

**Columbia River Regional Forum
System Configuration Team Meeting
August 19, 2021
Final Notes**

Representatives of Corps, OR, WA, BPA, NOAA, and others participated in today's SCT meeting facilitated by Blane Bellerud, NOAA. Draft and final SCT notes are available on the COE's TMT website under the FPOM link. For copies of documents discussed in the meeting, contact kathy.ceballos@noaa.gov. See the last page of these minutes for a list of attendees at today's meeting.

1. Update on FY22 CRFM budget & FY21 Project Updates

Ida Royer provided budget updates. Until the congressional budget is passed for FY22, the Corps follows the President's budget per a continuing resolution. The current budget is \$3.575 M.

As far as FY21, the Corps is identifying any projects that will have early needs in FY22 that may be impacted by the budget process. The Corps is also trying to identify extra funding it has this year and get out any contracts it can before the end of the year with those funds. This includes awarding contracts for B2FGE and the estuary habitat studies (line 3). Additionally, the PIT Trawl contract is just waiting on a signature from NOAA (the contract is for field work next year).

Ida shared a spreadsheet with updates including the work expected for FY22. Ida removed the cost line because it is fluid and the capability originally expressed has changed. For instance, line 3 was originally over \$1M and is now much less. Tom Lorz noted this is a problem since this group is meant to take the money it has and prioritize it the right way. If the group does not know how much money these projects cost, it is hard to rank the projects correctly, he noted. Ida replied that it is important for the Corps to know what the SCT considers biologically important. However, Trevor Conder, NOAA, noted that removing the capability is a departure from standard procedure and that the SCT is not just a technical group but a quasi-policy group. Trevor feels strongly that the costs should be included and if this is a long-term change, would likely elevate it within his agency. Charles Morrill, WA, agreed with both Trevor and Tom. Meanwhile, Tom Iverson, Yakama Nation Fisheries, added that the amount of funding tells you how much of the work on the spreadsheet will be done, which can be important for ranking. Brad noted that historically the Corps has asked for SCT's ranking based on the importance of doing the work. Ida said she would talk internally with Ian Chane.

Trevor Conder, NOAA, shared that as SCT-chair, he heard the concerns being raised by WA, Yakama Nation Fisheries, CRITFC, ID, and NOAA about ranking without costs. He proposed that the agencies rank today but that Ida return with cost information at the next SCT and allow agencies to re-rank based on the updated information. If Ida cannot share cost information, he requests that Ida share why she cannot do so. He commented that this is a past from how ranking

has occurred historically, noting that SCT members have always had some idea of cost at the time of ranking.

Ida will prepare that information. Ida led the SCT through today's ranking, providing additional information on some line items. Of note, the group discussed:

Line Item #3: Synthesis Memo #3 - CEERP Adaptive Management and State of the Science (Woodlands funded FY21). Ida clarified that the Woodlands study will be largely funded in FY21 with a minimal amount of carryover planned to oversee the study. FY22 funding will be allotted to Synthesis Memo #3. This memo is required to be completed on a 5-year cycle per the 2008 BiOp.

Line 6 Bonneville Powerhouse 2 Fish Guidance Efficiency: It is Ida's understanding that originally the plan was to complete 5 units in FY21 and the remaining 3 units in FY21. However, the new plan is to fund all units in FY21. There would only be oversight funded in FY22. Tom Lorz was shocked by this, noting it would be very surprising if \$1.8M covered work on all of the units. Ida will confirm that the cost and details are correct.

Line 7 Bonneville PIT Detection: NOAA commented that it would like to see this completed in the next few years. That said, in a low fund year, NOAA would be supportive of delaying the project. This does not indicate it is not a high priority for the agency. NOAA noted that in low flow years, detections can be low. WA believes detection is critical and was originally going to rank high, but chose to rank with a 3 after hearing Trevor's explanation of detection efficiency in different flow scenarios. ID chose to rank as a 1, noting there are higher priority spots to invest in detection infrastructure in ID's view.

Line 8 BON Serpentine Weir Modifications – NEW: Initial cost estimates are around \$7M for this project. Tom provided a ranking for CRITFC but noted that he is reaching out to his lamprey folks and may amend his ranking based on that. Jake Macdonald noted that there will be a refined cost estimate available in October. As part of this discussion, Trevor wondered who the Lamprey group is and how SCT or NOAA would connect with them with information. Tom shared that it is a Corps & CRITFC taskforce. Jake is also a member of the group and would like to wait until the refined cost estimate comes in before he reaches out to it.

Line 9 The Dalles East Fish Ladder Emergency Auxiliary Water Supply: The fish units at the Dalles Dam are scheduled to be removed in FY24. At that time, the project will become solely reliant on the AWS system.

Line 10 John Day Mitigation: This is a Fish Accords item for increasing production for John Day mitigation responsibilities. The Corps is waiting on a decision from the advisory committee and the division office regarding a path forward. At this time, they will not be able to move forward with this item. Tom commented it is also on the FPOM ranking list. Ida clarified that the costs are split between FPOM and CRFM based on what is O & M.

Line 11 FCRPS CRFM Program Management (NWP): is mandatory. Ida asked if this should be removed from the spreadsheet since it is mandatory. Tom Lorz answered that it has to remain on the spreadsheet. SCT needs to see how much of the budget this will take up.

Line 12 Inland Avian Predation: Lorz is wondering if this is required to implement the John Day pool raise. Ida commented that it is not required for the operation. The BiOp does require monitoring. If this is not funded, the operation will occur but monitoring will not. Lorz asked what NOAA would do if that happened. NOAA would have to coordinate at the technical and policy level to determine if monitoring could be delayed. Cindy noted that her organization commits to doing this in their biological assessment. She added that more could be looked into as far as monitoring. For instance, is it really necessary to monitor weekly or are spot checks acceptable. Discussions about frequency of monitoring would be outside the purview of SCT but could be added to a future SRWG agenda.

Line 13 Cooling water structures - potential locations: JDA MCN IHR LMO: Morrill felt conflicted on this, noting that while long-term he would rank it a 4 or 5, it could be delayed for a year. Morrill needs more background information on this and may revise his score. The Corps scored this a 3 because it is in the assessment phase and may not be ready for implementation. Trevor commented that NOAA considers this very important considering the increase in temperatures, which is affecting summer Chinook and sockeye. Ladder temperatures are high in July and August when fish are migrating. Research shows there is cooler water available at depths during those periods. It could provide a benefit to fish. NOAA recognizes this is a low-funding year and that it may take a few years to fund. ID agrees with NOAA. WA commented that this does not address passage issues in the pools. Given this, he wonders how beneficial this line item will be. *Will adults have better passage rates through the Upper Columbia*, he wondered. Lorz noted this will help the fish move past the ladders so they continue their migration. This is one of a few things that can be done to help the fish with warmer water conditions, Lorz said.

Line 14 McNary Avian Deterrent Deficiency Correction and Avian Wire Design Feasibility Report: There have been a lot of equipment failures during testing and COVID issues. Trevor commented that in a low-funding year, this may not be a priority for funding since initial testing makes it seem like it is not very effective. There are better options, he said. Lorz and Morrill agree with NOAA. Ida will have more information on this project at a future SCT.

Line 15 Ice Harbor Turbine Passage Survival Program: The contract was awarded and the work was delayed a year due to COVID. Next year, funding will be needed for study oversight. WA wondered if this should be mandatory. Ida agreed since the contract was funded and the Corps has an obligation once the contract is in place. Ebel is a little frustrated that it is a low-funding year and this has already been awarded, making it mandatory and moving funds that could have been used elsewhere. ID would prioritize other projects above this one. Lorz asked if this can be delayed a year. Ida will need to consult Walla Walla. She noted that when a contract is delayed, it has to be modified, which costs additional money.

Lorz wondered if it is cheaper to modify or fund the oversight. Ida said it would be cheaper to modify the contract. Leah Sullivan, BPA, said she remembered previous funding allocated to this project, from possibly FY17. She wondered if that was correct. Ida will look into it.

Line 16 Little Goose Adult Ladder Temperature Mitigation: The Corps scored this with a 3 because their understanding is there is not a direct threat to fish. Morrill commented that this is an item he would like to know cost on and if it can be deferred a year. Trevor and Jonathan agree. It needs to get done, but could be deferred in a low-funding year.

Line 17 Lower Granite Juvenile Bypass Facility - Phase 1a (Gatewell to Separator), Phase 1b (Outfall): FY22 funding would be for contract oversight and labor (with the bulk of the funding being spent in FY21). WA considers this mandatory.

Line 18 Lower Granite Turn Pool Gate – NEW: Jonathan wonders why the two things being funded in this project are lumped together (shad deterrence and automating the hoist system to make it more usable). Based on this, Jonathan ranked this as a 3. Morrill echoed Jonathan's comments and score. Trevor mentioned this could wait for another year, in his opinion.

Line items 20-24 are deferred by the Corps since there are not BiOp requirements: WA places high priority on Line 21 The Dalles Sluiceway PIT Detection Feasibility Evaluation.

Ida compiled the scores and notes from SCT members in a spreadsheet that she will send out to everyone.

Today's Attendees:

Blane Bellerud, NOAA

Brad Eppard, Corps

Charles Morrill, WA

Christine Peterson, BPA

Cindy XXX

Elaine Harvey, Yakama Nation Fisheries

Ida Royer, Corps

Jacob Macdonald, Corps

Jen Graham, Warm Springs

Jonathan Ebel, ID

Josie Thompson, NOAA

Leah Sullivan, BPA

Melissa Haskin, BPA (CONTR)

Shane Scott, PPC

Tom Iverson, Yakama Nation Fisheries

Tom Lorz, Umatilla/CRITFC

Trevor Conder, NOAA

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