

**Columbia River Regional Forum  
SYSTEM CONFIGURATION TEAM  
July 17, 2014  
Final Minutes**

***1. Introduction and Review of Meeting Minutes***

Today's SCT meeting was chaired by Bill Hevlin, NOAA Fisheries. Representatives of the COE, NOAA, BPA, Idaho, Oregon, Nez Perce Tribe, CRITFC/Umatilla Tribe and others participated. Copies of previous minutes, documents mentioned, and meeting sign-up sheets are available from Kathy Ceballos at 503-230-5420 or Bill Hevlin at 503-230-5415.

Draft and final 2014 SCT notes are available on the COE's TMT website under the FPOM link. Comments on the draft May SCT notes are now due.

***2. President's FY15 Budget and Pacific Lamprey Mitigation Funding***

The President's FY15 budget allocates \$69 million for FCRPS mitigation, which includes \$22.16 million for the Willamette River, Randy Chong, COE, reported. There's a separate \$2 million line item for Pacific lamprey recovery for a total of \$71 million to spend on Pacific Northwest fisheries recovery in FY15.

Spending on individual projects to enhance lamprey passage will continue to be prioritized by the lamprey advisory group. However, it may be more difficult than in the past to move funds from CRFM FCRPS and Willamette actions to lamprey mitigation now that they're listed as separate budget items. He encouraged SCT members to contact their congressional representatives if they want more flexibility to fund lamprey mitigation. The \$69 FCRPS budget figure for 2015 is the lowest seen in years, and \$2 million for Pacific lamprey is also low, Jim Ruff, NPCC, observed.

Russ Kiefer, Idaho, recalled that when the lamprey accords were negotiated, fish managers agreed that if they ranked a lamprey project as having high priority, it should be eligible for CRFM funding. These funds are meant to mitigate impacts on all Pacific Northwest fisheries resources including lamprey. Kiefer and Dave Statler, Nez Perce Tribe, said the \$2 million figure was envisioned as a minimum, not a ceiling.

In some years the COE has spent \$8-9 million on lamprey so there has been flexibility, Chong said. But things are changing, and the President's assistant secretary for civil works has final oversight of the budget process, not the action agencies. The COE's goal is to prepare budgets that meet the MOA commitment of investing \$50 million in Pacific lamprey recovery over 10 years.

Kiefer said SCT members need to know whether they have latitude to assign high priority to a promising lamprey proposal, even if the cost exceeds \$2 million. Chong said it might prove to be more difficult than in past years, but not impossible. Ruff suggested finding out whether the lamprey focus group has identified any high-priority proposals for funding. He reminded everyone the Council's fish and wildlife program is a potential source of lamprey funds in addition to what BPA pays for studies and the COE pays for structural enhancements.

Benefits for Pacific lamprey extend to other listed species, Statler said. The biggest problem areas for lamprey are in the Snake River basin and the Columbia River from Bonneville up to The Dalles dams. Much work needs to be done before we will see improvement in Pacific lamprey passage numbers on the upper Snake River.

### **3. FY15 CRFM Spreadsheet Scoring and Prioritization**

Chong distributed copies of the latest FY15 spreadsheet and led a review of individual line items, beginning with those the COE has designated as mandatory. Then SCT began its annual process of scoring and prioritizing discretionary projects and their estimated budgets for the coming fiscal year.

The FY15 ranking process will continue at SCT's August meeting and probably the September meeting as well.

#### **Mandatory FY15 line items (no scoring):**

- #7. Ice Harbor spillway chute and deflector modifications, \$200,000 – These funds are for S&A and EDC for an ongoing construction contract.
- #8. Post-construction evaluation of Ice Harbor spillway chute and deflector modifications, \$875,000 – The work is expected to begin next spring with a contract to evaluate post construction conditions using balloon tags and sensor fish testing.
- #10. Little Goose adjustable spillway weir, \$175,000 – This item is designated mandatory because construction was underway. However, the COE recently terminated the contract due to uncertainty the project would be completed. Anticipated losses are around \$1.2-1.3 million. Although approximately \$4.8 million of the money already obligated will be returned, the contract will have to be re-solicited, which probably won't happen until FY17-18. The COE will know then how much additional funding the new contract requires. Meanwhile, the delayed schedule means the Little Goose TSW will not be available as a back-up weir if the Lower Granite RSW is out of service.

- #14. Lower Granite juvenile bypass facility (phase 1A), \$4.5 million – This large contract will undoubtedly require modifications. The work will begin this winter and continue in FY15-16. The estimated cost of line #14 is \$4.5 million in FY15, but the cost of the entire project will probably be around \$40 million.
- #15. Lower Granite overflow weir and orifice lighting, \$70 million – This line item covers closing out the work at Lower Granite Dam.
- #19. Lower Monumental spillway boat barrier, \$150,000 – The contract for this work will be awarded in August or September; \$150,000 is the estimated cost of contract oversight for next year.
- #23. McNary adult fallback passage efficiency study, \$80,000 – A contract for this work will be awarded this year, and \$80,000 covers the estimated costs of contract oversight next year.
- #31. BiOp coordination, \$850,000 – This line item covers ongoing COE staff work to support the BiOp.

#### Discretionary FY15 line items:

- #2. BON 2<sup>nd</sup> powerhouse fish guidance efficiency, \$1 million – The goal is to install a flow control device that limits gateway turbulence. Tom Lorz, CRITFC/ Umatilla, pointed out that the current solution of operating units at a low end of 1% is an effective operational fix, but it's not a structural fix. Bob Wertheimer, COE, said this topic is on the agenda for the August 13 FFDRG meeting. Scores were: **Umatilla** – 3 (score might change when data are available); **Idaho** – 3; **NPCC** – 3; **Yakama** – 3; **Nez Perce** – 3; **BPA** – defer; **COE** – 5; **Oregon** – defer until more information is available; **NOAA** – 5.
- #3. Avian predation, \$3.2 million – This funding will support work on the cormorant EIS and reduce East Island habitat to one acre. The estimate includes funds to develop acreage for avian predators at the San Francisco wildlife refuge. Scores were: **Idaho** – 4; **NOAA** – 5; **COE** – 5; **Yakama** – 5; **NPCC** – 5; **BPA** – defer; **Nez Perce** – 4 due to skepticism about how this will work out, although the learning process has value; **Oregon** – defer; **Umatilla** – 5.
- #4. Estuary habitat studies, \$855,000 – SCT discussed whether the COE is authorized by Congress to continue funding estuary habitat studies, as well as possible reasons the FY15 President's budget doesn't include funding for the estuary. Although language to increase the Corps authority for these actions is in the FY15 PBUD, enactment by Congress is required. As with the issue of Pacific lamprey recovery, Chong

encouraged people to contact their Congressional representatives if they want continued funding of estuary habitat studies.

- #5 Ice Harbor performance verification monitoring, \$9.9 million – **NOAA** and **Umatilla** representatives will give this line item a higher score if it only involves one treatment. As a two-treatment test, they both gave it scores of zero. The next step is probably referral to policy decision makers. **Idaho** noted that a graduated single-treatment operation would probably be best for both power and fish, but there was initial concern that stakeholders wouldn't be able to agree on what actual flows were. **Oregon** and **BPA** prefer a single treatment test. BPA's position is the spring and summer treatments could be split, based on 2006-08 data indicating that 30% spill is attainable for IHR performance standards testing next spring. There was agreement to defer scoring this line item to August.
- #6. Ice Harbor turbine runner replacement, \$455,000 – This item is not mandatory; Chong will remove the "Y" designation from the spreadsheet. The funds will pay for sensor fish to collect baseline data on three fish-friendly turbines to be installed at Ice Harbor Dam. The first unit should be complete by FY16. Scores were: **COE** – 5; **Umatilla** – 2 because sensor fish are not the best means of accomplishing this; **NOAA** – 3; **NPCC** – 3; **Oregon** – 1; **Idaho** – 3; **Yakama** – 2; **Nez Perce** – defer due to skepticism that the turbine improvements will work for lamprey, and doubts about timing of the tests for various species; **BPA** – defer.
- #9. John Day north shore ladder entrance improvements, \$535,000 – Because a lot of fish use the north shore ladder, the COE considers this item to be mandatory. Scores were: **COE** – 5; **NOAA** – 5; **CRITFC** – 4 until data are available; **Idaho** – 5; **Oregon** – defer; **Yakama** – 4; **Nez Perce** – 4 (recognizing the need to investigate what's happening with the pumps); **NPCC** – 4; **BPA** – defer.
- #10. Little Goose adjustable spillway weir, \$175,000 – The COE will provide a revised estimate at the August SCT meeting. Scoring was deferred until then.
- #11. Evaluate data and alternatives for meeting summer operations goals at Little Goose, \$70,000 – This will cover the cost of an ERDC modeling trip to scrutinize the Little Goose spill pattern for ways to improve summer survival rates at LGS. Scores were: **Umatilla** – 4; **NOAA** – 4 due to uncertainty that a spill pattern change will boost survival; **Idaho** – 1; **Oregon** – 1 (might change score); **Yakama** – 4; **NPCC** – 3; **COE** – 5; **Nez Perce** – 2 (might change score); **NOAA** – 4.
- #12. Spillway PIT detection system installation at Lower Granite, \$250,000 – This estimate assumes the NOAA contract for antenna geometry is

completed this year. FY15 funds will pay for completion of a design for the PIT detection system; in FY16 SCT's votes will determine whether to install the system. It was a high-priority item today with the following scores: **NPCC** – 5; **NOAA** – 5; **Idaho** – 5; **Umatilla** – 5; **Nez Perce** – 5; **COE** – 4; **Yakama** – 5; **Oregon** – 5; **BPA** – defer.

- #13. Lower Granite performance verification monitoring, \$100,000 – Scores were: **COE** – 3; **Umatilla** – 3; **NOAA** – 3 due to doubts about conducting a performance test in the next 2-3 years with all the other work going on at Granite; **Oregon** – 1; **Nez Perce** – 2; **Idaho** – 2; **NPCC** – 2; **BPA** – defer; **Yakama** – 3.
- #16. Lower Granite juvenile bypass facility, phase 1B, \$1 million – FFDRWG's afternoon meeting today will focus on choosing a location for the outfall so the COE can proceed with plans and specifications for the juvenile bypass facility next year. The \$1 million will pay for facility design. Standard total cost for a project this size is around \$8 million. Previous experience at Lower Monumental and McNary dams will create some efficiencies, although the design work might have to be contracted out. The total cost will depend on the selected outfall location. Scores were: **NOAA** – 5; **COE** – 5; **Idaho** – 5; **NPCC** – 4; **Yakama** – 4; **Umatilla** – 3 (might change score); **Nez Perce** – 5; **Oregon** – defer until more information is available; **BPA** – defer.
- #17. Lower Granite surface passage addition/modification, \$250,000 – This will pay for further evaluation of possible alternatives to the RSW. The RSW was designed to be dropped slowly to the bottom in case of a flood, but the raising mechanism may not work. The COE is developing a potential fix, because the structure is in good condition and could last another 30 years if it can be stowed successfully. Although it would only need to be stowed in a flood, sinking it could cause loss of that surface passage route. Scores were: **NOAA** – 4; **Umatilla** – 4; **Idaho** – 2 because surface passage in a flood shouldn't be a problem, and the Little Goose ASW should be ready soon anyway; **Yakama** – 4; **COE** – 4; **NPCC** – 3; **Nez Perce** – 3; **Oregon** – defer; **BPA** – defer.
- #18. Lower Granite adult ladder temperature interim measures, \$600,000 – There was discussion of whether measures taken to address water temperature issues in the Lower Granite adult ladder will be temporary, interim or permanent. Measures to move cooler water into the diffuser #14 intake and the auxiliary pumps are scheduled for implementation this winter. Although described as interim, lowering the diffuser #14 intake and the existing pumps will be a permanent improvement. Line item #18 was the highest-scoring item today, a 5 for all who voted: **Umatilla** – 5; **Oregon** – 5; **Idaho** – 5; **NOAA** – 5; **Nez Perce** – 5; **Yakama** – 5; **COE** – 5; **NPCC** – 5; **BPA** – defer.

#### **4. Next SCT Meeting**

The next SCT meeting was originally scheduled for August 21, but the Walla Walla FFDRWG requested that date. So SCT meeting was rescheduled to September 4<sup>th</sup>, in conference room 140 on the main floor of the NOAA building. Prioritization of FY15 line items will continue. These notes prepared by technical writer Pat Vivian.

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Bill Hevlin	NOAA
Russ Kiefer	Idaho
Jim Ruff	NPCC
Kathryn Kostow	Oregon
Erick Van Dyke	Oregon
Dave Statler	Nez Perce
Scott Bettin	BPA
Christine Peterson	BPA
Bob Wertheimer	COE
Trevor Conder	NOAA
Randy Chong	COE Walla Walla
Pat Vivian	Notetaker
Dave Trachtenbarg	COE Walla Walla
Chris Pinney	COE Walla Walla
Tom Lorz	CRITFC/Umatilla
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