

Seasonally Varying Flows Task Force Minutes  
October 30th, 2014, 8:00 am to 11:45 am  
Oregon Water Resources Department  
North Mall Office Building  
725 Summer St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**TASK FORCE ON SEASONALLY VARYING FLOWS (SVFS) MEMBERS**

Leslie Bach, JR Cook, Tim Hardin, Bill Jaeger, Valerie Kelly, Richard Kosesan, Mark Landauer, Curtis Martin, Paul Matthews, Kimberley Priestley, Eric Quaempts (by phone), Gil Riddell, April Snell, Jeff Stone. Absent: Joe Whitworth, represented by Rob Kirschner; Dawn Wiedmeier, Tracy Rutten.

**FACILITATION TEAM**

Richard Whitman, Office of Governor John Kitzhaber, Convener; Brenda Bateman, Oregon Water Resources Department; Racquel Rancier, Oregon Water Resources Department; Nancy Salber, Governor's Natural Resources Office; Rachel LovellFord, Water Resources Department (Presenter); Brett Moore, Anderson Perry (Presenter, by phone).

**GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

David Filippi, Janet Neuman, Teresa Huntsinger, Amanda Rich.

**OBSERVERS**

Kaylin Barter, Tom Byler, Elizabeth Howard, Scott Jorgenson, Malia Kupillas, Margaret Matter, Amber McKinney, Tom Paul, Mateusz Perkowski, Jerome Rosa, Lauren Smith, Willie Tiffany, Ken Stahr.

**MEETING OBJECTIVES** ~ Scope costs of a water storage project

~ Discuss and decide upon SVF method

The audio, agenda, and power points from this meeting are posted on-line:  
[http://www.oregon.gov/OWRD/pages/SB\\_839\\_SVF\\_Task\\_Force.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/OWRD/pages/SB_839_SVF_Task_Force.aspx),  
under the "Oct. 30, 2014" meeting materials.

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**Housekeeping Items and Meeting Outline for the Day**

Richard Whitman started the meeting by reminding and inviting Task Force members that they have the opportunity to review and comment on meeting minutes. There were no comments on the meeting minutes from the last meeting, though members were invited to send comments and suggested changes to Brenda Bateman or Nancy Salber. Richard also requested that the group be prepared for one more meeting, likely to coincide with the next Governance task force meeting. The final (anticipated) meeting would likely be 1-2 hours in length.

The Task Force's goal today is to reach tentative consensus on the SVF approach that will move forward into rule-making and subsequently to the Water Resources Commission for consideration and action.

### **Scoping the Costs of a Water Storage Project**

Brett Moore gave an overview of estimated costs to build water storage projects of small (300 ac-ft), medium(2,000 ac-ft), and large (100,000 ac-ft) sizes. He calculated preliminary costs, construction costs, annual operations and maintenance costs for the reservoirs, and an estimate of ecological flow analysis for the different proposed allocation approaches. Tim Hardin and Leslie Bach commented that the mid-depth assessments could range from a few thousand dollars up to the \$100,000 cost that Brett estimated, depending on the proposed project and its requested demand relative to site characteristics.

### **Determining SVF Methods with a Matrix**

Brenda Bateman presented a matrix approach to establishing SVFs. During her presentation, she clarified that “bypass flow” is equal to the “floor ecological flow” and that flow prescriptions developed for the streamlined approach are predicated on, “when water is available for storage, according to the 50% exceedence analysis.”

Conversation and comments that followed Brenda’s presentation are summarized in the following outline:

1. To be clear, one must pursue BOTH permits and SB 839 funding to use the SVF approach.
2. Concerns Related to the 15% Percent of Flow Approach
  - a. Construction of the actual infrastructure
  - b. Not convinced it will work on the east side of the state
  - c. Concern that the percentage would become a cap on future development in the basin
  - d. Prefer a regional flow prescription that allows for easy determination of project feasibility
3. Mid- and In-Depth Approach
  - a. The group discussed what might drive the decision to go from mid-depth to in-depth; discussion captured in “Soft Decision” section below.
  - b. Rachel LovellFord presented an example flow prescription and hydrographs showing how a flow prescription could be applied.

### **Questions/Comments**

1. Are there project characteristics that would definitely put you in the in- vs mid-depth assessment? For example:
  - a. In-channel

- b. “Big” project for the stream size or basin capacity or available water (50% exceedence)
  - c. Location with special critical habitat or biological needs
2. Should the mid-depth approach be a screening to identify the need for in-depth assessments?
  3. Each of the matrix rows requires a different level of detail to answer the question; can we describe this detail more fully in the matrix?
  4. Is there a higher substantive standard for projects receiving public vs private monies?
  5. How do we evaluate all matrix/information inputs and weigh them against each other to develop a flow prescription in the end?
  6. How similar is an SVF review to the Division 33 review?

### “Soft” Decision

1. Put the following approach into rule.
2. Proceed with matrix with the following changes:
  - a. Include Mid-depth and In-depth only, deleting the streamlined column "percent of flow."
  - b. Show that the choice between mid and in-depth approaches is not binary, it is a continuum depending on many factors.
  - c. Approach will depend on the attributes of the project relative to the attributes of the site (e.g. total percent of flow being requested, location relative to sensitive ecosystems, water availability).
  - d. Mid-depth assessment will provide an analysis of the information and analysis already available for the proposed project
  - e. Insert "Floodplain Connectivity" into Hydraulic / Physical Processes questions.
  - f. Define “Sufficient”: Need to have a level of information and analysis such that ecosystem functions spelled out in SB 839 are protected.
  - g. Define “Sufficient”: As proposed project increases in: i) water demand relative to water available, ii) risk to ecosystem functions, iii) size and complexity, so too will the level of detail necessary to answer the matrix questions increase. Level of effort should correspond to how the project relates to its biological and physical setting.
  - h. Note that this approach responds to the economic feasibility realities noted in SB 839 (i.e., Many of the functional benefits to watersheds from water storage will not occur unless a new water storage project is financially feasible; and new water storage will not be appropriate or feasible in many locations).
  - i. state may pay for these studies; do not use operational budget for this.
  - j. all other permitting conditions still apply to project.
3. Re-visit the idea of a streamlined, regional approach at a later date
  - a. Come back to this approach once we have experience across the state

- b. Consider whether it makes sense to put a streamlined, regional method into place
- c. Base on a planning approach
- d. Make it transparent and clear from the beginner whether the project is likely to succeed.
- e. Account for project characteristics
- f. Projects will still be held to a floor / ecological baseflow and all permitting requirements.

**TO DO**

1. Final description and matrix will be presented at the next SVF meeting
2. Comment period on the Matrix Description and the Science and Economic Sub-Group Reports will be available.
3. The outcome of the next SVF meeting and the public comment will be transmitted to the commission.