**Columbia River Regional Forum**

**System Configuration Team Meeting**

**August 15, 2019**

**DRAFT**

Representatives of Corps, OR, WA, BPA, NOAA, Umatilla/CRITFC, and others participated in today’s SCT meeting facilitated by Blane Bellerud, NOAA and chaired by Andrew Traylor, Corps. See the last page of these minutes for a list of attendees at today’s meeting.

1. FY20 CRFM Updates:

The spreadsheet distributed at today’s meeting was the same as the one distributed at the last meeting. The Pbud for this year is $21.6 million for CRFM, which is a lot lower than it has been in past years.

**Line 15—McNary Top Spill Weir (TSW) Permanence**: This item had been deferred. However, the Corps was able to find funding and will move forward with construction in FY20. The award is scheduled for September. It should be functioning by spring.

If funding does not increase, it could have impacts on projects. For instance,

**Line 43 Bonneville Powerhouse 2 Fish Guidance Efficiency** – Currently has $2.6 million allocated to it. If the Corps can move funds around within the budget, it could potentially put a smaller amount, like $1.5 million to this project. While the whole project could not be completed with these funds, much of it could and the rest of the work could be rolled into FY21.

Scott Bettin, BPA, asked what would happen/what could be saved if the prototype went in and testing was delayed a year. Andrew Traylor responded that it was hydraulic testing not biological testing. Brad Eppard, COE, clarified that 2 years of biological funding have been funding. Thus far, 1 year of study has been complete and the 2nd year still needs to be completed. The funds have already been set aside for this testing, which will occur when the install is complete. Scott Bettin, BPA, asked if the funds could be moved to the install from the study.

**Line 33 Columbia River System Operations (CRSO) EIS** – Will be of concern this year. The current budget is ~5.78 million. This project alone would take up a good portion of the budget, if it were fully funded.

**Line 49 Bonneville PIT Detection** – Charles Morrill, WA, noted that the title for this project is misleading since the project includes the sluiceway and the corner collector. Work is coming along on this project and should wrap up in the next month and a half so the alternatives report will be available.

2. Update on expenditures and progress of Lower Granite spillway PIT detector:

Everything is moving on as scheduled. The transceiver room is under construction and the contractor is starting work on the transceiver equipment. The contractor will be on site at Lower Granite at the beginning of September.

Currently, the Corps is looking at the capability for funding to do research-based post-construction monitoring. It is in the list of things for FY20 but may be pushed to FY21. Currently, the Corps is in the procurement stage. This would put testing (balloon and pit-tag testing) in spring. The $550k in the budget should allow for some flexibility if there are minor modifications. The spreadsheet gives $500k for S&A and EDC and $550 for the pit-tag post-construction monitoring (Lines 21 and 22).

Russ Kiefer, ID, stressed the importance of post-construction monitoring since fish passing closer to the surface have a higher rate of injury/mortality. It could also be done in-season so this aspect could be delayed for a year, he said.

There was some talk about splitting the project into two parts (the balloon study next year and pit tagging in 2021). However, that would require double the spill. This would also increase the costs (setup costs etc.).

The group decided to rank the project in case a ranking is needed for decisions. It received the following votes with the following caveats.

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| --- | --- |
| Agency | Vote |
| Russ Kiefer, ID | 4 for FY 20; 5 for FY 21 |
| Trevor Conder, NOAA | 4 for FY 20; 5 for FY 21 |
| Corps Walla Walla | 4 for FY 20; 5 for FY 21 |
| Scott Bettin, BPA | 2 |
| Tom Lorz, Umatilla/CRITFC | 4 for FY 20; 4 for FY 21 |
| Erick Van Dyke, OR | 5 |
| USFWS | Not present |

\*Russ Kiefer, ID, noted that the project could be deferred for a year maximum but after that its importance elevates significantly, to the point he would consider it “mandatory.”

\*Erick Van Dyke brought up that it is hard to make a decision based on the current information since the group is still waiting on the final budget. Once the final budget is here, the group will have to divide that between ongoing projects and the importance of some projects may drop in comparison to others/what is on the “chopping block.” Ranking doesn’t answer the question, “*What would have to be sacrificed?*”

\*One member suggested postponing the ranking until the final budget is approved. Andrew Traylor, Corps, responded that the Corps has a capability and a guess of the budget so it is still useful for management to see the priorities.

3. Hydro-acoustic evaluation of surface weir use during the summer

This study would use hydro acoustic data to monitor the depth of migrating Subyearlings and provide information on when to quit operating the spillway weir and use the deep spill gates instead.

The Corps can put the request for this research into the research summaries in February when it starts scoping future projects.

Russ Kiefer, ID, reminded members of the reason for this study and provided context. Today is Russ’s last SCT meeting, he is retiring. Russ shared the following:

* The spillway weir was designed to be efficient at spilling juveniles and was put in place when there was only spring spill. The idea was that water temperatures would be cool enough the juveniles would use it. It operated as intended.
* Summer spill was added. The question became, “when are forebays warmed up to the point that Subyearlings migrate deeper and it is more efficient to spill the juveniles than to shut off the surface weird and transition to the deep spill gates.
* The purpose of this study would be to get data on what temperatures Subyearlings try to avoid. Since the water is pulled in through August/until flows are below 30 kcfs, and temperatures are 74-76 degrees at that time, it is likely the Subyearlings are not using it well.
* The study will not just look at depth but will also consider passage distribution.

5. Next SCT:

The next SCT will be the third Thursday in October.

6. Today’s Attendees:

Andrew Traylor, COE

Blane Bellerud, NOAA

Brad Eppard, COE

Charles Morrill, WA

Jacob Macdonald, Corps

Leah Sullivan, BPA

Leslie Bach, NPCC

Marvin Shutters, COE

Melissa Haskin, BPA (CONTR)

Paul Wagner, NOAA

Russ Kiefer, ID

Scott Bettin, BPA

Trevor Conder, NOAA

Phone:

Alice Roberts, Corps (filling in for Margie McGill through November)

Tom Lorz, Umatilla/CRITFC

Erick Van Dyke, OR

Christine Petersen, BPA

Minutes by Melissa Haskin, Flux Resources LLC, Contractor for BPA, mahaskin@bpa.gov