**Columbia River Regional Forum**

**SYSTEM CONFIGURATION TEAM**

**February 19, 2015**

**Draft Meeting Notes (edits/comments due 4/16/15)**

 Today’s SCT meeting was chaired by Bill Hevlin, NOAA Fisheries. Representatives of NOAA, the COE, CRITFC/Umatilla, BPA, Nez Perce Tribe, Oregon, Idaho and others participated. Draft and final SCT notes are available on the COE’s TMT website under the FPOM link at: <http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/tmt/documents/FPOM/2010/SCT/SCT.html>. For copies of documents discussed in the meeting, contact Hevlin or Kathy Ceballos at NOAA, 503-230-5420. The November SCT notes have been finalized and posted on the website. Comments on the January notes are due March 1, then they will be posted as final.

***1. Update on Lower Granite Adult Ladder Temperature Interim Measures (line 18 on the FY15 spreadsheet)***

Tim Wik and Brad Trumbo, COE Walla Walla, reported. Two days ago, as a result of agreeing to video monitor at the deep intakes in the Lower Granite forebay for bull trout during the first year of operating the improved adult ladder cooling system, the COE has received a letter of concurrence from the USFWS regarding compliance with the bull trout BiOp. This means plans for installing intake pipe extensions can move forward. In addition, the COE agreed to produce a report at the end of the year that describes the video monitoring results in detail. While entrainment of bull trout seems unlikely, the COE will develop an exclusion solution if entrainment is found.

The concrete underneath the shelf where the intake extensions were to be attached was found to be in poor condition by video last month. The plan to bolt the pipe extensions to the bottom of the shelf won’t work, so design alternatives are being explored. However, the plan to install the pipes in January 2016 should not be affected. The COE plans to use rental pumps to cool the ladder and adult trap, as was used last summer, with the rental pumps on site by July 1, 2015. There will be a full update on this project at next week’s FFDRWG meeting in Walla Walla.

SCT members discussed a chart that shows the timing of outages and upgrades at Lower Granite, Lower Monumental and Dworshak. Dave Statler, Nez Perce, asked how the Dworshak unit 3 outage timing will relate to the Lower Granite work. The extended intakes and chimney for ladder cooling should be in place at Granite before the Dworshak unit 3 outage starts in September 2016, Randy Chong, COE, replied. Last week FPOM discussed taking Dworshak unit 3 down earlier, in mid-August of 2016, and the COE said there might be flexibility to start the outage two weeks early or late, but that will be determined when scheduling is more definite. Concern was expressed that the contractor supplying cranes to Little Goose and Lower Granite could be delayed at Goose, which would delay the Granite work unless the work order is reversed. Russ Kiefer, Idaho, asked about the return of Lower Granite unit 1 to kaplan status, and Chong said the COE is aware that getting unit 1 back to adjustable-blade operation is a priority.

 With regard to the Lower Granite juvenile fish facility rehabilitation, Statler asked what will be done about juvenile lamprey escaping from the holding tanks. The daily sample tank isn’t part of the rehabilitation, Derek Fryer, COE Walla Walla, said. That would be Phase 2 work, which currently is not yet planned. Lorz said the lamprey task force might identify the JFF holding tank as a high-priority lamprey mitigation project.

***2. Changes to CRFM FY15 Spreadsheet and FY16 Budget***

 Chong distributed copies of two CRFM spreadsheets, FY15 which lists projects in ranked order, and FY16 which is ready for ranking.

 **FY15 budget/spreadsheet:** The budget for the year has been updated from $71 million to $74.2 million, Chong said. COE management in Washington D.C. decided to balance the FY15 and ’16 budgets by advancing $2.2 million to the Division office in FY15. These funds will be reserved for SAEDC work on ongoing projects, such as the Lower Granite JFF and The Dalles auxiliary water supply. The purpose of advancing the money in FY15 is to help balance the COE budget for FY16.

 With lamprey not listed as a separate line item in the FY15 budget, Lorz asked whether there would be additional opportunities to move money into lamprey mitigation this year. Chong said he is working with the Division office on that, but finding that our resources for designing and contracting current projects are already committed and additional time is scarce. The best possibility is using FY15 funds to pay for accelerated JLAT tag development, thus freeing up more resources for other lamprey work in FY16. Statler asked if lamprey work beyond JLAT tag development could be contracted out. Once the lamprey group establishes its priorities, there are acquisition methods the COE can use to speed up the contracting process, Chong replied. One possibility is modifications on the north shore ladder at McNary for lamprey passage. Ian Chane, COE Portland, said the COE is moving as much design work as possible into FY15, but staffing capabilities beyond JLAT tag development will be limited.

Project managers will have accurate estimates for line items on the FY15 CRFM spreadsheet by March 16, Chong said. The spreadsheet is expected to remain within budget. While the projects are listed in ranked order, at this point they all will be funded because there is sufficient money.

SCT discussed changes to the FY15 spreadsheet since the January meeting:

* Line 37. Adult PIT detection at JDA, $20,000 – NOAA is interested in seeing this implemented, Trevor Conder pointed out, and there appears to be money available in the FY15 budget to do it.
* Line 25. Lower river BiOp performance testing, $1.88 million – The cost estimate has increased from $200,000 for testing four dams, and it now includes the lower river PIT trawl.
* Line 18a. Lower Granite post construction evaluation – adult ladder temperature measures and noise impacts, $1.1 million – This line item includes noise, temperature and adult behavior monitoring through spring 2017. Lorz asked if the estimate includes bull trout monitoring, and Fryer said that could possibly add a couple hundred thousand dollars to the cost.
* Line 40. Retrospective analysis to determine feasibility of using downsized JSATs from LGR to Ice Harbor powerhouse, $125,000 – As suggested at the last SCT meeting, this item is two previous items combined, and the estimate is preliminary. A draft report is due later this year.
* Lines 42 & 43. Feasibility of PIT monitoring at B1 and TDA sluiceways and Steelhead fallback synthesis report – These two items lack estimates. Line 43 will be scoped out soon by the Walla Walla office.

**FY16 budget/spreadsheet:** The President’s budget for the FY16 CRFM program is $85.3 million, broken down into $58.3 million for the FCRPS, $24.5 million for the Willamette River and $2.5 million for lamprey. There was general agreement that having all three programs listed as one line item is highly preferable because it gives the COE flexibility to shift money among categories as needed. The direction to separate them came from Washington D.C., Chong explained.

Limiting spending to $2.5 million will make it hard to do much for lamprey in 2016, Lorz noted. It will cram the commitment to spend $10 million or so of the $50 million specified for lamprey mitigation into the last two years of the accord agreements, regardless of project schedules. That could make it difficult to fully implement the accords. At the time the agreements were signed, spending $50 million over 10 years was deemed a goal, not a cap on lamprey funding, Statler pointed out.

It will be easier for the COE to manage the budget process once priorities for lamprey have been established, Chong and Fryer said. However, even if the COE were to receive another $2 million in lamprey funds for FY16, staffing resources are so tied up in big projects like The Dalles AWS and Lower Granite JFF upgrade that it would be difficult to get designs done and contracts awarded in a timely manner. Having a list of lamprey priorities is critical. Statler and Lorz said they will take the lead on providing the COE with a list of lamprey action items.

Brian Malkowitz, CRITFC/Umatilla, informed SCT members that a complex out-year plan for accomplishing lamprey work already exists. Staffing will be key in getting the plan implemented, so the group needs to know whether adequate staffing will be available to implement the out-year plan, Statler said.

Chong pointed out that significant funds (around $23 million) are allocated for performance verification monitoring, including Ice Harbor ($8 million), McNary ($7.9 million) and Lower River ($7.6 million) now listed in FY16. The COE is considering wrapping the Ice Harbor test into the Lower Granite and Little Goose tests in FY17. Russ Kiefer said Idaho will probably recommend adding a line item in FY16 for a retrospective analysis of delayed bypass mortality data.

In response to a question from Scott Bettin, BPA, Chong estimated the total cost of work at Lower Granite over multiple years will be more than $60 million, not including Phase 2 of the JFF. A contract for Lower Granite spillway PIT tag detection capabilities will probably be awarded in FY17, with installation in the winter of 2017-18. Further discussion of Lower Granite PIT detection will take place at FFDRWG.

Greater detail on the FY16 line items will be available in April, and SCT will begin the FY16 ranking process in June. SCT discussed the preliminary list of FY16 line items today:

* Line 1. Willamette River, $24.5 million – The FY15 estimate was reduced by $7 million in FY16 budget.
* Line 3. Bonneville 2nd powerhouse fish guidance efficiency, $4.4 million – Tom Lorz pointed out that the size of this estimate appears to indicate that the installation of all plates might not be completed by the end of the year.
* Line 9. LGS adjustable weir, $7 million – This is a new FY16 estimate for the cost of the weir.
* Line 14. LGS juvenile bypass facility, phase 1B, $3.75 million – This covers construction of a new outfall.
* Line 20. McNary performance verification monitoring, $7.9 million – Based on results of similar testing in 2012, the cost estimate covers testing for the whole passage season, not just spring. Findings in 2014 indicate that spill targets might be hard to achieve.

***4. Update on JLAT Tag Development for Lamprey***

Brad Eppard, COE, gave an update on the development of an acoustic tag small enough to implant in juvenile lamprey. Battelle and PNNL researchers are working intensively on three aspects of tag development: batteries, electronics and transducer. One battery design looks especially promising and will soon be tested. Three potential design options for the electronics are being assembled, a time-consuming process. The tracking device for injectable tags will be infrared. Researchers are also working with manufacturers on whether to use an off-the-shelf transducer or customize a design. The COE is cost-sharing this work with DOE. When the tags become commercially available, the government will not have to pay patent royalties to the manufacturer, which should result in a price break. The goal is to have tags available by FY17.

 As for battery life, the injectable tag—still too big for lamprey—lasts about 100 days with a three-second pulse. Battery life on injectable tags can be extended or shortened by varying the ping rate. It is not known yet what kind of battery life lamprey tags will have because the battery is not developed. Lamprey tags will probably have a relatively short life because they will be 12mm by 2mm or even smaller. Lorz said lamprey tag development is vital because there’s no data at all now on lamprey survival through dam spillways vs. turbines.

***5. Update on FFDWG and SRWG Meetings and Schedules***

Walla Walla FFDRWG will meet next week on February 26. The Portland FFDRWG met on February 12. Installation of adult PIT detection at John Day continued to be an important discussion topic at that meeting. From that discussion, it appears that there will be limited hydraulic change in the ladder due to antenna installation, Eppard reported. However, at the next FFDRWG meeting, Eppard will provide information on velocities at orifices. In summary, while there is general agreement that a conversion rate problem at JDA exists, adult PIT detection does not appear to be required by the BiOp, which makes it a lower priority for the COE.

The SRWG will be developing draft one-pagers in March & April, with final versions by May. There was general agreement that SRWG needs to meet soon, probably for more than one day. The meeting(s) will most likely be held in Portland.

***6. Next SCT Meeting***

 SCT will meet next on March 19 in the Mt. St. Helens room in Portland. These notes prepared by technical writer Pat Vivian.

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