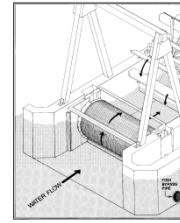




Fish Screening Task Force (FSTF)

Date: April 23, 2021
Time: 8:30 am to 12 pm
Location: Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
 Skype Virtual Meeting



Type of Meeting:	Fish Screening Task Force (FSTF)
The following attended (in person or via phone) all or part of the meeting:	
Fish Screening Task Force Members:	Kristin Bishop Barry DelCurto Greg Harris Nathaniel Olken Alexis Vaivoda Theodore Taylor Marc Thalacker
ODFW Staff:	Alan Ritchey, Fish Screening and Passage Program Manager, Salem Katherine Nordholm, Fish Screen and Passage Coordinator, Salem Bryce Macnab Brent Hinners
Public:	Antonio Bentivoglio Matthew Alongi

Agenda

Initial agenda items included:

- ~8:30 am **Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions** (*Chair Thalacker*)
- ~8:40 **Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes, Review and Approve Meeting Agenda** (*Chair Thalacker*)
- ~8:50 **Task Force Member Round Table** (*all*)
- ~9:20 **Public Comments** (*if requested*)
- ~9:45 **Non-Anadromous Fish Screen Requirements** (*DelCurto*)
- ~10:15 **Fish Screening Program Update and Funding Update** (*Ritchey*)
 - **Budget**
 - **Springhill Screen Exemption**
 - **Legislative Update**
 - **Plainview Diversion**
 - **Beaver State Podcast**

- ~10:45 **Fish Screen Administrative Rules (*Nordholm*)**
- ~11:00 **Maintenance/replacement/construction costs (*Ritchey*)**
- ~11:15 **Fish Screen Task Force**
 - Meeting Schedule
 - Membership Cycle
- ~11:45 **Review Action Items**
- ~12:00 pm **Adjourn**

Meeting Summary

Motions:

Meeting Minutes

Kristin Bishop moved to approve the August 5, 2020 meeting minutes as written. Olken seconded the motion, and the Task Force approved 7-0.

Screens Coordinator to Draft Letter on Loss of Shop Positions

Olken moved to direct the screens coordinator to draft a letter requesting that ODFW does not eliminate additional positions from the screens shops. Bishop seconded the motion, and the Task Force approved 7-0

Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Marc Thalacker, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:32 am.

**Review and Approve August 2020 Meeting Minutes
Review and Approve Meeting Agenda**

Meeting Minutes

Handout:

Fish Screening Task Force August 5, 2020, Meeting Minutes

The Task Force reviewed the minutes from the August 5, 2020 meeting.

Motion:

Kristin Bishop moved to approve the August 5, 2020 meeting minutes as written. Olken seconded the motion, and the Task Force approved 7-0.

Agenda

The Task Force reviewed the meeting agenda.

Task Force Member Round Table and Public Comments

Task Force members discussed fish and water-related activities in their respective areas.

Thalacker - Discussed that drought has been an issue. It's been a cold and dry spring. Reservoirs are low. Historically the three Sisters Irrigation District snow-pack is under target levels; water is expected to start being curtailed in July. The district is working with FS and FW, and other partners to remove the last dam on the Whychus.

Ritchey asked about the Three Sisters Irrigation diversion dam, which had a grade control roughened chute built for it. It failed in the first year but was rebuilt. Thalacker thought it has been functioning well after the initial repair. The FS has gone in and made some adjustments, and fish passage seems good.

Taylor – Has been recruiting to fill his position on the task force. He thinks he will be successful at finding a potential nominee.

Vaivoda- Hood River basin is also experiencing drought. They have turned off the frost control turbines. She is spending time down in Reno on a large fish screen on the Truckee River.

Harris – Discussed a new pipeline that went into operation this year upstream from McNary Dam. It was designed for up to 220 cfs, several thousand acres will be irrigated from this system and are coming off of deep wells.

Westland irrigation district has an upcoming groundwater recharge project with an addition of 45cfs to Westland irrigation district. They are hoping to have it in place by the 2023 irrigation season.

Their fish screens project is starting the screens consultation process with USACE. They are meeting next month.

Olken – Has had a few research projects. A pilot study of different barriers coating to replace the copper coating used traditionally. Tested multiple different kinds of coating. This was for the electric power research institute. Alan asked if the studies will be published. Olken answered that they would be publicly available in 5 years. It may be available sooner if it is presented at a conference.

Also working on a project that won a fish protection prize for the devilfish screen concept. This is an alternative screening design that can exclude smaller fish.

Has been working on a screen in California that was having sediment problems due to a recent fire. Expects similar issues in Oregon soon.

DelCurto- Update on drought conditions. It's been cold and dry. Have a fairly normal snowpack, but there hasn't been much rain. Many people are beginning to irrigate early. Feb was one of the snowiest months, but March and April have been dry.

Bishop- Gave a fishing report. Wrapped up winter steelhead season a few weeks ago, fish were big this year. Columbia closed for springers on April 4. Fishing has been tough, the weather has been cold, and there are a lot of sea lions. The water is starting to warm up now, they are seeing a good amount of fish caught.

There were no requests for public comments.

Non-Anadromous Fish Screen Requirements

DelCurto discussed fish screening requirements in areas of the state that do not have anadromous fish. Dams have stopped most of the fish runs in his area. He proposed that diversion upgrades would have more success if there were less screening requirement for them.

Ritchey – Asked if the projects were requiring point of diversion movement. He discussed the triggering requirements around fish screens; there are not automatic screening requirements at diversions unless there is a change in water right that goes through the OWRD.

This kind of proposal may require a statutory change. Ritchey also mentioned the fish screen payment in lieu pilot project as an example of an agreement where screening would not be required - offered to provide payment in lieu documents out to the task force.

DelCurto asked about moving the program into other areas. Ritchey stated that an expansion of the program would require Commission approval.

Harris asked about the options of coming to the task force with an exemption request, and Ritchey stated that that is an option, and mitigation in lieu of screening is always an option.

Fish Screening Program Update

Budget

Ritchey described the budget in general and the variety of funding sources. PCSRF and general fund, as well as screen and passage surcharges. Surcharges last reviewed and revised in 2009. Currently they are allocating funds for the next biennium 2021-2023. He outlined the budget forecast and challenges. He described the potential reductions in the shops and at HQ. They are still waiting on actual allocations for the next biennium. In the last biennium the Screens surcharge had just over \$900,000 for the biennium, 21-23 estimate is just over \$800,000. This is based on a forecast. He thinks that actual allocation may be a little higher than that. Passage surcharge allocation was about \$495,000 for the last biennium and the estimate for the next biennium \$209,000. He will have the real numbers soon.

Described how PCSRF funds are the bulk of our program and can only be used in areas that benefit anadromous fish. Projects in areas of the state with resident populations are covered by the surcharges and General Fund.

The surcharge amounts are the same as they were in 2009. The purchasing power is reduced over time.

Harris asked about the process for increasing the surcharge. Ritchey stated that it would be a Policy Option Package, and it is within the scope of the Task Force to ask for that. Although ODFW is sensitive to increases in license prices and increases to the surcharge increases license prices.

Springhill Screen Exemption

Ritchey gave an update on the Springhill screen exemption. This exemption went in front of the task force last year. It went in front of the Commission in Aug. The Commission approved the exemption and asked that the water users try to get a conservation easement on the property around the mitigation. They were not able to get an easement, but the project is still approved. The mitigation on Bateman Creek was planned for this year but has been delayed. They are not going to be utilizing the water right action that triggered the screen requirement this year, so they are not in violation of their agreement.

Legislative Update

Ritchey gave an update on the legislative report. There has not been a lot of legislative concepts that would relate to fish screens. A few of them would relate to fish passage. He reviewed two of them.

Ritchey gave a report on the program's Legislative report.

Harris asked about the process for proposing updating the fees or getting other funds.

FRIMA – Fisheries Restoration Irrigation Mitigation Act – was a process that allocated funds to specific projects in Oregon, Washington and Idaho. These funds tackled some of the large expensive projects. Thalacker also noted that it gave money to ODFW to do the inventories.

Thalacker suggested that the task force needed to understand the financial constraints better, what the O&M program looks like this year and over the next five years. Reducing the positions at the screen shop reduces the ability to do O&M.

He would support putting a letter together and sending it from the Task Force supporting not cutting additional positions. Asking to protect the positions for the conservation of fish.

Harris asked for clarification about the surcharges, and Ritchey clarified that they go into two separate dedicated accounts.

Bishop commented that raising the surcharges will increase the price of fishing licenses, and there would be public resistance to this idea.

Olken asked if other groups have worked to get their surcharges increased.

The task force discussed writing a letter to the Director asking not to cut any more positions.

Olken moved to direct the screens coordinator to draft a letter requesting that ODFW does not eliminate additional positions from the screens shops. Bishop seconded the motion, and the Task Force approved 7-0

Thalacker – discussed the contents of the letter. The letter should say that we understand that there is a number of positions that are projected to be eliminated from the screen shop. And that the task force has major concerns that the loss of these employees will affect the o&m program and the construction of new screens that they feel that would be detrimental to fish recovery thought the state. This is a small cost for a large return regarding maintenance of screens.

Taylor – suggests that the letter also states how many positions have already been lost and how much this program has already suffered from the historic loss of positions.

Plainview Diversion

Ritchey updated the Task Force on the Plainview diversion. The Plainview ditch is the uppermost diversion on Whychus Creek. Many users have water rights down the diversion that are scarcely used because the first water user has rights to most of the water. There have been discussions of transferring Plainview surface water rights to groundwater. ODFW’s perspective is that the groundwater is connected to the stream system, and this plan would result in a net loss of water from the system. So the District has not been supportive of it as a restoration project. However, they are supportive of addressing the fish passage barrier.

Thalacker –he has not developed enough information to share with local staff on the whole project, but the proposal will reduce the amount of water that will be diverted. They ran for almost 120 days in 2017. The current certificate is for 850 acres, and he is looking to get them to reduce it to 50-100 acres of water rights. In comparison, it would be a reduction in the average diversion. States that he needs to “prove” these figures.

Beaver State Podcast

Ritchey recommended the ODFW Beaver State Podcast to the Task Force. A recent episode featured a discussion about Fish Passage and Screens with Greg Apke and Ken Loffink. Ritchey promised to provide a link to platforms where the podcast is available.

Fish Screen Administrative Rules

Nordholm gave an update on the fish screen administrative rules development. The rule development process has been pushed back to 2022. The Fish Passage rule development process is currently underway, and developing screening rules at the same time may cause confusion with the public. Ritchey adds that the Fish Passage rules development process expanded to more than initially planned and has caused some confusion that we would like to attempt to avoid with the screens rules development process.

Maintenance/replacement/construction costs

Ritchey updated the task force on maintenance and replacement construction costs. He showed numbers from the database, including new projects, maintenance, and replacement costs. He

showed construction and replacement cost – not including outreach and technical assistance or administrative costs. Explained the history and changes in how ODFW defined “major maintenance.” Ritchey explained the new process: when a screen needs to be replaced, ODFW no longer considered it major maintenance, it is now considered a new project.

Olken asked about incorporating life cycle into “major repair” –beyond which it’s a replacement project? Ritchey – nothing set in stone. We have a one-year “warranty” where ODFW monitors the project before handing it over to the owner for minor maintenance. Olken asked if that is something that should maybe be developed.

Ritchey discussed the different funding sources and which could be used for maintenance and which can’t. The lack of funds that can be used for maintenance on screens in areas without anadromous fish has led to some shops being unable to perform maintenance in some areas.

Vaivoda asked if there is documentation on the sites that aren’t being visited.

Taylor – noted that the percentage of maintained costs will be increasing. It seems like for new screens we can estimate how much maintenance cost will be associated in the future. Notes that if sites aren’t being visited and maintained, that has the potential to be a big problem. Mentioned that some kind of life cycle asset management to allow an estimate of maintenance cost and replacement needs.

General discussion around license sales, the cost of licenses and the revenue from licenses. Prices have gone up, but the surcharge fees have stayed the same.

Taylor would be supportive of a letter advocating for a fee increase.

Bishop – concerned about the perception of license costs going up. Mentioned that she thinks the casual fishers have been more reluctant to buy fishing licenses since the fee increases.

The task force asked for more information at the next meeting. Information should include the process that ODFW would go through to propose an increase in the surcharges.

Update on the North Canal

Ritchey asked to add another agenda item to discuss North Canal in Bend, OR. NUID diversion has an old screen. Adding hydro triggered a fish screen requirement. The screening requirement was triggered, and a settlement agreement gave them ten years to meet the screening requirements. It must be screened by 2023. ODFW contributed \$75,000 to help with the design process. The estimated cost of the screen is ~ \$6 million. They are challenged by physical space. NUID is looking to hire another consultant to determine if a different design may be less expensive. Had ISI onsite to look at that as a potential option. FRIMA may be a future source of funds at this site. This site is not PCSRF eligible.

The task force will likely hear a request about coast share for this design at the next meeting.

Fish Screen Task Force Issues

Meeting Schedule

Thalacker suggested a meeting in August and then a fall meeting. Dates were discussed, and the task force settled on a virtual meeting Friday, August 27 from 8:30 – 12:00.

Membership Cycle

DelCurto, Olken, and Taylor will be termed out this year. ODFW will be working on recruiting new task force members. The three task members will still participate in the August meeting. The Screens Coordinator will begin the process of recruiting to fill their vacancies.

Review Action Items

Action:

Screen Coordinator will add North Canal to the agenda for the next meeting.

Screen Coordinator will prepare an explanation of the process the task force would go through to propose a surcharge increase to present at the next meeting.

Screen Coordinator will send information on payment in lieu of screening pilot project.

Screen Coordinator will send link to ODFW Beaver State Podcast.

Screen Coordinator will distribute request for new Task Force members. Including areas of representation and position descriptions.

Adjourn

Thalaker motioned to adjourn at 11:14 Olken seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:14 a.m.