 miles of high-quality upstream spawning and rearing habitat. The watershed has nearly two decades of extensive monitoring data, including spawning surveys, screw traps, PIT-tagging, and full lifecycle monitoring assessments. The primary tide gate that was replaced governs access to the entire tidal pool and was identified as a top regional priority under OWEB's Focused Investment Partnership. Tarbox then described the gate's location along the Highway 101 emergency bypass, noting the vulnerability of upstream assets such as homes, roads, bridges, septic systems, and low-lying lands. The Haynes Drainage District, composed of about 30 landowners, operates a system that includes one primary and five internal tide gates, protecting roughly 50 low-elevation acres. Tarbox proceeded to describe the primary gate that was removed as an approximately 60-year-old top-hinged wooden structure that had deteriorated significantly. It was undersized, frequently remained closed across multiple tidal cycles, and opened only about 27% of the time during the spring migration period. It also restricted drain out of flood and storm waters resulting in prolonged upstream flooding. Structural issues included a failing headwall and tide box, complicated by split maintenance responsibilities between county and private landowners. Tarbox summarized the project timeline, beginning with collaboration with the drainage district in 2019, installation of monitoring equipment in 2020, and an alternative analysis in 2021 that determined the district and county infrastructures could be separated. The selected design, provided by River Design Group, shifted the new gate approximately 50 ft upstream to a sheet-pile wall with modular aluminum construction, four side-hinged doors and muted tidal regulators (MTRs), and two separate aperture gates. Tarbox then described the water management plan that consisted of two distinct (winter and summer) settings along with an adaptive management clause that opens discussion to changes based on the needs of fish or land management. Tarbox also shared some construction details and pictures of the work bridge, partial dewatering via cofferdam, fish salvage operations using a large seine net, the installation of the four doors and MTRs, the aperture gates, the removal of failing infrastructure, site regrading and the finished product. The project cost roughly $3.5 million and was fully funded by grants and partner agencies. She concluded by reiterating the project's benefits: improved fish access to upstream habitat, enhanced tidal exchange and water quality, better juvenile acclimation through gradual salinity

transition, and improved drainage that reduces flood duration. She described the robust monitoring program including water-level sensors, dissolved oxygen and temperature monitoring, door-angle recording, velocity sensors, and a multi-location PIT-tag array. The new tide gate represents a major first step in a long-term flood-management and restoration strategy with future phases to address internal tide gates, sediment-choked channels, upper-district drainage limitations, and an upstream wetland restoration project.

Public Comment Period

- Rex Miller, the chair of the Ross Slough Drainage District began by stating that a definition of "tide gate" should be added to Oregon's Administrative Rules (OARs) for fish passage. He highlighted the OARs with regards to tide gates as having to be side hinged and be within ODFW criteria 51% of tidal cycles and defined his definition of a tide gate and its purpose to let freshwater out and prevent saltwater from coming in. He expressed his concerns with muted tide gates and the potential for future misuse and government overreach to let more saltwater in and turn private property from pastureland to wetlands. Miller cited loss of value to property, sulfur smell and mosquitoes as potential consequences. Miller's primary concern was that the 51% tidal cycle was an arbitrary number that future administrations could increase which would have consequences for landowners in the basin. Miller spoke about the effects of saltwater on pastureland and focused on its toxicity levels and its long-term impacts to agriculture lands. Miller concluded that tide gates, along with farmers, were being unfairly treated as a scapegoat to salmon restoration and spoke to his concerns related to saltwater intrusion and conflicts with agricultural interests.
- Greg Stone is a landowner in the Haines Drainage District whose land is adjacent to Palouse Creek where a new muted tidal regulator tide gate was recently installed. Stone provided some exhibits showing his property, two surveys from 1932, and a lidar map. Stone claims that part of the tide gate project was implemented on his property without his permission. Stone disagreed with the invert elevation of new tide gate and noted his concerns with the new tide gate not flushing out and compounding his problem of saltwater inundation and flooding on his property. He acknowledged Tarbox's explanation of the water management plan but did not agree on the four feet elevation for the tide gate doors to close, stating the lidar map showed his property under four feet elevation. Apke responded with empathy for Stone's concerns and noted that the ODFW's role is narrow and limited in scope to fish passage and the agency's role with tide gate water management and project permitting. Apke encouraged taking up the realty issues with the appropriate agencies and opened the door to future conversations on Stone's plight. Stone looked for more answers with regards to who determined the four-foot elevation. Tarbox responded that recommendations from the engineer were communicated with and passed through the project stakeholders during the project development process.
- Cam Perry introduced himself as being involved in salmon restoration and policy for 40 years at a state and federal level. He expressed his major concern that the permitting process has become so arduous that it can take too much time to get projects on the ground and is a disservice to both the fish and the farmer. Perry cautioned that if landowners continue to face difficulties with permitting, some may take matters into their own hands. He encouraged the Task Force to help find solutions. He used ditch maintenance as an example of a simple project that runs into permitting issues and can lead to unwanted consequences for both famer (saltwater invasion) and fish (blockages, temperature issues, stranding). Perry suggested solutions such as a modified nationwide permit with the DSL and USACOE or an informal section 7 ESA Consultation. Perry emphasized collaboration and supported bringing stakeholders together to solve the permitting problem. Perry discussed putting time limits on the permitting process. Apke encouraged Perry to help find solutions and help advise the Task Force on how to best tell the tide gate story in a way that influences common knowledge of the issues and complexities surrounding tide gates. Perry responded that they have tried to incorporate storytelling into all their projects and to find new ways to fund the storytelling. He suggested collaborating with tribal partners because they may have the funding to make that happen. Perry mentioned different ways to effectively communicate including audio-visual and an internet presence, door to door outreach, incorporating the business community (landowners, farmers, ranchers, timber companies) to tell their story through different media.
- Chair Hoffert thanked the public and concluded the public comment session. Apke reminded Task Force members that during the upcoming December meeting there will be an opportunity for additional tide gate dialogue to discuss what was learned during this meeting including the presentations, field visits and public comments.

Working Lands Tidal Restoration Projects: Goals, Funding, and Permitting (Sowers, Coos SWCD)
Kaylee Sowers, the District Manager with the Coos Soil and Water Conservation District, led a guided tour of the North Bank Working Landscapes Tidal Channel Restoration Project, a small-scale tide gate and tidal channel restoration effort. Sowers focused on project goals, site conditions, restoration design, and the benefits to both estuarine habitat and agricultural land management. She began by outlining the project's purpose: restoring historic tidal connectivity, improving juvenile salmonid rearing habitat, and supporting economically productive working lands. Sowers used maps, aerial imagery, a historic landscape reconstruction based on original land-survey notes (the "Benner Report"), lidar data, and on-site photographs to show the project's location within the watershed, its historic classification as tidal marshland, and key site features. These included the former channel network, the previously undersized top-hinged tide gate and culvert, the breached dike, agricultural modifications, areas disconnected from tidal influence, and the newly constructed tidal channels and wetland pond. Project objectives included restoring the hydraulic regime and fish passage, increasing productive rearing capacity for salmonids and other native aquatic species, improving water quality, and enhancing drainage and water-management functions for the landowner. Sowers described the design process, highlighting the hydrologic modeling used to determine the appropriate culvert size, a seven-foot diameter barrel designed to maintain water velocities within fish passage criteria and the development of a water-management plan to prevent saltwater intrusion and flooding of the agricultural field. She described benefits to fish, including early monitoring results showing increased numbers of large, healthy juvenile coho salmon utilizing the restored habitat. Benefits to the landowner included improved drainage efficiency and the reconstruction of the dike. Sowers also presented the project budget, acknowledging high costs, anticipated inflationary pressures, and the need for increased agricultural-based funding sources to complement traditional restoration funds and better align with diverse stakeholder goals. Construction-phase visuals illustrated excavation of the new tidal channels, installation of the new culvert and tide gate, and reconstruction of the dike. Sowers shared post-construction monitoring data and early habitat response, noting increased tidal inundation frequency, natural colonization by native wetland vegetation, and use of restored areas by juvenile salmonids. The tour concluded with a discussion of ongoing adaptive management, continued monitoring needs, and potential future phases of restoration in the broader North Bank landscape. Sowers acknowledged the many funding partners and technical collaborators who supported the project and emphasized the importance of coordinated planning to meet both ecological and agricultural objectives.

Lower Coquille River Tidal Monitoring (Huff, Coquille Watershed Association)
Julie Huff, from the Coquille Watershed Association, presented an overview of tide gate monitoring and fish ecology in the lower Coquille River estuary, focusing on the multi-year PIT-tag monitoring program, sampling approaches, tide gate function, and coho salmon movement and growth behind tide gates. Huff began by outlining the scope of the Lower Coquille Monitoring Program, which started after completion of the Winter Lake Restoration Project in 2018 and has since expanded to four tide-gated restoration sites, one ungated channel at Bandon Marsh, and a monitoring network that includes 16 PIT antennas. Huff described the fish sampling tools used across sites, including three- and four-foot hoop traps, beach seines, purse seines, dip nets, and minnow traps. She emphasized that conditions vary significantly across space and time, from distinct channels at Seestrom and Cochran to broad inundated basins at Winter Lake, creating site-specific challenges for gear deployment and capture rates. She highlighted the importance of long-term monitoring given the high degree of interannual variability. Huff summarized key factors that influence tide gate function and fish access, emphasizing that tide gate systems are complex and do not function uniformly from site to site. Higher tidal amplitude, water management plans that allow for higher upstream water elevations over longer periods, and the elevation of the land behind the gate all contribute to longer open door periods and increased opportunities for fish passage. She noted that approach timing is a critical component of fish passage, with PIT data showing that juvenile coho most often approach tide gates during dusk and dawn and during outgoing tides. Differences in gate design, channel geometry, and culvert length affect velocities at the gate and the window of opportunity for passage. Ultimately, successful passage depends on both fish behavior and gate operating conditions, and understanding these dynamics is essential for informing project design, evaluating restoration effectiveness, and balancing fish access with landowner water-management needs. Huff presented movement data demonstrating that juvenile coho are far more mobile than previously assumed with over one-quarter of PIT-tagged fish moving among sites, sometimes traveling more than seven miles upstream and passing through multiple tide gates. Growth data from recaptured individuals showed consistently strong growth across all sites for fish rearing in restored tidally influenced wetlands compared to fish in riverine habitats. Resident time patterns indicated that larger restoration projects tend to hold fish longer, while smaller structures exhibit shorter rearing periods and more transient use. She explained that two age classes, young-of-the-year and pre-smolts are being captured in the spring highlighting the importance of providing both age classes access to wetland habitats that support growth and improve survival through the

following winter or ocean migration. Huff concluded by discussing upcoming work, including installing new downstream PIT antennas to determine entry conditions, passage frequency, and potential delays in entry or exit. She summarized the discussion by noting that tide gates are improving access to critical rearing habitat, but that engaged landowners and water-management plans that support passage during key rearing periods are essential, and that no tide gate is too small to be replaced.

Tide Gates & Lessons Learned with the ODFW Fish Screening Program (Nordholm)

Katherine Nordholm, ODFW's Statewide Fish Screening Program Coordinator presented on parallels between Oregon's Fish Screening Program and the potential development of a formal tide gate program at ODFW. Nordholm first provided an overview of Oregon's Fish Screening Program, explaining that fish screens are installed at water diversions (irrigation canals, pumps, hydropower intakes) to allow water to pass while preventing fish from entering diversion infrastructure. Oregon's screening laws date back to the late 1800s, but the modern program began in 1991 as a cost-share pilot and was made permanent in 1995 alongside the creation of the Fish Screening Task Force. Funding has included state dollars, fishing license surcharges, and federal mitigation. Today ODFW maintains nearly 3,000 fish screens statewide, supported by four regional screen shops in Enterprise, John Day, The Dalles, and Central Point. ODFW cost-shares fish screens at points of diversion on older water rights. A tax credit incentive program also helps water users pay for up to fifty percent of the cost of installation. Nordholm stated that ODFW assumes long-term maintenance for screens under 30 cfs installed through the program. Nordholm noted that although tide gates and fish screens have different primary functions, their management challenges are strikingly similar. Both support economic activity and protect infrastructure while managing safe fish movement, manage water and are financially burdensome to the landowner, require engineering design and long-term maintenance, depending on permitting, especially with ESA-listed species, may involve multiple landowners, and need sustained investment, prioritization, and monitoring. Both also range from small, simple installations to large multi-million-dollar structures and are often components of broader restoration projects. Nordholm proposed the concept of a dedicated Tide Gate Program at ODFW modeled on the Fish Screening Program. She outlined reasons ODFW could house such a program, including existing policy frameworks, engineering capacity, established partnerships, and three decades of lessons learned in administering a similar statewide program. Critical lessons include the importance of predictable funding, long-term planning, monitoring and maintenance, and the impact a dedicated program can have towards accomplishing a goal. Nordholm concluded by asking the Fish Passage Task Force to consider next steps and needs with respect to program feasibility, staffing and budgeting requirements, fiscal estimates, policy option package development, and most importantly, what forms of partner support would be essential. Nordholm emphasized the value of further discussion among task force members and partners as the idea continues to develop. Kelly Moore followed up with a comment stating that at the start of the Oregon Plan there was a lot of skepticism around providing grants to watershed councils and it was optimistic to hear some of the good news regarding high quality projects, including the review and monitoring in the Coquille and reiterated the importance of learning and understanding the point of view of the land owners as part of the process. Chris Claire suggested that tide gates could potentially operate under a similar model to the Screening Program where when a landowner needs to replace a tide gate, ODFW regional shop could build, install and maintain it through a cost-share program. This approach could help address the high engineering, permitting, and construction costs that currently burden landowners. Claire noted that agency involvement might improve trust and streamline permitting, which is often a major obstacle. Claire also pointed out that the screening program has dedicated funding and exists because screens protect a public resource (fish) while supporting landowner needs. Tide gates serve a similar function as they manage water for land use but have significant impacts on fish when outdated or failing, suggesting a rationale for a comparable program structure. April Snell stated that she supports this concept and wanted to discuss it more at a future meeting, explaining that there are details that need to be worked out and mentioning the difficulty of getting funding and her willingness to help. Zach Toledo agreed with the idea referencing the similarities in need on the landscape between screens and tide gates and mentioned the idea of more collaboration with other state agencies such as DSL with permitting challenges. Fred Messerle reminded the group of the difficulties of working with salt water and changing tides and the need for structural stability when building tide gates so that they last and that using an ODFW shop similar to the screen shops might be a way to build that expertise and understanding that might not be present in the current engineering and contractor communities. Denise Hoffert highlighted that, unlike culverts, which are so numerous that engineers and contractors across agencies and areas are familiar with designing and installing them, tide gates are far fewer, more specialized, and carry greater uncertainty. This smaller project universe results in a need for more specialized engineering and project-specific solutions. Hoffert followed her comment up by ending the meeting.