**Columbia River Regional Forum**

**SYSTEM CONFIGURATION TEAM MEETING**

**April 4, 2018**

**DRAFT**

**\*\*Comments due by June 15, 2018**

***1. Introduction***

Representatives of NOAA, Washington, BPA, Oregon, NPCC, COE, CRITFC/Umatilla, Idaho and others participated in today’s SCT meeting chaired by Blaine Bellerud, NOAA Fisheries.

The main focus of today’s meeting was to finish ranking FY 2018 CRFM line items and preview the FY 2019 CRFM spreadsheet in preparation for ranking the line items beginning with the May SCT meeting.

***2. Review FY 2018 CRFM Spreadsheet Line Items***

Ian Chane, COE, distributed copies of the FY 2018 and FY 2019 CRFM spreadsheets and went over preliminary changes to the FY 2018 budget. SCT has already done most of the ranking for FY 2018 line items, but there have been a few budget changes since the last SCT meeting. There may be more changes as project managers narrow their focus on year-end funding needs. The COE plans to do a budget lock for FY 2018 in the next month or so.

The FY 2018 spreadsheet has separate columns for previous and current budgets provided at the last SCT meeting and this one, and these numbers could still change. The cost of line #7. The Dalles East Fish Ladder Emergency AWS, $4.9 million could increase. And a few other FY 2018 CRFM projects have emerging issues. More will be known as the end of FY 2018 approaches.

The estimate for line #2. Willamette River is up from $4.39 million to $4.63 million due to the Cougar Dam fish passage project. Because the estimate for line #23. Lower Granite Juvenile Bypass Facility, $9.3 million is up by $5 million, several other line items were put on hold in FY 2018 and deferred to FY 2019.

The President’s budget of $70 million for FY 2018 was passed a month and a half ago, and the COE has been asked to provide estimates for the continuing resolution (CR) through June. Full funding is still not available for FY 2018 CRFM projects, so the COE is operating on a month-to-month CR budget in lieu of actual allocations from Congress. Additional funds of $386,000 are being carried over from FY 2017.

Discussion turned to individual FY 2018 line items:

* #2. Lamprey, $4,632 million – The budget has been increased from $4.396 million to $4.632 million in FY 2018. Some of that funding will be carried over into 2019 to complete contracts issued this year using 2018 funds.
* #3. Estuary Habitat Studies, $265,000 – This item is on hold, and Chane will update the comments section accordingly. The work was deferred to FY 2019 to provide funding for the Lower Granite juvenile bypass facility in FY 2018. However, there might be additional funding available in FY 2018 to move estuary habitat studies forward, so the estimate has been increased by $200,000 since the last SCT meeting. Not all of that will be spent in FY 2018, leaving more funds to be carried over to FY 2019.
* #7. The Dalles East Fish Ladder Emergency AWS, $4.9 million – The estimate hasn’t gone up since the last SCT meeting, but several construction modifications that were not previously funded are under negotiation now, with a potential $500,000 increase. In response to a question from Scott Bettin, BPA, Chane estimated the total cost of this line item at around $40 million.
* #11. John Day Mitigation, $170,000 – The estimate of $10,000 presented at the last SCT meeting was a placeholder based on discussions about moving forward with the John Day mitigation analysis. The budget has been increased by $160,000 to look at *U.S. v. Oregon* total adult production in relation to facilities or improvements needed to reach production goals. Scott Bettin, BPA, said this work has been ongoing since the dam was built. There was general agreement this line item is mandatory.
* #21. Lower Granite Spillway PIT Tag Detection, $6 million – The estimate has been increased by $200,000 since the last SCT meeting.
* #22. Lower Granite PIT Tag Detection Post Construction Monitoring. $500,000 – This project was going to be deferred to FY 2019 to help pay increased costs of the Lower Granite juvenile bypass facility, but funding has since been freed up so this work can move forward now. Construction will begin in fall 2018, with post construction evaluation in FY 2019. Further discussion of this line item, particularly the use of sensor fish, was deferred to the next SRWG meeting on May 3-4.
* #33. Columbia River System Operations (CRSO) EIS, $4.7 million – The estimate went down from $8.6 million to $4.7 million due to the way CRSO EIS work is funded. Budgetary amounts are based on actual expenses, not allocations as in CRFM. Although $8.6 million worth of CRSO EIS work is planned for FY 2018, only $4.7 million of that can be expensed so the obligation was reduced. This frees up dollars for other FY 2018 projects that had been deferred to FY 19. The total estimated cost of the CRSO EIS remains $70.387 million.
* #35. FCRPS CRFM Program Management and COP Updates, $240,000 – These funds will cover program management and support. There has been no change to this estimate since the last SCT meeting, although program management funding has gone down over time because support staff have been encouraged to bill directly to projects rather than program management accounts.
* #44. Bonneville Powerhouse 2 Floating Orifice Gates/Bulkheads, $960,000 – This project was deferred to help fund the Lower Granite juvenile bypass. Work is scheduled to move forward on a contingency basis because it could easily be deferred to FY 2019. If either the TDA AWS or Lower Granite juvenile bypass costs increase, this is where additional funding will come from.
* #43. Bonneville Powerhouse 2 Fish Guidance Efficiency, $180,000 – Trevor Conder, NOAA, asked how cost increases in the Bonneville plate modifications will be covered. Vibrations are pulling the projects out of their concrete base, Chane told SCT. The fix could cost as much as $700,000. This is a newly emerging issue as of this week, and we don’t yet know the severity, Brad Eppard, COE, said. It could become a FY 2019 budget issue as the cost will definitely increase.
* #49. Bonneville PIT Detection, $50,000 – This estimate has increased from $0 as of the last SCT meeting. The goal of the project is to look at the feasibility of installing PIT detection at the piers of the juvenile outfall and build a prototype detection system. The COE is currently in the process of selecting a project manager for this effort. It will be discussed in further detail at FFDRWG.

***3. Begin Evaluation of FY 2019 CRFM Spreadsheet Line Items***

SCT discussed the preliminary FY 2019 spreadsheet, which is based on changes made to the FY 2018 spreadsheet after the CRSO EIS budget estimate went down from $8.6 million to $4.7 million. Today’s iteration of the FY 2019 spreadsheet assumes projects that were deferred in FY 2018 to help pay for the Lower Granite juvenile bypass increase will be funded in FY 2019.

The President’s budget of $46 million for FY 2019 has yet to pass the House and the Senate. Chane emphasized that $46 million is substantially less than past FCRPS and Willamette River budgets have been. The COE has identified a need for $50.536 million in FY 2019 FCRPS expenses, so there’s a considerable funding gap.

Of the $46 million in the FY 2019 budget, $28.9 million is allocated for the FCRPS and $17.025 million for the Willamette River. The Willamette budget might change because the COE has submitted a letter to NOAA to reinitiate consultation, which could lead to a similar mitigation process as the one for the FCRPS. Details of the settlement are being handled by the Department of Justice.

To help SCT members prepare to rank FY 2019 line items at the May meeting, Chane will update the remarks on the FY 2019 spreadsheet, as well as the work plans. He went through the FY 2019 spreadsheet line by line:

* #2. Lamprey, $0 – This got zero funding in the President’s budget because the fish accords end in FY 2018. Any money spent in FY 2019 will be FY 2018 funds carried over.
* #3. Estuary Habitat Studies, $625,000 – Initially this had zero funding in the President’s budget, but funds have since been allocated to complete a synthesis report.
* #4. Avian Predation – Cormorant Management and Monitoring, $750,000 – This will allow the COE to move forward with terrain modifications identified in FY 2018 as the final stage of cormorant work under the BiOp.
* #5. John Day Avian Wires, $0 – This project should be successfully implemented by the end of FY 2018. Any costs beyond that will be covered by the O&M budget.
* #6. John Day Adult PIT Detection, $0 – Work will be finished in FY 2018. Installation of a ramp walkway over the powerlines will be covered by the O&M budget.
* #7. The Dalles East Fish Ladder Emergency Auxiliary Water Supply, $500,000 – Funds are needed as a placeholder to wrap up the contract. If all goes well, nothing will be needed in FY 2019.
* #8. Lower Columbia River Juvenile Survival Studies, $1.6 million – This project is known as the PIT trawl.
* #9. Avian Island PIT Detection, $200,000 – This work has been going on for years, and the cost estimate has not changed.
* #10. Turbine Survival Program, $0­ – This is closeout funding. Any remaining work will move to the BPA large cap program for FY 2024.
* #11. John Day Mitigation, $436,000 – This line item was not included in the President’s budget, but funds are needed to move forward with analysis. Chane will update the remarks accordingly.
* #12. Reservoir Temperature Monitoring at Lower Columbia River Dams, $50,000 – These funds will be used to wrap up two years of monitoring and prepare a letter report.
* #13. FCRPS CRFM Program Management, $500,000 – The placeholder of $600,000 has gone down by $100,000. At one point it was $800,000, but costs have decreased because staff time is being supported by individual project budgets.
* #14. McNary Avian Water Cannon, $100,000 – Funds will cover construction oversight. Charles Morrill, Washington, said the word “cannon” is a misleading way to describe this dissuasion device to keep predatory birds away from fish. Perhaps a better term would be “water deterrent system.”
* #15. McNary Top Spill Weir, $2.5 million – Construction was deferred to FY 2019, which means the bulk of funding will fall in that year. Plans and specifications are being drawn up now, and the contract will be awarded in the first quarter of FY 19. When completed, this modification will allow project staff to open and close the spill weir from the control room of the powerhouse.
* #16. Ice Harbor Turbine Passage Survival Program, $100,000 – The estimate has been reduced from $250,000. Delays in the diving effort to define the scope of work mean this line item will continue to need funding. District staff are working with the contractor on a better plan, and the overall schedule will become clearer over the next few months. Margie McGill, COE Walla Walla, will work with the project manager to coordinate an outage and an MOC for FPOM consideration.
* #17. Lower Monumental Outfall Primary Bypass Pipe Expansion Joint Deficiency Correction, $575,000 – The President’s budget lists $575,000 for this work in FY 2018 but the work is being deferred to FY 2019.
* #18. Little Goose Spillway Weir Boat Barrier, $0 – This budget is zero for FY 2019 because the work was completed in FY 2018.
* #19. Little Goose Adult Ladder Temperature Mitigation, $100,000 – The estimate is down from $125,000.
* #20. Little Goose Spillway Weir, $0 – This work will close out in FY 2018.
* #21. Lower Granite Spillway PIT Detection, $500,000 – This will cover SAEDC work on the design-build effort for the PIT tag detection system at Granite.
* #22. Lower Granite Spillway PIT Tag Detection – Post Construction Monitoring, $15,000 – This is closeout funds for post-construction monitoring.
* #23. Lower Granite Juvenile Bypass Facility, Phases 1a and 1b, $3 million – The juvenile bypass facility is passing fish now, but substantial work is needed to make it function safely and reliably. More will be known in the next few months about the FY 2019 obligation. The total cost is now estimated at over $90 million, which is not far from the original estimate of $80 million in 1998.
* #26. Lower Granite Surface Passage Modifications, $500,000 – The budget was increased from $250,000 to $500,000 to look at solutions for redeploying the RSW after a flood event. Because it appears the cost will be substantial, the COE is looking at associated risks. The outcome might be a decision to leave the RSW as is and come up with a plan in case the RSW has to be sunk. One possibility would be to use the ASW that’s mothballed at Little Goose. This will be covered in further detail at the next Walla Walla FFDRWG meeting.
* #27. Lower Granite Spillway Weir Boat Barrier, $0 – The estimate was originally $200,000 to build a barrier, but now the cost is zero because a warning sign to boaters has been posted instead.
* #28. Lower Granite Juvenile Passage Performance verification Monitoring, $75,000 – These are closeout costs. McGill will provide more detail at the next SCT meeting.
* #28b. Lower Granite Juvenile Passage Performance Verification Monitoring, $100,000 – This funding is being carried over from FY 2018 to cover oversight. Chane will update the remarks accordingly.
* #29. Lower Monumental and Lower Granite 10 Minute Intake Gate Closure, $0 – This work will be closed out in FY 2018.
* #30. Snake River Intake Gate Closure, $10,000 – This represents the final costs of wrapping up the project.
* #31. Snake River Adult Sockeye Passage Initiatives, $275,000 – This item was cut from the President’s budget for FY 2018, but the COE has identified additional work. The project description is based on FY 2018 and needs to be updated.
* #32. Inland Avian Predation, $150,000 – FY 2019 is the final year for this work.
* #33. Columbia River System Operations (CRSO) EIS, $7.6 million – The revised estimate went up from $6.35 million. The CRSO EIS might include mitigation on the Willamette River.
* #34. Snake River Fall Chinook System Survival Study, $35,000 – The COE has identified a need for closeout funds to finish the reports. This estimate might change.
* #35. FCRPS CRFM Program Management and COP Updates, $400,000 – The estimate is up by $30,000 since the last SCT meeting because $30,000 was added from line item #48. AMIP Spill Test. Line items #13 and #35 are essentially the same (#13 is the Portland District and #35 the Walla Walla District). Chane will retitle the line items “program management support” to describe them more accurately.
* #36. FCRPS Spill to Gas Cap – Spill Pattern Development, $0 – This is the first line item in support of spill to the gas cap, in this case the modeling effort. Because no modeling will be needed in FY 2019, funding was shifted to line #42.
* #37-41 – These line items all have zero funding in FY 2019 because they were placeholders or closed out in FY 2018. The two placeholders are #38, Evaluate Feasibility of More Acceptable Alternatives for Turbine Blade Blocking, and #41. Spillway and Turbine PIT Tag Detection Feasibility Study.
* #39. The Dalles Sluiceway PIT Detection, $0 – This line item should remain on the FY 2019 spreadsheet, Russ Kiefer, Idaho, said.
* #40. Sheepy Lake Caspian Tern Island, $0 – The work is nearly finished and may come in under budget.
* #42. FCRPS Spill to Gas Cap – Adult and Juvenile Studies, $11.3 million. This line item is a placeholder. Funding in FY 2019 will be just for studies, not for modeling. Eventually, spill studies for juveniles and adults will be split into two separate line items. In the FY 2018 CRFM budget, the John Day modeling effort is a separate line item, but it’s combined into one line item for FY 2019. No modeling of the John Day spill pattern will be needed in FY 2019.
* #43. Bonneville Powerhouse 2 Fish Guidance Efficiency, $150,000 – This is just a placeholder estimate. The cost will probably increase depending on the fix. Further discussion will occur at FFDRWG.
* #44. Bonneville Powerhouse 2 Floating Orifice Gates, $150,000 – The estimate was initially zero, then $10,000 as a placeholder to close out the project. The contract will probably be issued in FY 2018. However, if The Dalles AWS or the Lower Granite Juvenile Bypass costs go up, this will shift from being a contingency in FY 2018 to a line item on the FY 2019 budget.
* #45. Caspian Tern Management Plan, $0 – The initial estimate was $630,000 for the hazing effort at East Sand Island in FY 2018, the last year of these efforts to implement the avian predation EIS. SCT’s discussion today elicited controversy as to whether BiOp goals have actually been met.
* #46-47 – These line items for adult ladder temperature mitigation at Little Goose and Lower Granite both have zero funding because they were closed out in FY 2018.
* #48. AMIP Spill Test, $0 – This line item originally had $30,000 in funding but was excluded from the President’s budget, so the $30,000 was shifted to line #35. Costs are expected to go down because less oversight is needed than in past years.
* #49. Bonneville PIT Detection, $160,000 – This is a placeholder for implementing some form of PIT tag detection in FY 2019. The cost will change depending on what’s feasible.

Chane said he will update the remarks and descriptions on the FY 2019 spreadsheet for the next meeting, when SCT begins ranking FY 2019 line items. Given the gap between the President’s budget for FY 2019 and the needs identified to date, SCT’s ranking exercise will be critical in FY 2019. Competition for dollars will be keen.

Most of the Salmon Managers agree that PIT detection at the Bonneville ladder entrance is desirable and are waiting for information to produce a cost estimate, probably $350,000-$400,000 at most, Charles Morrill said. This could become an issue in FY 2019. A written summary is expected after the next SRWG review. There’s a collective sense that PIT detection at the ladder would help clarify what’s going on with fish passage in general. The work being done at Bonneville could be extended to other projects such as Little Goose, Erick Van Dyke, Oregon, said.

Chane spotlighted the two FY 2019 projects most at risk of escalating costs, #7. The Dalles East Fish Ladder Emergency Auxiliary Water Supply, $500,000 and #23. Lower Granite Juvenile Bypass Facility, Phases 1a and 1b, $3 million

In both cases, modifications will be needed. If the estimating phase stretches into June 2018, it will limit the COE’s ability to move forward with funding other line items in FY 2019. Chane will report on these two items at the next SCT meeting, as well as any new developments regarding Willamette River mitigation.

***4. Bonneville PIT Tag Feasibility Study and Spill to Gas Cap Biological Studies***

The COE will assign a project manager to both of these studies, Chane reported. In the out years, spill to the gas cap will be focused on biological studies, with funding spread among the various projects being studied. This should make it easier to track the costs of biological studies vs. modeling and construction.

***5. Next SCT Meeting***

SCT will reconvene on May 17 to begin ranking the FY 2019 spreadsheet. In preparation for that meeting, Chane and Bettin will work together on updating the project remarks. SCT members will review placeholders in the FY 2019 spreadsheet and decide which to keep as triggers for further discussion.

Leslie Bach, NPCC, said the Council is still deciding when to put out a call for funding recommendations in FY 2019. The timing of this needs to be taken into account.

There will be more to come on risk assessment of the Lower Granite surface passage projects, Chane said. Bettin asked, what about building an adjustable spillway weir (ASW) at Granite? Because there are so many competing needs in FY 2019, such a major construction project would probably need to be funded with FY 2020 CRFM dollars, Chane replied.

Charlies Morrill asked about funding to level a mound in the Little Goose model at ERDC. If this results in better hydraulics for adult passage, it could provide a viable approach to improving conditions for juveniles and adults. The benefits would have to justify the high cost. This is not in the current FY 2019 budget, but SCT can revisit it at a later date, Chane said.

Precision in estimating will be paramount in such a tight year, Chane said. He’s tracking line items closely and refining the cost estimates, potentially to justify a work plan increase.

These notes prepared by technical writer Pat Vivian.

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