

Columbia River Regional Forum
System Configuration Team Meeting
May 16, 2019
DRAFT

****Comments due by August 15, 2019**

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.

Ian Chane, SCT's co-chair will be on an assignment in DC starting next Friday. He will return on October 1, 2019. Andrew Traylor from the Corp's Portland offices will fill in for Ian and Margie will take the lead at SCT in Ian's absence.

1. Approval of Official Minutes:

There are no meeting minutes to be approved at today's meeting. The March notes will be up for approval at the next SCT.

2. FY20 CRFM Updates:

Ian Chane, Corps, gave an update on FY 20 CRFM-funded projects. The Pbud for this year is \$21.6 million. The House and Senate appropriations committees are looking at these budgets right now. There has been an increase to the Corps' overall budget but without line items, Ian is unsure if CRFM was included and if so, how much that would be. Ian reminded SCT members that the Corps may be in a CR come October 1. It is typical in October to be under a CR. If this is the case, the Corps has to go with the lesser of the House and Senate's budgets.

3. FY20 CRFM Prioritization:

SCT spent most of today's meeting reviewing and ranking line items to provide the COE with regional recommendations on FY20 funding priorities. For complete rankings, see the rankings spreadsheet managed by Blane Bellerud and Kathy Ceballos, NOAA. Some items were specifically highlighted for updates and discussion. Those include:

- **Line 3 Estuary Habitat Studies** – This is a non-mandatory item and the comment in the Excel sheet is incorrect. This project would cover the first year of post-construction modeling at Woodland Island, WA. It would also cover year 1 of the AMR indirect benefits. Ian will update the current remarks to reflect this. NOAA voiced concern that the project does not include looking at the fish assemblage. They commented at SRWG that there should be snorkeling, at the least, to investigate how predators are using the new habitat. NOAA commented that the project could wait a year, especially with the constrained budget. They

believe some setup time may be necessary and waiting a year could provide that. WA echoed NOAA's concern. ID commented that SRWG ranked this item low because it may take some time to evaluate how beneficial the change was. Spending money in the first year may not provide much data.

- **Line 15 – McNary Top Spill Weir (TSW) Permanence** – This is a mandatory project. Some member wondered why. Margie reminded SCT that the current fix is temporary. In order to move ahead with things like the overshoot study, this needs to be fixed first. Blane noted that this is mandatory because it is in the BiOp. Trevor Conder, NOAA, wondered if it has to be completed in 2020. Margie noted that there may not be as much operational flexibility and there is risk by using the temporary structure instead of using a permanent fix. The \$50k in the 2020 budget is to keep things moving so that a contract can be put in place when the funding becomes available, whether that is in FY20 or FY21. SCT decided to rank this item even though it is mandatory.
- **Line 31 Snake River Adult Sockeye Passage Initiatives** – This item is marked as a non-mandatory item on today's ranking sheet but because it is a closeout project, it will be changed to be mandatory.
- **Line 49 Bonneville PIT Detection** – SCT members talked about cutting the budget down to maintain the evaluation to move forward. After it is funded, agencies could start looking at what options there are knowing the barge work is going on.
- **Line 50 Little Goose Adult Ladder PIT Feasibility** – There was some talk about the specifics of this project. Originally it focused on the North powerhouse entrance but some members, including Trevor Conder, NOAA, noted they would be more interested in the North spillway. Ian asked what the purpose of collecting the information was. Charles Morrill, WA, shared that it is about the 30% spill criteria. Salmon managers know that fish utilize the ladder at 30% spill. They also know that there is "different" passage above that. The question is: "Do the fish use the North entrance more when we have a high level of spill?" As spill increases, the eddy below the ladder increases. When spill is 30%, that eddy recedes and creates a pathway to the ladder. While 30% is observed, a study may help to see if going to 31% or 35% or something else would also be helpful.

Flex spill may help with this, said Trevor. Charles Morrill, WA, said that FPC is also following up on modeling and a memo that should help guide this discussion. With that in mind, Russ Kiefer, ID, said he is OK if this is deferred since it may be solved.

- **Line 51 McNary Steelhead Overshoot** – This item was discussed at-length at the last SCT. It was also a large part of today's discussion. The study is on hold to see if there is funding, reported Derek. He put a cost estimate together and was waiting to hear back from Ian and Margie before asking PNNL to update their preliminary proposal.

Ian is working with Margie to update end-of-year forecasts for the projects. At the next SCT meeting, Margie should be able to let SCT members know if the Corps can fully or partially fund this project in FY19. It is a priority, Ian said and he is concerned about it going into FY20 with budget risks.

Leah asked if the funding should be higher to include year 2 of the study. Ian said this would fund spring and fall and FY20 would fund the following year.

To award and get work started in August for a September/October study, a decision would need to be made soon. The equipment would be put in during August, which could be a challenge with spill.

There are no cable lines in place now that would help in the fall. However, if the equipment is installed in the fall, the Corps would like to leave it in place for the spring portion of the study. This would cut costs since the equipment would have to be removed and then re-installed.

Ian noted that next year there would still need to be internal funding for internal labor.

If Derek hears back by the next SCT, it may be close but it would be possible to still get a contract in place.

- **Line 52 Acoustic study to compare subyearling passage via deep spill and RSW** – SCT would like to ask SRWG for a 1-pager on this to get this started. Blane said a 1-pager may have been started. Russ and Blane will work together to get something together.

3. FY 19 Update:

Ian Chane, Corps provided an update for FY19 projects.

Line 43 – Bonneville Powerhouse 2 Fish Guidance Efficiency – This item was deferred to create money for CRSO. NOAA wants the research to continue and wonders what the path forward is on this. Ian said that his understanding was there was \$3.3 million in the FY19 spreadsheet. When this was deferred he believes there may have been a misunderstanding as to

what deferral means. There are some sunk costs and part of the remaining funding is not for monitoring. They did fund the removal of some of the equipment that is being removed/replaced. Design work continued. Some of the monitoring equipment was also purchased. This misunderstanding happened in March when Ian was not at a meeting. Ian says he will try to address this in 20. It is too late to address this in FY19.

Line 33 Columbia River System Operations (CRSO) – Ian did not get a funding request in April from CRSO for remaining FY19 funds. This means they had adequate funding to get through their expenditures in April. This may reduce the overall budget for CRSO for FY19. Ian is waiting on an updated budget.

4. Dalles Dam Gas Abatement

Erick Van Dyke, OR reported. This year, a flexible spill agreement is being implemented by the Corps. At TMT, there has been some discussion about the unexpected gas pattern at The Dalles this year. On OR's mind is what methods could be used to abate gas at The Dalles. He would like to explore old documents or have a new evaluation of methods at The Dalles. At this point, he has raised the issue at FPOM and TMT.

Erick Van Dyke talked about an adaptive management plan. Erick is hoping to get traction somewhere. He has been discussing this at FPOM and not got much traction. Higher spill next year may make this more of an issue. Ian will elevate Erick's concerns and put it on the spreadsheet to get the conversation started.

Laurie may be helpful in locating past studies.

5. Cascade Island PIT:

They think they have a solution for where the PIT Tag building would be located but have not finalized a cost estimate. It looks like the cost will be decreased.

6. Other:

Derek Fryer, Walla Walla, said the Corps might need some funding to close out Line 32 Inland Avian Predation.

7. Future Agenda Items:

At the next SCT, Sean Tackley will present on lamprey. Erick's concerns about the Dalles Dam Gas Abatement will also be discussed. The next SCT will be on Thursday, June 21.

8. Today's Attendees:

Blane Bellerud, NOAA

Charles Morrill, WA

David Trachtenbarg, Corps Walla Walla

Erick Van Dyke, OR
Ian Chane, Corps
Jacob MacDonald, Corps
Leah Sullivan, BPA
Leslie Bach, NPCC
Melissa Haskin, BPA (CONTR)
Scott Bettin, BPA
Trevor Conder, NOAA

Phone:

Christine Petersen, BPA
Derek Fryer, Walla Walla
Margie McGill, Corps
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