



**OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

**Fish Passage Task Force**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Virtual Teams Meeting**

**Wednesday – March 11, 2026 @ 0800 to ~1200 hrs.**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Representing</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Fish Passage Task Force			
Kelly Moore	Fishing and Conservation	x	
Denise Hoffert ( <i>Chair</i> )	Fishing and Conservation	x	
Jim Harbeck	Fishing and Conservation	x	
Steve Albertelli	Water Users	x	
April Snell	Water Users	x	
Fred Messerle	Water Users	x	
Alix Danielsen	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
- Sharon Crowley, Assistant Fish Passage Coordinator
- Toby Schuyler, Fish Screen Coordinator
- Bryce Macnab, ODFW Screen Shop Manager
- Josh Kelsey, Fish Screens Coordinator
- Kevin Rybacki, ODFW-ODOT Assistant Liaison
- Pete Baki, ODFW-ODOT Liaison

**Members of the Public in Attendance\*:**

- Brian Hidden, USFWS
- Nicole Weprin, USFWS
- Greg Burak, USFWS
- Sarah Blocker, USFWS
- Cash Chesselet, ODOT
- Allen Gillette, ODOT
- Joshua Hanson, ODF
- Michael Tripp, Trout Unlimited
- John Netto
- Jack Hanson

\*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 Hoffert called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

### **Review & Approve Task Force Meeting Agenda (*Chair Hoffert*)**

Chair Hoffert asked if questions or changes were needed to the draft agenda for the Fish Passage Task Force meeting.

**Motion:** Hoffert motioned to approve the agenda. Steve Albertelli seconded the motion. The motion was approved 8-0.

### **Review & Approve Agenda & December 5, 2025, FPTF Meeting Minutes (*Chair Hoffert*)**

Motion: Hoffert moved to approve Dec 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025, combined Fish Screening and Fish Passage Task Force meeting minutes. Alix Danielsen corrected the spelling of her last name. Danielsen seconded the motion. The motion was approved 8-0.

### **Introductions (*all*)**

Chair Hoffert facilitated a round of introductions of everyone on the meeting.

### **ODFW Passage Program Updates (*ODFW Staff*)**

Apke started the passage program updates with an update on the fish passage order at Winchester Dam and the recent ODFW Commission final order for fish passage at Winchester Dam. He gave an overview of the history of the 2023 fish passage trigger during repairs of the dam, the Commission's order to provide fish passage in 2024, and the resulting legal challenges. The Commission voted 6-1 to issue the final order during their February 2026 meeting. The final order provided a 60-day protest period. No protests have yet been filed. Apke highlighted the unprecedented nature of the Commission issuing a fish passage enforcement order.

Fred Messerle asked what the cost estimate for the new fish passage would be. Apke noted that, although ODFW has not formulated a cost estimate, the media has reported a range of \$4-10 million. Hoffert asked what the timeline of the appeals process is. Apke responded that that timeline is unknown at this point and likely depends on many factors.

Apke moved on with the passage program updates discussing that Kevin Rybacki is currently on a job rotation and Pete Baki will be covering all the ODOT projects until he returns.

Apke discussed recent funding for McKay Reservoir fish passage. The dam is a high priority fish passage barrier that is on our 2025 fish passage priority list. Recent funding allocates \$1,000,000 in federal funds for alternatives analysis at the dam.

Sharon Crowley provided program updates on disaster relief coordination with FEMA. In March of 2025 there was significant damage caused by record rainfall, flooding, and landslides. FEMA works to repair or replace structures that are damaged during disasters. Usually structures are replaced in-kind, however, they do have to comply with State law, and therefore need to meet fish passage criteria when required. FEMA reached out for assistance at 35 locations that requested disaster relief to determine if their repairs would trigger fish passage. One of the structures was the city of Sutherlin Dam. Repairing this dam will trigger fish passage, requiring the fish ladder to come into compliance with current fish passage criteria. FEMA, OEM and ODFW are working together to address disaster damage on this and other projects. Crowley discussed the possibility of funding streams to help county or city's work to address infrastructure priority to a disaster.

Greg Apke gave an update on the ODFW Fish Screening and Fish Passage Cost-Share program. He discussed different funding streams and the fish screening and passage projects facilitated with those funds through the program. He discussed the fish screen shops and the projects they implemented on-the-ground.

Toby Schuyler presented information on Mirror Pond Dam fish passage project. The dam is located on the Deschutes River. Schuyler gave an update on the history of the dam and importance of fish passage at the location. He gave an update on impacts of the dam, and the approach to design, and plans for a fish passage solution at the dam. He reviewed the funding sources and timeline for the project.

Denise Hoffert asked if this project addresses any repairs at the dam. Apke thanked PacifiCorp for their partnerships with this project and noted that there were some repairs done quite a few years ago, that would be a trigger under our new rules but were not at the time. Therefore, this is a voluntary fish passage project. He highlighted how this is an example of how ODFW's cost share funds can help leverage worthwhile projects.

Josh Kelsey presented information on the Murphy Dam Fish Passage Project in Southwestern Oregon. He discussed the multiple components on the project including structures on the Applegate River, Onion Creek, and Stringer Creek, and screening at multiple diversions. He reviewed the impact of the current dam and the multiple benefits to the removal and planned restoration at all three sites. He discussed how the diversions will be switched to pump sites and much of the diversion ditches will be piped for efficiency. He shared images of the dam and fish screen and the planned project at the current 60% design and plans for the new fish screen. He updated the Task Force on funding sources and project trimline.

Katherin Nordholm gave a brief update on the Fish Screening Oversight Committee (FSOC) and the planned upcoming meeting in Enterprise. FSOC is a partnership of multiple state's screen programs including Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana. Hoffert asked about FSOC and how long it has been around. Jim Harbeck asked about the intended audience and expressed interest in going.

Mac Barr shared information about recent Fish Heart presentation that the fish passage team heard as an interesting possibility for an experimental fish passage solution at high head dams. Kelly Moore asked about the height limits. (There are nearly none). Denise Hoffert asked if it could pass lamprey. Barr discussed costs and their lease-to-buy program.

Barr also announced that there was a planned lunch with Zac Toledo and Terry Turner and invited task force members to attend if interested.

### **Task Force Member Issues, Updates & Roundtable** (*Task Force Members*)

Kelly Moore – Discussed how encouraging it was to see progress being made on fish passage and conservation given some of the more recent setbacks. He also mentioned that ocean coho and Columbia chum numbers were encouraging this year.

Ted Labbe – Mentioned that he did not have many updates from Portland and expressed befuddlement about the recent legislative session.

Fred Messerly – Started by mentioning that the south coast has had a fairly mild winter. He also expressed frustration at the outcomes of the recent legislative session and the impact on the state’s resource base.

April Snell – Expressed that this year is looking pretty dry, and thoughts that it might be a tough year for water scarcity and drought for water users and fish this year. She expressed hope that this would lead to collaborative solutions. She has been seeing piping and water conservation projects moving forward. She is looking forward to getting together as a task force in person and doing some tours.

Jim Harbeck – Shares his concerns also with the legislative results for Oregon natural resources. He discussed approaching fish biologists and tribal leaders for their opinions on fish passage issues in eastern Oregon. He has started reaching out to District biologists and tribal managers to get their perspective on fish passage issues locally. They have referred to the fish passage barrier list, but not exclusively. They occasionally refer to their barriers differently from what is on the barrier list. They have also asked questions about funding. He plans to ask Greg for additional information on the funding sources he discussed during the program update. Harbeck also discussed the low snowpack and expressed concern about the summer and fish - how lack of water and high water temperatures can be a serious fish passage problem.

Steve Albertelli – He also discussed the dry year and low snowpack in his area. He mentioned new technologies at the North Umpqua Soda Springs facility. They are testing new cameras at the site using AI technology to count and identify fish.

Alix Danielsen – They have a new foot of snow on Mt. Hood this morning. She mentioned that they may be expecting more, so they are heading in a better direction for the snowpack. However, there will likely be some concern about water in the area when the joint task force meeting meets there in May.

Denise Hoffert – Shared updates about the OWEB open solicitation for the Focused Investment Partnership (FIP). There are now six priority areas. Applications are due in July. The FIP in the Warner Basin is coming to the end of their 6-year FIP, they are planning fish passage at three structures on Honey Creek. She also shared general encouragement with the progress that continues to be made around the state on fish passage and habitat projects.

**Presentation: Overview of the ODOT Fish Passage Program** (*Allen Gillette, ODOT*)

Allen Gillette gave an informational presentation to discuss what ODOT does for fish passage. He discussed how the task force is pretty familiar with ODOT waiver and exemption request and the Culvert Repair Programmatic Agreement (CRPA), however ODOT also has a fish passage program. He gave a history of ODOT’s fish passage program, founded in 1996 as ODOT’s commitment on the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Healthy Watersheds. He shared some examples of projects ODOT has completed through their Fish Passage Program. Gillette highlighted the ODOT barriers on the ODFW fish passage barrier priority list (Priority List). There are 35 ODOT barriers on the 2025 version of the list. He pointed out that many projects have been completed off previous versions of the list, and many of the remaining barriers are politically or financially challenging. He shared how the ODOT barriers on the Priority List inform ODOT’s 10-year list of planned fish passage projects. He shared the funding ODOT has for fish passage projects and the estimated cost of the projects on the 10-year list. He discussed how ODOT applies for grants, but there is still a large gap between the funding need and the funding available for their fish passage projects. He shared some examples of planned projects from the ODOT 10-year list.

Gillette also discussed the ODOT-ODFW culvert repair programmatic agreement (CRPA) and the ODOT culvert dilemma. ODOT owns ~40,000 culverts and only about half have been inventoried and about 1/3 are in poor or critical condition. The CRPA allows ODOT to repair culverts without meeting fish passage requirements as long as fish passage can be improved. The CRPA also pays ODFW for each project and those funds go into the ODFW Fish Passage Compensation fund. ODOT also pays for two Fish Passage Liessons to facilitate fish passage projects with ODOT. He then discussed the various ways ODOT projects intercept fish passage. He highlighted the benefits of the ODFW-ODOT fish passage liaisons and expressed appreciation for those positions. Finally, he highlighted some fish passage program challenges, including funding, the need for guidance materials, outreach and training.

Ted Labbe commented that the presentation was interesting and he will be looking into the ODOT Hydraulics Materials. He also suggests that in the future ODOT highlighted other project by partners going on in ODOT right-of-ways and suggested Kellogg Creek as an example. He also asked the ODOT consider how to get people out of a vehicle and be able to highlight some nature bases solutions and “traffic calming”. He shared a link to information about the Kellogg Creek project.

[https://www.milwaukieoregon.gov/departments/community\\_development/kellog\\_creek\\_restoration/index.php](https://www.milwaukieoregon.gov/departments/community_development/kellog_creek_restoration/index.php)

## **Break**

### **Update & Discussion on ODFW Fish Passage Program Outreach (All)**

Mac Barr led a discussion on outreach. He highlighted that the ODFW Fish Passage Program faces similar issues to what Allen Gillette shared are the challenges facing the ODOT Fish Passage Program (funding, the need for guidance materials, outreach and training.) Barr shared the ODFW fish passage program project highlights webpage and some recent information shared about Fish Passage and Restoration work in the Smith River Basin and a Story Map developed by Kevin Rybacki for the ODOT CRPA program. Rybacki shared the CRPA Story Map developed for the ODOT annual CRPA report. He showed how to find it on ODFW’s website and discussed the layout and development of the web interface for sharing information and encouraged the Task Force to check out the information.

Pete Baki shared a link in the Teams Chat.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/d5ed90a0c30740c9a847bccb777232d0>

Barr continued the discussion with some information about the current resources ODFW has to dedicate toward this kind of outreach. He mentioned that Denisse Hoffert had asked about this during the last meeting and shared that there is very limited time and resources in the Passage Program to dedicate toward this. He opened up the conversation to the task force on brainstorming ways to continue this conversation, develop a work plan, and continue developing outreach materials and plans for the passage program.

Chair Hoffert volunteered to help develop ideas between task force meetings, she also asked for additional volunteers who might want to participate in a small work group. Alix Danielson shared that the ODFW Private Forest Accord website is very nice and asked about the ODFW web and education team, and if they would be available to help with this. Greg Apke acknowledged that ODFW does have additional staff who focus on agency priorities, but those resources are available to the passage program as well.

Alix Danielson shared the PFA site story map:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/69c0941ffd044f94b84e6a363f359753>

## **Public Comment Period**

Barr paused the discussion at 10:30 for the planned public comment period.

Brian Hidden from USFWS discussed floodplain reconnection projects in the Klamath basin and how fish passage is being discussed associated with those. Some floodplain reconnection projects have been flagged as worrisome for their potential to strand fish in isolated wetlands. Barr and Hidden discussed the competing interests around fish passage/egress and wetland projects with floodplain reconnection. Barr discussed the Passage Program's desire for early project coordination to evaluate and discuss the risk on a project specific basis.

Denise Hoffert discussed research from Stan Gregory ~15 years ago looking at floodplain connection in the Willamette basin that showed native species are often able to find their way out of floodplains but non-native species were more likely to be stranded.

Denise Hoffert shared Stan's research in the Willamette Valley.

<https://bioone.org/journals/northwest-science/volume-92/issue-3/046.092.0306/Fish-Occurrence-in-a-Seasonally-Inundated-Floodplain-of-the-Willamette/10.3955/046.092.0306.short>

<https://academic.oup.com/tafs/article/138/6/1302/7888520?guestAccessKey=>

Barr discussed the impact of fish passage review as part of the permitting gridlock that good project often run into and how this is an example of that. Alix Danielsen mentioned a few related wetland and estuary projects that could be referenced for lessons learned.

Ted Labbe shared this article from California:

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0216019>

## **Update and Discussion of Fish Passage Guidance Documents (*All*)**

Barr brought up the frequent discussion within the Task Force on the ODFW Fish Passage Guidance Document. He mentioned that the draft from 2019 has not been shared because it is very incomplete and does reference ODFW's old rules. He showed some of the existing guidance documents that the department has developed; including Beave Flow Devices and Beaver Dam Analogues. He shared that the Department has been working on ODFW's Large Bridge Guidance document that he plans to have available soon. Barr discussed additional need for guidance around multiple topics. He shared that, although we have a need for additional guidance, the program does not have the capacity for one large all-encompassing guidance document. He thinks the way forward would be to focus on smaller guidance and information documents like a flow chart. Barr asked for volunteers from the Taks Force for a workgroup to focus on guidance documents. Barr shared that he had previously discussed this with Denise Hoffert on how to determine what would be best to focus on and they had discussed the possibility of a survey to send to users to determine what their needs are for guidance.

April Snell thanked Mac for the update and shared that she is interested in participating as time allows and would like to help with the survey. She is willing to share documents with her members for feedback.

Greg Apke discussed that we want to understand where people are unclear about the rules so ODFW can shape where we need to focus on guidance. April Snell suggested making sure a survey asks the key questions from both sides. She also discussed timing for getting feedback from water users and the importance of making sure it is before the irrigation season starts otherwise there is a need to wait until fall.

Ted Labbe agrees that it is important to think about the intended audience. He likes the idea of a working group and is interested in being part of it. He likes the idea of developing some basic tools (like the flow charts) and pointing to existing resources.

Jim Harbeck volunteered to assist but also has questions. He is wondering what the process currently is when someone is starting a project. Mac shared a bit about the current process on how projects are identified and connections are made, often by District or Screen Shop folks. Harbeck asked if the district biologist had the right information to be able to communicate our policy and rules. Barr discussed the training the Passage Program provides to the Districts and some of the guidance we give for projects. Greg Apke added that the policy framework of the passage rules is notification based, it is the responsibility of the project applicant to notify ODFW when they have a project that interacts with ODFW fish passage rules. Alix Danielsen also volunteered to be part of the Guidance committee, she feels like there will be plenty of overlap between the outreach and guidance committees. Chair Hoffert wrapped up the discussion by summarizing that Jim, April and Alix had volunteered for the guidance document work group.

### **Planning and Discussion of October Meeting Location (*All*)**

Mac Barr started the discussion with a review of what was talked about at the last meeting on where to hold the October Task Force meeting. There was interest in visiting some of the large Willamette River Dams. However, the Department reviewed some options and decided that this might not be the right time to visit those structures, but perhaps the USACE could be invited to a future Task Force meeting. He discussed that this might be a possible agenda item for the May combined Fish Screening and Passage Task Force meeting. He suggested that one possibility might be to visit The Dalles Dam during that spring meeting.

For the October meeting, he discussed the Big Creek dam replacement project and the City of Newport's work on that structure. There are two dams on Big Creek that are aging and seismically unsafe, they are also interested in increasing their storage capacity. They are proposing a new structure that will not provide fish passage, Newport is seeking a waiver and may have a mitigation and waiver package for the Task Force. It would also be a good opportunity for the Task Force to see the current facility, see the location of the proposed structure and possibly the proposed mitigation. He suggested that the October 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> meeting be held in Newport.

### **Not on Agenda (*Apke*)**

Greg mentioned a conversation he had with ODFW's Director where she discussed how much good work the Fish Passage Team does as we manage outside funds, and fish passage projects. He shared that we are making progress on high priority projects quicker than we have in the past and that the Task Force has been incredibly important for these projects, investments, and accomplishments. He shared his appreciation with the Task Force, with Mac Barr and the rest of the Fish Passage Team.

~ **11:42 am \*\*\* Meeting Adjourn \*\*\***

Chair Hoffert adjourned the meeting at 11:42.

### **Public Comments Received:**

No written public comments were received.

## Meeting Teams Chat:

7:45 AM Meeting started

8:04 AM BARR Mac \* ODFW started recording.

HOFFERT Denise \* OWEB 8:17 AM



I am here just finishing my breakfast.

RYBACKI Kevin J \* ODFW 8:28 AM



five months and two and a half weeks



Hidden, Brian S 8:47 AM



I have to jump on another call in a few. I will rejoin around 10.



BARR Mac \* ODFW 8:47 AM



Ok thanks

Ted Labbe 10:15 AM



Good Kellogg Cr project info is here

[https://www.milwaukieoregon.gov/departments/community\\_development/kellog\\_creek\\_restoration/index.php](https://www.milwaukieoregon.gov/departments/community_development/kellog_creek_restoration/index.php)



APKE Greg D \* ODFW 10:16 AM



Quotable quote from Ted, "**Dethroning the Automobile**". Love that Ted and I appreciate your questions and statements. Thanks -

Ted Labbe 10:41 AM



An excellent article on this topic from California from a few years back... <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0216019>



HOFFERT Denise \* OWEB 10:42 AM



Stan's research in the Willamette: [Fish Occurrence in a Seasonally Inundated Floodplain of the Willamette River, Oregon](#)



Weprin, Nicole E 10:43 AM



Thanks for sharing these resources!

HOFFERT Denise \* OWEB 10:43 AM



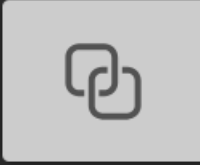
This is the paper I was actually thinking about: [Fish Use of Intermittent Watercourses Draining Agricultural Lands in the Upper Willamette River Val...](#)



BAKI Pete \* ODFW 10:49 AM



Story map link here: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/d5ed90a0c30740c9a847bccb777232d0>



**ODOT-ODFW Culvert Repair Programmatic Agr...**

A cooperative approach between ODOT and ODFW to address culvert repairs and maintain highway safety and...

storymaps.arcgis.com

Weprin, Nicole E 10:49 AM



Gotta hop off for another meeting. Thanks so much for the information and good conversation!

BARR Mac \* ODFW 10:49 AM



thank you for joining

APKE Greg D \* ODFW 10:53 AM



Kevin, can you provide a link to the Story Map so folks can preview?

Blocker, Sara D 10:55 AM



BAKI Pete \* ODFW 3/11/2026 10:49 AM

Story map link here:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/d5ed90a0c30740c9a847bc...>

really cool! Thanks for sharing!

Alix Danielsen 11:01 AM



<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/69c0941ffd044f94b84e6a363f359753>



**Private Forest Accord Grant Program**

Project Highlights 2024-2026

storymaps.arcgis.com

11:06 AM Recording stopped.

11:06 AM BARR Mac \* ODFW started recording.

11:12 AM Recording has been saved to BARR Mac \* ODFW's OneDrive.

RYBACKI Kevin J \* ODFW 11:13 AM



I need to jump on another call. Great seeing everyone (albeit virtually) and always great discussions here.

