**Columbia River Regional Forum**

**System Configuration Team Meeting**

**May 21, 2020**

**DRAFT Official Notes**

Representatives of Corps, OR, ID, WA, BPA, NOAA, and others participated in today’s SCT meeting chaired by Blane Bellerud, NOAA. See the last page of these minutes for a list of attendees at today’s meeting.

1. FY20 budget update & B2FGE:

The main purpose of today’s meeting is to discuss additional funding for capabilities this year for funding on Columbia and Willamette. Funding has come back to the program because of de-obligation on the Willamette. At today’s meeting, SCT members ranked their priorities so that Ian could take a list of regional priorities to the division office to help the Corps decide how to spread out the available funding. Highlights of today’s update and ranking session include:

* Total Available in FY20 $48.566M\*
* Total - Willamette (NWP) 16,422 – a project on the Willamette is not moving forward, which freed up ~$3M.
* **Line 3 Estuary Habitat Studies**: if this is funded this year, it will shift funding out of next year’s budget and free up that funding for other projects.
* **Line 7: The Dalles East Fish Ladder Emergency Auxiliary Water Supply**: A debris issue has been identified at the AWS intake that has caused a differential on the system. If the AWS is used long-term (which it was not designed to do, but is currently doing), debris could build up and cause an issue. If funding becomes available, the work to investigate this issue could be completed this year. Specifically, the Corps could investigate the need for an automatic trash rake system at the AWS intake. That would need to be coordinated through FPOM. FPOM would then ask SCT for funding, which would come out of CRFM.
* **Line 23 Lower Granite Juvenile Bypass Facility - Phase 1a (Gatewell to Separator), Phase 1b (Outfall) Close Out**: The Corps is looking to award the contract next year but could fund it this year and is looking for input from the region on their priorities. SCT members ranked this.
* **Line 33 Columbia River System Operations (CRSO) EIS**: this project has a reduced capability in FY21. $500k will come back into the budget.
* **Line 43 Bonneville Powerhouse 2 Fish Guidance Efficiency**: Originally, this project was allocated $1.5 from the PBud. However, some of that was diverted to fund CRSO. Due to COVID-19, the Corps is concerned about getting the contract out for this project. Based on input from region, however, it moved forward with the contract and right now, it is seeking to have mandatory one unit replaced and the second unit as an option. It also has a contract to evaluate the hydraulics of the first unit once the first unit fix is complete. Ian noted that this contract only covers two of the eight units that need to be fixed. There would need to be an additional contract for the remaining six units. Since there may be time to complete the work this winter, Ian would like input from the region. Specifically he would like to know if the region would like to put one unit in and then do testing, to put two units in and then do testing, or to do something else. He noted that mobilizing and then de-mobilizing adds additional cost to the project. By doing two units at once, the region will save about ~$200k. Charles Morrill, WA, advocated for doing one unit and then testing. Trevor Conder, NOAA, said he would be supportive of doing both at once if he knew they would work but the problem is that it is not clear if it will work and what effect it will have on fish. There is also the erosion issue.
* **Line 51 Implementation of Spring study to assess overshoot of steelhead at McNary**. The fall study is on track to be awarded in FY19. Since there is additional funding, the region could chose to fund additional studies this year. If the studies are funded with this year’s budget, then the studies could be completed next year. Tom Lorz noted that the BiOp has not come out yet and may effect this item. If a study needs to be put in place first, then his score would be different than if the operation was already in place and then the region was looking to fund the study. The preliminary spring report with results from 2019 and 2020 should be available in mid-June. Joe Norton can send out the preliminary fall report, which he already has.

2. PIT Trawl / Transport Marking Update (NOAA)

It looks doubtful that the trawl will be put in place and that marking operations will occur this year. At this point, it is late in the season and there is little reason to put either in place, should COVID-19 restrictions be lifted, which it looks unlikely they will be. Steve Smith is building additional data into models and talking to BPA about that. He is look at historical data with and without avian PIT-tag information in the estuaries. All the details have not been ironed out yet. Blane will ask Steve to write up a paragraph or two about his work and he will forward that to SCT.

3. Unmarked Hatchery Releases (Corps)

This is not really an SCT item but Ian want to make people aware of some unmarked hatchery releases because it is not typical. When the Spring Creek hatchery made its release of subyearling tule, one of the groups, about ~2.3M fish, were released unclipped due to COVID-19. Likewise, ~1.7M upriver brights will be released in June from Crosser Hatchery and they will be unclipped as well. In future years, this may cause some confusion for wild fish numbers during return. Andrew Traylor will contact forward Blane an email detailing this, which a Blane will forward to SCT members.

4. Other items

Tom Iverson wondered about CRFM. He heard that it is phasing out and switching to structure and operations. Ian said he does not see CRFM going away. The vision or future for CRFM is a lot less structural improvements for fish passage at this point. Some items will continue to be CRFM-funded, like the McNary overshoot study discussed today.

FY22 cannot be released until it comes back as the president budget.

5. Next SCT:

The next SCT will be the third Thursday in June.

Today’s Attendees:

Blane Bellerud, NOAA

Brad Eppard, Corps

Charles Morrill, WA

Christine Petersen, BPA

Erick Van Dyke, OR

Ian Chane, Corps

Jacob Macdonald, Corps

Jim Wick, XXXX

Joe Norton, XXXX

Jonathan Ebel, ID

Leah Sullivan, BPA

Leslie Bach, NPCC

Melissa Haskin, BPA (CONTR)

Scott Bettin, BPA

Tom Iverson, Yakama Nation Fisheries

Tom Lorz, Umatilla/CRITFC

Trevor Conder, NOAA

*Minutes by Melissa Haskin, Flux Resources LLC, Contractor for Bonneville, mahaskin@bpa.gov*