

**Columbia River Regional Forum  
System Configuration Team Meeting  
December 21, 2023  
Official Notes**

Representatives of Corps, ODFW, WDFW, BPA, NOAA, and others participated in today's SCT hybrid meeting facilitated by Blane Bellerud, NOAA. Ida Royer, The Corps of Engineers, hosted the WebEx to facilitate better notetaking.

Draft and final SCT notes are available on the COE's TMT website under the [FPOM link](#). For copies of documents discussed, contact Kathy Ceballos at [kathy.ceballos@noaa.gov](mailto:kathy.ceballos@noaa.gov). See the final page of these minutes for the list of attendees of today's meeting.

**1. Update on Budget and Work Plans**

- Still in the Continuing Resolution Authority.
  - Expires on January 19, 2023
  - Congress will extend the CR, pass a budget, or enter into a shutdown.
- A typical assumption for the CR is that you operate to last year's PBud, the House markup, or the Senate markup, whichever is less.
  - At the start of the FY the Corps assumed \$66.6M capability for CRFM.
  - New guidance from OMB:
    - Limit is last year's PBud amount \$29.175M.
    - If there are contracts or other needs above that, we can request up to last year's final work plan, \$47.4M.
- They have dropped the \$29M to the account but they will not be providing anything more unless we ask for it, with the limit of \$47.4M.
  - There is enough funding to keep everything going until Q2.
  - Royer is not worried in the immediate future unless the guidance holds AND we are in the CR through the entire year.
  - Not changing strategy and will continue to move forward with the assumption that things will change as we go.

**2. Redistribute funds to cover McNary alternate spill plan survival tests?**

- Royer provided the most recent reallocation plan approved by the administration.

- Reallocated \$1.5M for MCN (as in the SCT Excel spreadsheet).
- Royer’s understandings of McNary need changes on an almost daily basis.
- Royer requested SCT’s prioritization.
  - May have happened through SRWG.
- Planning to fund
  - EDRC modeling.
    - Cost Estimate: \$1.5 M
    - Most recent cost update increased this estimate to \$2.3M.
  - Balloon Tags Study
    - Cost Estimate: \$400 K
    - Solicitation is out, final cost won’t be known until bids are received
  - Acoustic Telemetry Study
    - 1000 yearling fish
    - Cost Estimate: more variable
- Work In Progress
  - Royer is committing to the EDRC modelling, Balloon Tags Study, and the Acoustic Telemetry (with 1000 fish).
  - With the understanding the cost to expand beyond that.

Erick Van Dyke, ODFW, said that he did see the line items for the Acoustic work or the Balloon tags.

Royer said that they labeled it as McNary Spillway Modeling, that is line item that is housing all of the stuff. Right now, it has the \$1.5 M because that was what was approved by the administration. She said as we rework this, and we get final numbers, and she comes up with a new game plan (which she does not have right now) we will be vetting that vertically and getting that approval. She said that she thinks that the administration considers this a priority, so she is not worried about that piece but before she goes to them, she wants to make sure that she has a relatively stable plan, and she does not think she is there yet. Van Dyke said thank you for the clarification.

Royer said that she will update the description on the sheet to clarify.

Bellerud asked what the next action should be, whether the group should re-rank everything or should they include the ranks for the Acoustic Telemetry study and the Balloon Tag study.

Royer said that it would be good to have the ranks for that to indicate the relative regional importance. She said that she would leave it to SCT to decide if they would want to split it out into components or rank it as a group. She said that she has not been plugged into the SRWG process so that she was not sure if there has been time to rank it there. She said that we could rank it here if necessary. She said that she expects that this will be a process over the next month as there are not a lot of people at the meeting here.

Bellerud said he thought that she might be able split Active Tag and Balloon Study but it is still a little conceptual and the objectives are just firming up right now so it cannot be broken down to far. He asked if SCT would like to go around and verbally add a score for those studies or would people prefer to have time to go over and rebalance their sheet.

Royer said that the McNary Remodeling line item can wait to rank for next month but verbally she would like to hear the penultimate regional priority in the Columbia.

Bellerud said that NOAA views Active Generation as top priority [5].

Trevor Conder, NOAA, said that he would agree but he was struggling with the participation at the meeting and being able to get a good regional rank. He said to be fair that Royer should have a call out over email.

Bellerud said that if Royer just wants a read on regional enthusiasm, he said that all the emails to the SRWG show high interest, it is really important.

Conder said that there have been some letters and comments requesting it. He said that he has high confidence that it is a very high rank within the region.

Royer said that we would pause on the ranking until there are more people. She said that she could break it out into the three components, but this can be decided as a group at the next meeting.

Conder asked if that would screw Royer up at all having her wait.

Royer said that the next SCT meeting is on January 18, so it should be fine.

Conder said that he is a bit concerned with the project creep or the cost changing at ERDC. He said that the Corps is cognizant of the situation that we are funding limited right now. It can really start cutting other projects off and so Conder said that he hopes they can try to find ways to keep that cost as low as possible.

Royer said that Walla Walla is lead and there have been phone calls to keep them realistic with costs. What happens sometimes is that there are complications and unforeseen costs. It is easier with contracts because you fund it and that is it, they agreed to that cost upfront. Until that contract is awarded there is opportunity for it to go up as well. Royer said that she is keeping her eye on that because until those final costs come in she does not know what those final cost will be.

Van Dyke said that there has been a lot of conversation going on about these topics, but he is skeptical about the process. He said that there is some impression that there is money coming from other places. He asked how she would handle that, if she would reduce the amount based on some other money captured somewhere else in the process.

The evaluations are CRFM funded there is not going to be another funding stream. Lorz had the question about the Stay Agreement, the Stay Agreement does not come with a suitcase of cash, it gets folded into how we do business and if there is additional capability need, we elevate that and express that, but it needs to follow the budget process. The modeling is funded by CRFM, and we are allocating funds with what we have in FY24.

Van Dyke said that was clear and helpful. He said that he said that we are talking about CRFM here and not the Stay Agreement, but that detail will drive decision making moving forward.

Royer said that she is leaving on detail for four months starting on February 1, 2024, and Jon Rerecich will be backfilling for her.

***Ongoing Topics***

- McNary Spill

**Next Agenda Topics**

**a.**

**Next meeting: January 18, 2023 (Hybrid)**

NOAA offices at 1201 NE Lloyd in Portland (11th floor)

**Today's Attendees:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
<b>Blane Bellerud</b>	<i>NOAA</i>
<b>Ida Royer</b>	<i>Corps</i>
<b>Kelsey Swieca</b>	<i>NOAA</i>
<b>Scott Fielding</b>	
<b>Jonathen Rerecich</b>	<i>Corps</i>
<b>Jacob Macdonald</b>	<i>Corps</i>
<b>Erick Van Dyke</b>	<i>ODFW</i>
<b>Christine Peterson</b>	<i>BPA</i>
<b>Ben Hausmann</b>	<i>BPA</i>
<b>Chris Magel</b>	<i>NOAA</i>
<b>Carolina Andes</b>	<i>BPA</i>
<b>Trevor Conder</b>	<i>NOAA</i>
<b>Andrea Ausmus</b>	<i>BPA Notetaker</i>

*Minutes by Andrea Ausmus, CorSource Technology Group LLC, Contractor for Bonneville, [amausmus@bpa.gov](mailto:amausmus@bpa.gov) (971-442-5931).*

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