

**Columbia River Regional Forum
System Configuration Team Meeting
June 20, 2024
Official Notes**

Representatives of Corps, ODFW, WDFW, BPA, NOAA, and others participated in today's SCT hybrid meeting facilitated by Blane Bellerud, NOAA. Ira 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 Bonnie Hossack at Bonnie.Hossack@noaa.gov. See the final page of these minutes for the list of attendees of today's meeting.

1. Update on FY24 Budget and Work Plans

- There are a few changes to FY24 allocations.
 - Trying to accelerate some executions leaning out on research
 - Lamprey Program RM&E
 - Willamette Program contracts that were delayed
 - Allocations modified to currently reflect actual costs
- CRSO
 - \$75K
 - Is closing out.
 - There was a dispute with one of the old contracts.
- We do not budget for the Programmatic Accounts, but we still pay people.
 - It is now in the spreadsheet to reflect what is needed for the year.
 - \$400K
- Spill Evaluation
 - Big Change
 - \$4M
 - The team is going to lean out on purchasing some equipment.
 - There are still some discussions needed.

- Hopefully in the next few weeks they will have an opportunity to get those and get them funded this year.
 - Royer provided funding for that pending those discussions.
- Estuary Habitat Studies
 - 180K
 - Utilized some carry-in funds.
 - The Corps is still moving on with the work just funding it differently.
- TDA AWS
 - \$1M
 - When originally budgeted it was for fully funding the construction, the construction will not happen until next year.
 - Cost is more in line for the execution this year
- JDA Mitigation
 - \$500K
 - Did not execute. Did not need all the funding so it was downsized.
- MCN Spillway modeling
 - \$4.421M
 - Required a lot more funding than what was originally proposed. This was a big increase to FY24
- IHR Turbine Passage
 - \$230K
 - Needed more funding because there were delays in the schedule, so they had to modify the contract.
 - Royer had not planned to fund any more, but they needed more funding.
- IHR Adult Ladder Cooling Structure
 - \$500K
 - The Corps had not budgeted for, but they did accelerate the project because they were able to bundle all the ladder cooling projects.
 - They are going to award an AE contracts for the EDR imminently.

2. Update on FY25 Budgets and Future Capability.

- PBUD released.
- Discussing allocation plan to capture necessary changes.
 - Royer will share that once it is vetted with Administration.
- PBUD is currently:
 - Full Capability: \$75.2M
 - Willamette: \$50.55M
 - Lamprey: \$5M
 - CRS: \$19.65M
- Line 5: Spill Evaluations
 - \$5.5M
 - Increased funding.
 - As a Program Manager, Royer does not know what the scope will look like so we may need to allocate additional funding.
- Line 10: BON PIT Detection
 - \$0
 - The Corps will try to install these next winter.
 - We may be able to fund with carry-in, but they may need some funding.
 - Royer is waiting to see what that will look like, she does not expect it to be much.
- Line 12: TDA AWS
 - \$1.25M
 - The Corps will be awarding that construction contract next year.
 - Whenever a contract is placed out for bid you do your best to estimate that cost, but you cannot control what bids come back.
 - Caveat: Construction contracts can be wildcards.
 - Anticipate 1.25M should be sufficient.
- Line 13: JDA Ladder Cooling
 - \$500K
 - Continuing design.

- Line 17: MCN Avian Deterrence
 - \$5M
 - Awarding a construction contract for the bird array or bird wires.
 - Right now, the \$5M is a placeholder based on Royer’s previous experience with how much that costs, but we will wait and see what the bid comes back as.
- Line 19: MCN Spillway Modeling
 - \$2M
 - Placeholder.
- Line 21: IHR Adult Ladder
 - \$0
 - Because they accelerated the IHR it is not in the PBud, but they would propose to reallocate that to keep it moving along with everything else.

Tom Lorz, CRITFC, said that they know that there have been discussions about trying to bring forward some of the backlog of maintenance issues forward into CRFM. He asked if that is ongoing or if there has been a pivot because he has heard that they are trying to use more Large Cap. He asked if there is going to be some thought about trying to use CRFM to help out with the backlog of some of the bigger O&M projects that are expensive, and rebuilding will almost be a complete redesign.

Royer said that they have been having discussions and it is an active conversation. She said that she is not ready to present that to everyone here because she wants to have alignment internally about how that is going to happen and the boundaries. She said they are still working on those, but they are actively discussing.

Lorz asked if the earliest that we would see that is in FY26 now, since we did not see anything in FY25, our earliest opportunity would be FY26.

Royer said that they are discussing for it FY25. She said that she does not have it on her list because she does not want to present something without having some sort of certainty around it. She does not currently have anything listed because she thinks they still need to discuss what that would look like.

Lorz said that he understood, he said that she needed to get a number in for capability. He asked when that needs to be done.

Royer said that they submitted their budget for FY26. She said we are fully funded in FY25 so Royer thinks there would be opportunities to fund additional work with the “excess funding” we would have. In FY26, if there is an opportunity to put in for workplans, or as we determine the scope we would have to rack and stack, because we do not know what the budget will be in FY26.

Lorz said that he wanted to make sure that we are putting in as much capability as we can and not limiting ourselves unnecessarily. He said he would rather ask for more and have us help you try to get more than not ask for enough and basically delay getting the work done.

Royer said realistically, as someone who is building budgets, FY27 would be achievable to start incorporating new scope into the budget process because that takes time. And then just looking for opportunities before that as they come up.

3. Columbia Basin Settlement Additional Funding (\$50 Million)

Bellerud asked if there have been any updates on the additional money from the Columbia Basin Settlement.

Royer said she said that she was not sure what John Rerecich presented last month. She asked if Ian Chane was presenting. She said that it was above her pay grade, so she could request somebody.

Bellerud said there was speculation and Royer’s group was waiting to hear from above. He asked Lorz to sum it up because it was his issue.

Lorz said it was not his issue, it was what was written in an agreement document. He asked if there was anything that has trickled down because he knows that there have been discussions well above us and he was hoping that maybe there had been some messaging coming down one way or the other. If Royer had not heard anything that would tell him that we are basically still in Amber right now. He said that he is aware that Chane and other people had said that the \$50M is part of our capability and all that mumbo gumbo. Lorz said that he does not think that was satisfying or what people thought was the intent of the agreement. He said that there have been some back-and-forth discussions at higher levels on that. He said that he just did know if anything percolated out to us.

Royer said that she has not heard anything about additional funding outside from her seat, but she does not rank that high. She said that if people want someone from Division to attend the next SCT to speak she can invite Chane or Kim.

Lorz said he is not sure about Chane, Chane said it was above his pay grade. He said that he will talk to his higher-ups and ask where it is going and if we should still keep pursuing this. He said they will huddle internally.

Bellerud asked if that money was intended to flow through the SCT route, CRFM.

Lorz said that was one of the questions they had. He said it was their understanding that this was additional funding that was going to go into the Columbia Basin, it was unclear if it was going to go into O&M or CRFM or split between the two. There was a lot of vagary around it and that was part of their problem, they at some point need to get a little more detail on this so they can figure out how best to participate in prioritizing where the funding goes. Now the debate is if it is even a real number, so it is unfortunate because they thought it was a little more solid than in the agreement than what they are getting right now.

Bellerud said there are ever expanding opportunities in maintenance, there is a place where some of it could go and help things.

Lorz said hence the reason why that was part of the reason they asked for, we need to do something, and that is why there was a commitment made of \$50M. But at those higher levels, they are not aware of the details, and some of the nuances. Unfortunately, it has been stagnant. Lorz said that he will talk to his reps to see if there has been any movement. He was hoping that something had broken loose in a month and a half, but he said that he sees that is still not the case.

Bellerud said that he would think if Lorz could shortcut any color of money issues from the top end, make them understand what that is and the difficulty we have had. Basically, we have not been able to shift any money from CRFM to fixing fish passage critical items. He said if you could have them understand that and have that from the beginning it would make life a little simpler, less frustrating anyway.

Charles Morrill, WDFW, said his two cents is that he would back up Lorz and Bellerud. He said that the other thing he would say is if Chane gave SCT his best assessment of what little he knew and said that he would take it back and go from there. If he does not have anything new to add from last month's meeting that would be disappointing. Unless there is new information to help us go forward, he did not see the need to invite anybody from Division if they cannot convey more than what he could last month.

Jay Hesse, Nez Perce, asked if she is familiar with the language in the commitments document relative to the \$50M.

Royer said that she has read through the MOU. She is somewhat familiar with the language, but she does not know who wrote it. She is reading it after the fact.

Hesse said this is specific to the Backlog of Salmon items, page 13. He said that he would ask that she take that specific language up through her chain of command and figure out how this is specifically addressed and how it can be conveyed at our next meeting. He said if we are at a point where this is still not a tangible and a very specific point of discussion with you and your organization, Hesse said he thinks that we have a larger problem. He asked Royer if she could ask that question right away instead of waiting for this to trickle down.

Royer said she can ask the question. She said for CRFM the Corps is looking at redefining the boundaries of the program. As a program manager she wants to make sure they are doing that in a way that is sustainable for the long haul so if they make a change, they can defend it and justify it for the next 30 years. They are actively going through the process and hopefully in the next month they can take the first step towards that. She said that is how she has been engaged in the process. She said she was not sure if it was helpful, but she wanted everyone to understand they have different funding accounts, so they are trying to move things within the boundaries of the authorities and limitations they have but trying to push as they can. She said that is how she has been engaged. She can ask the question, but she is not sure that they would get a satisfactory response.

Bellerud asked, with the reorganization if it would be possible to allow money to be put toward fish passage critical maintenance. He said that would pose the risk of them wanting to use the money from this instead of what should be dedicated for maintenance.

Royer said that we would not be taking from something else we would be adding to the capability to this program. She said that CRFM is a construction general account and that has meaning you cannot just fund any project. It has to be a capital improvement by letter of the law. There are things that you have to consider when you are discussing when you can fund with different accounts. Maintenance by definition is and O&M item versus an improvement. She said just little things that you end up parsing out when having these discussions.

Hesse said that they were told multiple times during the development of the commitments and after it came out that this is new money, additional money. He said that Bellerud's concern about this being reshuffled and taking away from other thing has been their concern. That is why they have been asking the questions and every time they have said it is new money. He said that he is very frustrated that they are not seeing any new money. He said that Royer's portrayal

of money is available for allocation does not seem to be like there has been internal discussion about how to find the \$50M or how we would apply that. He said that there is a huge disconnect.

Erick Van Dyke, ODFW, said that he would say that the disconnect is even broader than that, but it seems to him that there is not a lot of movement here and defining and describing what is going on. He said that it is to Lorz' problem to start with when he asked the question a while back to help define what is going on. He said if this is not the place to talk about it that is what we need to know and so we can find out where that place is. The rules that make these nuances create the frustrations that you are hearing, we are hearing them too. But you are defining what is right now and when are we going to see that. He asked Royer if she has a timeline on when she thinks that she will have her final product of what rules we are to follow when we are talking about how to use and allocate these dollars we are here to talk about.

Royer said that is a good question, she said certainly before the end of the Fiscal Year taking the first step and then sharing that with SCT. She said that is her plan and she thinks that is an achievable plan. She said that she understands frustrations about hearing a response that it is just a bunch of rules. She said that she gets that. She said that she does not have a lot of power. She can ask for funds for her program, she can request to reallocate those funds that she gets, but money comes via the budget process. From where she is sitting, she does not have a lot of levers, so she is probably not the best person to try to enact those changes that everyone is hoping to see. She can ask questions and can persist in asking those questions.

Van Dyke said that he is not asking her to defend her position. He said that he thinks that is the point, if this is not the place to talk about this, but they need to know where there is. If Royer could help with that it would be great. He said that we have been looking at list that we are spending CRFM dollars and that has been stagnant for a while. He said that it is not very nimble, and we are not in a place where we are offering new ideas to address problems. He said that one that stands out to him now is LGS, any time the PH is impacted, fish passage is impacted. Attraction flow to the ladder is expressed to needing a PH flow to occurring. Van Dyke said that this is the kind of thing that he thinks the dollars we are talking about now might be important to focus on. Figuring out how we can develop and create attraction flow for the ladder when the PH is down. Things like that are absent and we have now been going on for a while so helping us understand where to talk about these things is what he is after.

Bellerud said that changing operations is more an FPOM sort of thing. He said that he agrees with Van Dyke that this is outside the scope. He said that it puts Royer on the spot because she is not getting support or information from above that she needs. It is useful to keep having pressure applied from below so people do not forget it as a strategy, but you can only do so much. Until they decide where they will put the money or if there is some change in our scope it is not even CRFM yet, it is just money floating in the ether. He said that he knows that they need to keep engaging and keep after them to find out what is going to happen, but Bellerud thinks that needs to happen at a much higher level. He said that we have not had a ton of things on the agenda so we have had time to talk about it, but he does not think we will get anything done here with that until the money is busted loose and then if there is a query about here's the money where should we put it, then we should reengage at this level.

Morrill said that she is redefining the budget, he asked if that is within the confines of the PBud, within the current context of what the Corps capabilities are. He said that has nothing to do with the additional money committed by the US Government.

Royer said sort of, she said if we expand the boundaries of the program starting in FY25 we could add projects and then prioritize those with everything else and as funding, she thinks we would have funding available to start funding some of this additional scope and then be able to start to build that into the budget through the budget process. Her next opportunity for that would be FY27 but then we would have opportunities through workplans and other things to request capabilities as well.

Morrill said that kind of answered his question, the lack of communication based on the language in the USG Commitment Agreement and the fact that Royer is not getting any support or information to share to those of interest at SCT. He said that it is frustrating because they don't know where the money is and it was expected that there would be engagement by the Corps with the regional Sovereigns and that really has not happened. He said if Royer is going to broaden the scope, she is kind of implying that she is making some effort to accommodate if she gets extra money how she would handle that. He said it would be nice to have a better understanding. He said that they simply do not have that. It is frustrating for all.

Ongoing Topics

Next Agenda Topics

Next meeting: July 18, 2024 (Hybrid)

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

Today's Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Ben Hausmann	<i>BPA</i>
Carolina Andes	<i>BPA</i>
Christine Peterson	<i>BPA</i>
Scott Bettin	<i>BPA</i>
Chuck Barnes	<i>Corps</i>
Ida Royer	<i>Corps</i>
Jacob McDonald	<i>Corps</i>
Steven Sipe	<i>Corps</i>
Tom Lorz	<i>CRITFC/Umatilla</i>
Jay Hesse	<i>Nez Perce</i>
Blane Bellerud	<i>NOAA</i>
Kelsey Swieca	<i>NOAA</i>
Trevor Conder	<i>NOAA</i>
Kate Self	<i>NPCC</i>
Erick Van Dyke	<i>ODFW</i>
Charles Morrill	<i>WDFW</i>
Andrea Ausmus	<i>BPA Notetaker</i>

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

Please send any requested edits to Bonnie Hossack, NOAA, Bonnie.Hossack@noaa.gov

