

Columbia River Regional Forum
System Configuration Team Meeting
March 19, 2026
DRAFT Official Notes

Representatives of Corps, ODFW, WDFW, BPA, NOAA, and others participated in today's SCT hybrid meeting facilitated by Ida Royer and hosted via Microsoft Teams.

Draft and final SCT notes are available on the COE's TMT website under the FPOM link. See the final page of these minutes for the list of attendees of today's meeting.

1. Review Minutes

a. February Minutes

- Minutes were sent out with Royer's edits
- Approved

2. FY26 Update and Ranking Spreadsheet – Royer

- SCT sheet was sent out with the approved allocations
- These are the projects moving out.
- A lot of expectations of executing all that funding.
- They also do not have the discretion to make changes to those allocations.
- Any changes would need to be vetted high up.

Tom Lorz, Umatilla/CRITFC, asked for an explanation of the allocations. He said that they got earmarks, and they expected some plus ups in some areas, but they had thought that there would be a discussion about where those plus ups were going to go. He said that some of the plus ups do not really match the scoring. He asked if the plus ups were because of contractual issues or honors on high. He said that he was trying to figure it out because SCT provides scoring and rankings to help provide the region's input on budgetary stuff, but this does not seem to have followed that.

Royer asked if there was a particular project because she felt like they were funding everything with a scope.

Lorz said that there were a lot of things that had scope. He said looking at the estuary while there was importance to that it had fairly low scores across the board yet is now plus upped. He said that he was looking at The Dalles AWS thing, while that does need to get done, that turbine work will not be done until 2030 so there is time to for that work to get done. He said that he looks at those as lower priorities. He said that there is a project, like McNary Avian Wires, he said that he cares about predation, and looking at the information that they got from the research this year_ He said that looking at last year's predation numbers from the avian work and research from the survival studies there is a problem at MCN and avian wires would help address that. He said that would be a direct result to survival. He said that that is why the other projects that do not have a direct potential for survival are being or being done ahead of that one. He asked what the process of selecting where the earmarked money went to. He said that he was not even going to talk about how we take the Action Agencies (AA) to court and they get the money for them, and they are going to spend some of the lobbyist money to pay for their court fees.

Royer said as she said they are expected to execute all the funding so it was where can they execute the funding based on where we are in the designs for different projects. For TDA AWS they are very close to awarding a construction contract, they are very close and that is why that funding amount is so high. She said that other projects are in design phase, and that is just labor. So even if we had additional funding the Corps could not execute that because they are just not there yet. She said that she would not say that the funding amount is associated with importance, it is associated with what we can get done this year. She said that they are also staffing-limited at the Projects.

Lorz said that he was just saying that \$100K for MCN wires, that does not even keep the lights on. He said that was why he was perplexed by that one and seeing that there is talk about doing a spill study in 2027 it was news to some of the Fish Managers (FM). He said that he was surprised at where some of this funding was going.

Royer said that they had conversations with the districts and staff and they had received feedback on what could be supported as well, so that is reflected.

Lorz said yeah, he just thought it was disappointing that the FM were just given this and were told that there was no ability to change anything. He said that he was really starting to wonder why he was spending his time at SCT. He said not

to be too blunt, but it is honestly disappointing because in previous years we have started to work much closer together and try to get more alignment on things and that seems to have fallen by the wayside.

Royer said that she heard Lorz and that it was noted.

3. FY27 PBud

- The PBud had not been released so she was unable to discuss it.
- Royer had heard to expect it to come out the very last week of March, she would not be surprised that it would be early April.
- When it is released SCT can have some discussion about what that means, and what we are looking at for FY27.

Tom Iverson, Yakama, said that he may be pushing ahead but along the lines of Lorz' previous comments, he asked how the table would be generated for FY27. He asked if it would be limited to what the PBud is, or could SCT put a longer list of needs. He said that he looks at CRITFC report from 2023 with the \$750M worth of work that we need to get done. He said that he would like to start a larger planning table. He said that we should have a forecast as well as the current year. He said that he wondered how SCT could go about building that, so we are all playing off the same song sheet. He said the FY26 budget might make sense if we could see what the Corps were thinking about, at least in the planning frame, for 2027, 2028, and 2029.

Royer said that she would say that she is extremely limited in what she could share however the fish managers (FM) are free to propose whatever they would like, and we could initiate a list. She said that they can send her their proposals on a sheet for consideration and she could take that in. She said that she was very limited in what she was able to share right now. She said also waiting to see how FY27 plays out. She said that this is kind of a new landscape. She said that we are playing it by ear a little bit but the FMs are always welcome to provide input or proposals.

Iverson said thank you. He said that he was just concerned because the President proposed a lot less than what Congress actually approved. He said that he did not want to limit the list to what the President proposes. He said that he wanted to have a broader list based in the hopeful thought that Congress would approve more than that.

Royer said that she understood.

4. FY28

- Royer said that she would also mention that we are always working three budget years at a time. She said that she is also submitting the FY28 budget right now. That will work its way through the layers of the Administration.
- Next year we will see it reflected in next year's PBud.

Charles Morril, WDFW, said that he did not think that he had seen an FY28 ranking sheet.

Royer said that SCT normally ranks the next fiscal year. She said right now she is unable to share that project list, and she had never been able to share that far out.

Morrill said that it was disappointing in trying to provide input to the Corps and collaborate with the Corps two years out.

Royer said that SCT could rank the FY26 projects that we have, once the PBud comes out she can update with that and we can rank what is in the PBud and we can have discussions.

Morrill said that it goes back to what Tom said. He said that we are working together to have a framework and an understanding of what the Corps is thinking but if the Corps is already submitting their ranking sheet for their process, and the FM do not have any insight into what the Corps is thinking it makes it pretty tough to be supportive. Especially when Iverson and Lorz talk about the lobbying effort and the regional effort to support the Corps, it makes it pretty tough to be effective and helpful. And/or sharing concerns like Lorz had noted, ranking the MCN Avian Deterrence below the others. He said that was disappointing. He said whatever Royer could do; he said that he understood that it was not in her ballpark to change that dynamic but at least carry the news back to the leadership that having the FMs being able to assist and support the Corps leadership with those priorities is still an important high-level need from a regional perspective.

Royer said thanks.

Jonathan Ebel, IDFG, asked Royer what submitting now meant because we were going to put together a list from the FMs at FPAC next week.

Royer said that it meant that they were pulling it together and are elevating that. If FMs had proposals that are not currently listed, please send them to her very soon.

Ebel said that the FMs were discussing it on Tuesday. He asked if that would be classified as very soon.

Royer said yes. She said that she would say by the end of next week to get it to her to have it considered. She said that she would not promise anything but at least she would have it.

Morrill asked if he understood correctly that Ebel was asking about a list of projects that FMs would like to be considered for FY28 and if so Royer would need that in the next week.

Royer said that was correct.

Trevor Conder, NOAA, responded to Lorz' concern. He said that he does see some justification there. CRITFC has been pushing for wires at MCN for a long time. The region, including NOAA, has identified that there is a pretty strong need for a system there. He said that there is an avian problem at MCN and it would benefit plenty from some wires. He said that we have seen some survival estimates from MCN going down over the recent years. He said that it is a bit of a head scratcher that CRITFC went and lobbied for a bunch of additional funding and a lot of these projects got a really heavy plus up, but MCN sits at \$100K for the wires. He said that was a little bit of a snub and asked what is the justification that we cannot use some of the funding that was plussed up by millions and come up with a qualified design at MCN.

Royer said that the MCN staff were hit very hard with the DRP and they could not support input into the design right now and there is a lot of work happening at MCN so due to those factors the intent was the Corps would work on the design as they were able, understanding that they are very short staffed.

Conder said that he heard that on the surface but there is the MCN PIT project that is continuing to roll forward with substantial funding, but he did not understand what the role the MCN staff play into the design of that. He said that it seemed like that was more of a District engineering effort than it is Project staff effort. He said that he just wanted to know what the disparity was and how they could do the PIT work but not the wires.

Royer said the PIT was something that the Corps could get done this year and there was agreement from District that they would support that. She said that was a discussion with District staff.

Conder said so the Corps is not abandoning MCN wires and they intend to move forward on that soon.

Royer said yes. They are having those discussions.

Lorz and Iverson both reiterated that the lack of informational exchange makes it difficult for their lobbyists to develop strategies to help provide the Corps with more money for the needed projects. Iverson asked if it would be helpful for the FMs to push the information about FMs preferences out to Royer and the Corps. Royer said that it would be helpful to understand what FMs are thinking and to understand their priorities, but she is limited in what she can share. Morrill asked if the FMs should work off the FY26 and include any additional unidentified projects by the close of business Friday of next week.

Erick Van Dyke, OR, asked if it was necessary for FMs to specify an FY. He said in this case, since Royer is asking for ideas that she may or may not share depending on how things work. Royer said that FMs did not have to specify. Van Dyke asked if FMs shared a list if the Corps would treat it as a list that the region had identified as important infrastructure development. Royer said yes, you are free to share their inputs at any time she can take in input, but she is limited.

Conder asked given that this is one of the first times that FMs have been about to see the funding and the juvenile survival studies and that is an SRWG topic, he asked if there was anything more that Royer could share with the intent what those will look like for the region. Royer said that the Corps had not initiated anything yet, Chuck Barnes would be coordinating with SRWG on that project to develop what that would look like. She said that they would not be able to conduct the study this year so it would be a 2027 study and that would go through a more abbreviated or condensed SRWG process.

Morrill pointed out that they had not started the discussions in SRWG for what the Corps had in mind. Royer said that the Corps had just got the funding approved so they are just getting started. She said that it is a FY26 project, the work would happen next year, but the funding is for this year, it is a little delayed. Royer said that the project was covered under the Spill Evaluation on the sheet. Barnes said that SRWG would have a kickoff meeting as soon as they got the PBud for FY27. There was some more discussion about the FY26 spreadsheet and where it mentioned the continuation of the survival study. Royer pointed to Row 17, Line 6 “CRS Spill Evaluations”.

Jay Hesse, Nez Perce, said that it appeared to be two different responses, Barnes said that he would wait to set up the meeting until the FY27 PBud was released and Royer said that the FY26 money was in hand and we need to coordinate

details. He asked why they were waiting to have the discussion in SRWG. Barnes said that it was a decision that was made internally because they do not know what FY27 is going to look like so it would not be a good use of time to start the process without being able to see the PBud first. Royer said that the Corps would be coordinating more than just that study.

The FMs did not understand this discussion point because Royer said that \$7M of money was there. Conder said that he thought they needed to get started on figuring out how the study was going to look. Ebel said that it did not seem like the Corps needs the PBud for FY27 because the money is already there in FY26. Royer said that they would take it offline and work it with the team.

Lorz said that the Corps were doing the Laughery Jacuzzi SRWG meeting. He said that he thought that this could also be lobbed into that because they had already allocated the money for this. He said that it seemed like this could also be a special break out SRWG. Barnes said that they are working on planning right now for the spill effects study and the region would be hearing something from the Corps very soon. Lorz said that the region needs to have the draft report from this year's study as it would help inform the region of what we are planning to do in 2027 instead of doing what has been done, guessing instead of using information that molds and directs the study going up in '27. Barnes said that he thought that they would be able to have meetings soon with the researchers at SRWG to talk about some of the things that they are seeing and to go through data and get suggestions.

Van Dyke said that he was concerned about how SRWG, FDRWG, and other work groups were being treated. He asked if the money was being made available for research and infrastructure development. Royer said yes. Van Dyke said that he would like to know if the Corps was still limiting the way that the money is used, in the past it had been limited to certain things. Royer said no, CRFM is a construction account focused on upgrades or new infrastructure and is tied to listed anadromous fish or species of concern (e.g. lamprey). They also fund research to support fish passage. Van Dyke asked whether they would fund assets. Royer said to fund the asset it needs to be tied to fish passage, and it must be an upgrade or a redo, fixes have to be from an O&M account.

5. CRFM Funding

- Royer received emails about CRFM funding.
- CRFM is funding the items on the spreadsheet well within the variables considered when funding.

- Projects have been discussed in FFDRWG or FPOM.
- If a project had already been funded within an account that funding stream would likely not change.
- If there was a project that the region would like updates (e.g., design) it could be added to the FFDRWG agenda.

6. Additional Comments/Questions

- BON Rock Wall

Lorz said that the BON Rock Wall was done, but because of a snafu in budgeting it did not get done. He said that he thought that it was a candidate to be a CRFM project because it is a new structure, it aids fish passage and it is an improvement on the spillway. Lorz said that it would be a brilliant one to have in 26/27 to get done, and it would save O&M money from having to remove rocks all the time.

Royer said that she believed that was an ongoing project. She said that the Corps could provide a status update at the next FFDRWG. Because it had already been funded, they cannot flip flop on funding.

Lorz asked how it was already funded. He said that it was funded to do one of the walls but not enough to do the other wall. It has been in limbo for the last two years. If it is stuck in O&M, it will not get done. He said that he thought that things like this the region can lobby for and get money for CRFM. They are hoping that the money was being put towards projects that the region deems important and it is what they want to use SCT for. He said that he looked forward to more discussions.

Iverson pointed out that they can lobby for other funding as well and it would be nice to know where the other projects rest and what programs they rest in. He said if they were able to get an earmark to finish the rock issue it is known where the money needs to go and how to identify it. He said that he thought it would be helpful if the region could create the list of projects and if they do not fall under CRFM it would be nice to know where they rest, what other Corps programs need money in order to get all of the important fish projects done. He said that he looks forward to additional dialogue.

Royer said anything not CRFM would be either O&M or it is joint, O&M and BPA funded.

- Staffing Changes

- Jake McDonald is taking a different position within the Corps. He will not be chairing.
 - Chuck Barnes (Portland) and Ryan Ashcroft will be the chairs for FFDRWG and SRWG.

Next meeting: April 16, 2026

Agenda Topics:

1.

Today's Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Ben Hausmann	BPA
Ida Royer	Corps
David Trachtenbarg	Corps
Charles Barnes	Corps
Christopher Yane	Corps
Chris Peery	Corps
Jonathan Ebel	IDFG
Jay Hesse	Nez Perce
Kate Self	NPCC
Trevor Conder	NOAA
Tom Lorz	Umatilla/CRITFC
Charles Morrill	WDFW
Erick Van Dyke	ODFW
Tom Iverson	Yakama Nation Fisheries
Ralph Lampman	Yakama Nation Fisheries
Aaron Jackson	CTUIR
Tod Sween	Nez Perce
Andrea Ausmus	BPA Notetaker (recording)

Minutes by Andrea Ausmus, CorSource Technology Group LLC, Contractor for Bonneville, (503-230-4439).

Please send any requested edits to [Ida Royer, USACE, Ida.M.Royer@usace.army.mil](mailto:Ida.M.Royer@usace.army.mil).