

Columbia River Regional Forum
System Configuration Team Meeting
June 17, 2021
Official 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. Comments on the April 15 draft meeting notes are due ASAP so they can be finalized. See the last page of these minutes for a list of attendees at today's meeting.

1. Line 19: Little Goose Adult Ladder Temperature Mitigation

Charles Morrill, WA, asked for an update on the new work item (Sluice gate is LGO, BON PIT Antenna) to improve pit detection at Bonneville. The Corps is looking at the cost estimate for installation. The main concern the team has is making sure that the design will not require any future modifications.

2. Water Supply Concerns

Leslie Bach, NPCC, asked if any SCT members have an update on the water supply forecast and any measures the action agencies may be taking ahead of what may be a dry water season. While the water supply is lower than normal (~82-83% at The Dalles), some areas of the Northwest have not officially declared a drought. The Dalles would need to drop below 72% of average to be considered in drought territory. Jonathan Ebel, ID, commented that water temperatures thus far are not much above normal in the Snake River. There are ongoing conversations about possible actions, however those actions are constrained by multiple-use authorizations, proposed actions, and the 2020 BiOp. That said, these discussions are not in the purview of SCT.

3. 2022 Initial Budget Review

Ida Royer, Corps, took the SCT through updates to the FY22 initial budget, which came in substantially lower than the expressed capability. The main purpose of today's meeting was to discuss the preliminary budget so SCT can be aware of the funding challenges prior to ranking, which will occur at the next meeting. At this time, the FY22 Pbud is \$3.575M. This is the entire budget for the Willamette, Columbia, and Snake River projects.

Ida cautioned that this is a preliminary budget and there is still opportunity for work plan funding. Congress will still need to pass a budget (Congressional budget = workplan). Ida is optimistic that the region will receive additional funding, but says there is no guarantee. With only \$3.5M to allocate, the Corps may not be able to meet all of the mandatory-need projects and BiOp requirements.

SCT members expressed frustration both for the small budget and for the processes outside of SCT that influenced the PBud.

Ian Chane, Corps, reminded the group that today's budget was submitted over two years ago. It becomes a challenge to meet obligations in a given fiscal year when those obligations are not requirements when the budget is initially submitted. There is often a disconnect between budget submittal versus release, commented Ian. Another challenge is that the Corps is expected to execute the entire budget it is given within the fiscal year it is awarded.

SCT members requested documents and additional meetings to clarify the intent, purpose, and history of SCT. These requests included:

1. For the Corps to distribute the budget spreadsheet ahead of meetings in the future.
2. Jonathan Ebel requested a document containing an overview of historical budgets going back as far as possible, especially containing the Corps requests versus what was awarded.
3. Additional information and transparency on the budget processes outside of SCT, including who/what committees and persons see the budget between when SCT submits its rankings and when the PBud is awarded. WA would like to help support the Corps to get the funding it needs in whatever way it can. WA would like to know if there are additional ways it can help the Corps get the funding it needs.

ACTION ITEM 2021-06-17-1 → Ian will set up a meeting with SCT members and the division office.

4. Leslie Bach and others wonder if there is a list of project CRFM has funded that is available to the public.

ACTION ITEM 2021-06-17-2 → Ida will do some digging. Blane may also have something available. He will look.

Several members including Erick Van Dyke and Charles Morrill expressed disappointment in the Year-over-Year decrease in the CRFM budget. Trevor Conder, NOAA, noted it seems like the Corps is asking for less each year. Ida and Marvin? reminded the group that over the past decade or so, CRFM received large budgets partly because they were funding big construction projects such as flow detectors. Some of the budget drop-off has been expected since those projects have wrapped up.

Ahead of the next meeting, Ida will distribute an excel spreadsheet to the group.

4. Other:

SCT meetings will be moved to the first Thursday of each month. The next SCT meeting is scheduled for July 1.

Today's Attendees:

Blane Bellerud, NOAA
Charles Morrill, WA
Christine Peterson, BPA
Erick Van Dyke, OR
Ian Chane, Corps
Ida Royer, Corps
Jonathan Ebel, ID
Marvin Shutters – XXX
Leah Sullivan, BPA
Jonathan Ebel, ID
Melissa Haskin, BPA (CONTR)
Scott Bettin, BPA
Tom Lorz, Umatilla/CRITFC
Trevor Conder, NOAA

Minutes by Melissa Haskin, Flux Resources LLC, Contractor for Bonneville, mahaskin@bpa.gov (971-373-1288). Please send any requested edits to Kathy Ceballos, NOAA, kathy.ceballos@noaa.gov.