

**Columbia River Regional Forum**  
**SYSTEM CONFIGURATION TEAM**  
**MEETING NOTES FOR**  
**November 16, 2017**

***1. Introduction***

Representatives of NOAA, BPA, NPCC, the COE, Oregon, Idaho, and others participated in today's SCT meeting chaired and facilitated by Bill Hevlin, NOAA. Comments on the October 19 notes are due the first week of December, and the final notes posted to the TMT web page under the FPOM link.

Ian Chane, COE, distributed copies of the latest 2018 CRFM spreadsheet. Gary Fredricks, NOAA, added discussion of a new PIT tag detection system below Bonneville Dam to today's agenda (see page 3 of these notes).

***2. Updates to FY 2018 CRFM Spreadsheet***

Ian Chane outlined changes to the 2018 CRFM project list and cost estimates. Since SCT last met, he added scores from the Warm Springs Tribe for several items. The overall President's budget for FY 2018 shouldn't change, but the funds will shift among projects.

A major candidate for funding rearrangement (and a subject of much concern today) is line item #42. Adult/Juvenile Spill to Gas Cap Studies, \$0, deferred for scoring because the scope of work and budget need refinement. This line item is connected to #36. FCRPS Court Ordered Spill Evaluations, \$6.146 million. The two line items will be reorganized and renamed as two new line items that are separately funded, one for modeling and another for spill studies. The COE will have updated budget numbers by the next SCT meeting.

PNNL submitted an initial study proposal for gas cap spill studies and will provide more details by the end of November. The COE will send this information to SCT as soon as it is available. Additional funding is not needed, just shifting of dollars. See below for further discussion and ranking of item #42.

SCT turned to other line items that needed scoring:

#28b. LGR Performance Verification Monitoring Juvenile Study, \$0 – Scoring was deferred last year because the scope was unclear, the work was going to be combined with other studies, and BiOp guidance is in a state of flux. However, the COE awarded a contract and work is proceeding because this study is considered part of line #42, Derek Fryer, COE, explained. Also, it will use the same fish as the system and reach survival study, saving money. A separate report on the Lower Granite survival study will be funded with FY17 dollars, and the post-construction evaluation will be handled under a different proposal. Modeling has already been paid for, but tag costs could add around \$1 million.

Erick Van Dyke, Oregon, commented that work moved forward on this project without SCT having an informed opportunity to score it. Others expressed similar views, with general agreement that it was the result of dealing with multiple issues simultaneously. There will be more discussion at SRWG this afternoon.

SCT considered dropping line #28b from the FY18 CRFM spreadsheet because it's moot, then agreed to keep it on the list and rename it Lower Granite System Survival Study. Chane will add the FY18 dollars already spent to the spreadsheet. At this point, it's considered mandatory. In early December, the revised PNNL proposal and study design will go out for regional review.

#37. Smolt Susceptibility to Avian Predation Post-BON (placeholder), \$0 – SCT agreed to continue deferring this item for more discussion.

#38. Evaluate Feasibility of Turbine Blade Blocking Alternatives, \$0 – BPA's "2406" program will probably take over funding of turbine blade-blocking efforts and the COE will no longer fund this under CRFM, Chane said. Fredricks suggested it be funded as O&M. Fish experts need to be involved in decision making. SCT agreed to keep this item on the spreadsheet until FPOM addresses how it will be transferred to another funding source.

#42. Adult/Juvenile Spill to Gas Cap Studies, \$0 – Discussion returned to this line item. Using acoustic telemetry, the pilot project will cover the same river spans as PIT tag system survival estimates, which have always been tailrace to tailrace. In some locations it might be preferable to monitor forebay to forebay, but the design of PIT tag studies makes that infeasible in terms of comparable results, and it would be cost prohibitive to study individual reaches using acoustic telemetry. The final product will be a system survival estimate similar to PIT tag studies.

Brad Eppard will write up the study approach by end November and coordinate a time to discuss it, possibly at a special SRWG meeting. SCT will delve into this in greater detail at its next meeting in January. Erick Van Dyke suggested sending SCT members written information beforehand so they'll have a better idea of how to respond.

Russ Kiefer, Idaho, said Washington (not present today) has concerns about being able to trap enough adults at Ice Harbor for meaningful results. Van Dyke suggested the researchers compare acoustic telemetry findings with fish previously PIT tagged as juveniles to verify there are no significant tagging or handling effects; Fryer said he will pass that comment on to the PNNL researchers. Chane will delete the comment about funding under the court ordered spill evaluation on the FY18 spreadsheet.

Oregon was reluctant to score line #42 until more information is available. Scores given today were:

- NOAA – 5
- COE – 4
- BPA – 4 (tentative)
- Idaho – 5

#50. PIT Tag Detection below BON – This item was added to the spreadsheet at the request of Gary Fredricks, who envisions large antennas crossing the river to detect passage in the BON tailrace. Another possibility is to deploy detectors from the JBS outfall. That location would provide good egress for JBS-passed fish, in addition to detecting fish that pass via spill, the corner collector, and the powerhouses.

The installation would not replace the PIT trawl but the findings would supplement trawl observations. It was noted that adding PIT detection below BON would alter reach survival estimates by extending the range to BON tailrace.

Trevor Conder said it would probably cost \$50,000-\$100,000 to install a pilot PIT detector below BON and find out if it works. The NOAA Science Center investigated this recently and concluded that a pilot test in spring 2018 is quite doable. There would be added costs to maintain it, Eppard said. Two action items emerged from this conversation:

- Chane and Eppard will work together to ensure the region’s questions regarding PIT detection below BON are being adequately addressed.
- Conder will ask NOAA Science Center staff to supply the COE with an implementation plan and cost estimate.

### ***3. Review of Updated Work Plans***

Budget numbers for individual line items are still being refined, Chane said. Work plans will be available by the next SCT meeting.

### ***4. FFDRWG and SRWG Updates and Future Meeting Dates***

- **November 30** – This Walla Walla FFDRWG meeting will cover adult and juvenile spill to gas cap studies in depth, as discussed earlier today. It will displace the SRWG meeting previously planned for the same day.
- **December 13, 9 am-2pm** – This special SRWG meeting at CRITFC will examine in detail the PNNL proposal for gas cap spill studies.

### ***5. Next SCT Meeting***

SCT elected to cancel the December meeting, so the team will meet next on January 18, 2018, in the Mt. St. Helens room. Blaine Bellerud, with NOAA, will now chair SCT, taking over for Bill Hevlin who is retiring. These notes were prepared by technical writer Pat Vivian.

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