

Columbia River Regional Forum
SYSTEM CONFIGURATION TEAM MEETING NOTES
February 15, 2018
DRAFT

****Comments on these notes are due on April 19, 2018.**

1. Introduction

Representatives of the COE, NOAA, BPA, NPCC, CRITFC/Umatilla, and others participated in today's SCT meeting chaired by Ian Chane, COE Portland, and Blaine Bellerud, NOAA Fisheries. Comments on the draft January 18 SCT meeting notes are due March 15.

Chane distributed copies of the latest FY 2018 spreadsheet, which Margie McGill, COE Walla Walla, updated during the last meeting. There has been minimal change to the spreadsheet since SCT last met, with one exception: The way the CRSO EIS is funded will affect the FY 2018 budget.

A draft FY 2019 budget is available, which Chane will use to compile a ranking spreadsheet for the March SCT meeting. The FY 2018 budget will not be available until after the continuing resolution expires on March 23.

2. CRSO EIS Budgeting and Budget Changes

Chane explained how CRSO EIS funding is managed and how it will affect the FY 2018 CRFM budget.

CRFM projects are based on expenditures; once the funds are obligated, the money is considered spent. These funds are typically not carried over in subsequent years to cover construction oversight and project closeout. Large, multi-year CRFM contracts can be funded under a 3 year continuing contract clause. The full amount is obligated in the year it's listed on the spreadsheet, and if funds remain when construction is completed, the excess is returned to the CRFM budget for use on other projects.

By contrast, CRSO projects are managed based on obligations, but the obligation doesn't occur until the money is actually spent. This can create lag time in allocation of funds. Thus the CRSO EIS line item (#33. Columbia River System Operations EIS, \$8.6 million) is managed differently than other items on the FY 2018 spreadsheet. The COE has been funding CRSO EIS work on a monthly basis as part of its continuing resolution request.

It was noted that the \$8.6 million is just the CRFM component of the CRSO EIS, which the COE is managing to meet court-ordered requirements. BPA also pays a portion of these costs. The \$8.6 million won't actually be spent until FY 2019, and Chane said he expects the cost to drop to \$6.9 million, maybe lower. Line item #33 is the only one he expects to change on the FY 2018 spreadsheet at this point.

3. Continue Review and Discussion of Updates to FY 2018 CRFM Project List and Cost Estimates

Discussion turned to individual items on the FY 2018 ranking spreadsheet:

- #7. The Dalles East Fish Ladder Emergency Auxiliary Water Supply, \$4.9 million – Work is proceeding on schedule with modifications underway. Moving the pipe required additional redesign, for which there will be additional cost. It is unclear whether that cost will come from the FY 2018 or FY 2019 budget.
- #23. Lower Granite Juvenile Bypass Facility – Phase 1a and 1b, \$9.3 million – The COE is tracking this project closely due to a big budget increase this year. WECC testing started in February. Soon (probably by the end of February) the COE will know on what date the Granite bypass expects to open for juvenile passage.
- #36. FCRPS Spill to Gas Cap Pattern Development, \$2 million – These studies are on track, with the COE working on very short time frames to schedule outages in the tailrace, Derek Fryer, COE, reported. The goal is to work around existing outages in March. Two weeks' notice for scheduling an outage is needed to avoid forced outages, Scott Bettin, BPA, pointed out.
- #49. Bonneville PIT Detection, \$0 – Trevor Conder, NOAA, asked about the status of this item. It received a rank of 5.0 from SCT, yet the spreadsheet indicates it has no project manager, project ID number or funding. That's because the COE is considering incorporating this into #8 Lower Columbia River Juvenile Survival Studies, \$1.5 million, Chane replied. BPA is providing partial funding for line #8 to supplement the CRFM portion managed by the COE, Scott Bettin added.

Conder said he was under the impression that FY 2018 funds might be used to investigate PIT tag detection potential at BON and FY 2019 funds to install the equipment. Brad Eppard, COE, asked for an estimate of costs in FY 2018, which Conder will provide. The COE and BPA will work together on this.

While line #49 has a lot of regional support, Erick Van Dyke said, Oregon does not support a heavy CRFM focus on the lower Columbia at the expense of mitigation potential elsewhere in the basin.

4. FY 2019 CRFM Budget Capability

None of the FY 2018 projects that were shifted into FY 2019 to accommodate a big increase in the Lower Granite juvenile bypass budget have been funded yet, Chane reported. The deferred items are on hold until FY 2019.

As a result, the COE has identified a higher capability (\$47.7 million) for FY 2019 CRFM projects than the President's budget allocates (\$46 million). This presents a dilemma because FY 2018 CRFM activities were shifted to FY 2019 when the budget for the Lower

Granite juvenile bypass facility increased. This puts the true FY 2019 CRFM capability in the \$50 million range.

The COE plans to seek an increase in the President's budget via revisions to the work plans. In the meantime, SCT should plan on prioritizing FY 19 items in the context of a \$46 million budget ceiling. Leslie Bach, NPCC, asked whether the \$46 million covers mitigation in both the Columbia and Willamette basins. Yes, it comprises the whole FY 2019 CRFM budget, Chane replied. No major activities or construction are planned for the Willamette next year. There is no funding for lamprey recovery in FY 2019 either, but some of the FY 2018 funding will carry over for lamprey program closeout and SAEDC work. Chane noted that the \$46 million President's budget would be sufficient if projects had gone as expected.

Bach noted that projects falling below the FY 2019 cut line might get done if people contact their elected Congressional representatives and advocate for funding. Trevor Conder said some of the CRSO funding might shift due to program uncertainties. Scott Bettin said several line items could see cost increases, such as the auxiliary water supply for The Dalles fish ladder (line #7 on the FY 2018 spreadsheet).

5. Review of Updated Work Plans

Chane provided printed copies of project work plans, which show FY 2017 expenditures and final obligations as well as FY 2018 budget allocations for each line item. The work plans will eventually be posted online for SCT members and others to access. They will be "living" documents, revised and updated as work evolves.

Ongoing access to the updated work plans is intended to inform SCT's scoring sessions by clarifying the projects and scope of work involved for each line item in that fiscal year. Project numbers provide a way to correlate the work plans with line items on the spreadsheet.

Chane will email the work plans to SCT members for comments by the next SCT meeting. He also asked people to double-check that all projects listed on the spreadsheet are accounted for in the work plans.

6. Roles of the ISRP, ISAB, and the Council's Program in Relation to the BiOp

Leslie Bach, NPCC, initiated a discussion of the roles played by the ISRP (Independent Science Review Panel) and the ISAB (Independent Science Advisory Board) in relation to AFEP. She asked SCT members to think about whether there are scientific inquiries under way in either the Columbia or Willamette basins that might benefit from ISAB review.

In terms of how the two independent groups differ, the ISRP reviews individual fish and wildlife mitigation projects BPA implements as part of the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program under the 1980 Northwest Power Act, while the ISAB takes a region-wide approach to the Council's program. The ISAB advises the Council on needed changes to the program, which is amended every 5 years.

SCT also discussed ISAB review of NOAA's proposal for a spill block study design, which NOAA advocates as being more statistically robust than straight spill throughout passage season. Three spill blocks have been proposed: from the start of spill season to May 1, from May 1 to May 31, and during spill operations to the gas cap, Tom Lorz added.

Scott Bettin asked when the Council's amendment process takes place. It typically starts in April with a call to the region for recommendations, although the schedule is unclear because the Council members haven't planned it yet, Bach said. The Council's program is heavily influenced by the region's fish and wildlife managers as required under the 1980 Act. It is largely funded by BPA ratepayers. The last amendment process occurred in 2014.

Christine Peterson, BPA, said the Council's program is not 100% in synch with the BiOp and asked for more clarity on this. The Council's program is driven not by BiOp requirements but by the 8 appointees of state governors who serve as Council members, Bach replied. The goal of the Council's program is to mitigate FCRPS operation not just for ESA-listed species but for all anadromous fish, as well as resident fish and wildlife. The Council tries to synch its program to the BiOp but it is essentially broader than the BiOp. The question of how NEPA relates to the Council's program is an open-ended one.

Bettin requested that this topic be added to the next SCT meeting agenda. Bach will provide an update on the amendment process in addition to emailing SCT more information on the ISAP, ISRB, and the Council after today's meeting.

7. FFDRWG, SRWG, and ERDC Future Meeting Plans

Three meeting times were established:

- February 27 – Walla Walla FFDRWG (morning) and SRWG (afternoon)
- March 1 – Portland FFDRWG

There will be an agency trip to ERDC in mid-April or May to update the John Day model for spill testing, Chane said. Exact dates will be established within the next few weeks. At this time, a contractor is building the upstream portion of the model while ERDC does the bathymetric work on it. Chane will notify SCT members as soon as firm dates are set.

8. Next SCT Meeting

SCT will meet next on March 15 at NOAA's offices in Portland. These notes prepared by technical writer Pat Vivian.

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