

**Columbia River Regional Forum
System Configuration Team Meeting
June 16, 2022
Final Official Notes**

Representatives of Corps, OR, WA, NOAA, BPA and others participated in today's SCT meeting facilitated by Trevor Conder, NOAA. Previous meeting notes are available on the COE's TMT website under the FPOM link. For copies of documents discussed in the meeting, contact kathy.ceballos@noaa.gov. See the last page of these minutes for a list of attendees at today's meeting.

1. CRFM Spreadsheet and Funding

Ida took the SCT through April's budget ranking spreadsheet "CRFM FY22 SCT Ranking Spreadsheet_14APR2022." This is the most updated budget spreadsheet available at this time.

She noted that moving towards the end of the year it is still unclear how much extra funding will be available to reallocate to high-priority projects. At this point, it is unclear which projects will under or over execute on their budgets.

Overall, the FY22 capability, including the injunction, came in at \$78.625 M. This number does not include "closeout" projects.

The group asked some questions about the budget process, particularly given the extra-long continuing resolution this year. Ida commented that continuing resolutions are common and have likely occurred annually since the Bush administration. The fiscal year starts on October 1 and if a budget is not passed, then the Corps operates in a continuing resolution. This means no new projects can be started. This year, the final budget was not approved until February. After that, it was still about 3 months before the funds trickled down to the Program. To make this more complicated, the Corps is expected to spend their annual budget within the fiscal year. If they do not, they can have trouble securing funds the following year. Part of Ida's job is to justify why the entire budget was not spent, if that ends up being the case. This year, the late budget allocation would likely play a role and she could cite that, she noted.

There are a few noteworthy changes to the spreadsheet:

1. The Dalles East Fish Ladder Emergency Auxiliary Water Supply project is delayed due to a shortage of engineers. Work is expected to begin in July.
2. The Columbia River System Operations (CRSO) EIS is back on the funding spreadsheet. Tom asked how that decision was made, who made it, and why CRFM money was funding it. Ida noted that it is only partially funded by CRFM. The litigation is tied to the EIS, which puts CRFM on the hook for a portion of the funding. That said, what is reflected in the spreadsheet currently (\$6,000) will not be the final amount. It may be higher either this fiscal year or next.
 - a. Tom Lorz noted that the optics on this seem off. He noted that the CRSO was completed in a way that many people disagreed with and resulted in

litigation. Now, mitigation money that should be earmarked for fish will be used to defend a product that he sees as objectionable.

Tom asked if lamprey funds are covering line 8 (BON Serpentine Weir Modifications - "Salmon" cost-share). He asked for confirmation that salmon funds are not being allocated to the line item. For now, lamprey funds are covering costs. This year, there was an expressed capability but no funding for design. It is low on the priority list. When construction occurs, it is assumed that there will be a cost share between salmon and lamprey funds. At this point, the Corps has not guaranteed that they will receive funding for this project. Construction is not scheduled to be funded until FY24 and that budget has not been released yet. Ranking will have to occur when that budget is released.

Ida noted that if SCT members have question or concerns that they are always welcome to email or call her. She is happy to answer questions at any time, not just at SCT meetings.

Trevor noted that at the last FFDRWG meeting that Jacob MacDonald confirmed that construction for line 8 would occur. He noted that those with objections should speak up now. NOAA is comfortable with the project moving forward as long as the agency can review the plans and provide input. Ida commented that all design and construction plans will go through the normal processes. NOAA wants to see construction during appropriate timeframes so that there are not disruptions to fish passage, such as outages of the Washington shore ladder during April. NOAA thinks that comparatively the ladder cooling structures have larger benefits to salmonids than the serpentine project. Tom noted that if money is spent on design work and then ultimately the project is not funded, that his organization would be unsatisfied.

2. Ladder Cooling

At John Day, cool water is available so the project meets the criteria for action in the proposed action in the BiOp.

FFDRWG has found that Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, and McNary could benefit from cooling ladders as well. The question at stake is, if there is funding, how would the region prioritize the projects. The Corps had to input one of these NWW locations to hold a spot in the budget, so Ida put McNary in as a placeholder. It can be changed to a different dam if FFDRWG decides. The schedule would be design in FY24, with construction in FY25. The next project would start design work in FY25. Tom wondered why they could not all be completed at once. Ida said it was mostly a resource issue.

Following the summer shad operation, the Corps will draft a memo with the results in the fall. This will help set a path forward and provide a justification for future budget requests.

One way to fund this design-construction would be in the FY24 Work Plan, said Ida. It will be a line item in the budget with an expected budget.

3. Update on Pit tag detection funding (Trawl, McNary, B1)

At the last SCT, Ida mentioned there may not be funds for the PIT-trawl. This caused some tension in the group, as several members expressed that the trawl is an exceedingly high priority for their organizations. Ida updated the group, sharing that typically there is no money for the PIT-trawl, however, once July and August hit and extra funds open up in the budget, that

the PIT-trawl, historically, has always been funded. In a few weeks, it should become clear if this will be the case this year. Erick Van Dyke wondered if this is the process the Corps plans to use moving forward. Ida stressed that this year, a significant portion of the budget was reallocated to the Willamette injunction. Erick, Trevor, and Charles mentioned that the PIT-trawl is important to the region. Trevor added that it is a legal obligation, as well. Ida noted that almost all of the projects requesting funding under CRFM are legal requirements since they relate to ESA requirements.

Regarding B1, BPA has funded a design for the auto-gates and is waiting for funding to complete an engineering analysis, which will show if the design impedes the operation of the gate or not.

4. Other

There was a question about when SCT typically ranks projects. Typically, ranking occurs in September. The group could start ranking FY23 if it wanted and could also revisit its FY22 rankings.

Action → Before the next meeting, group members should think about their rankings so ranking can occur at the next SCT.

Today's Attendees:

Charles Morrill, WA
Christine Petersen, BPA
Cynthia Studebaker, Corps
Doug Newton, Corps
Erick Van Dyke, OR
Ida Royer, Corps
Jen Graham, Warm Springs
Kelsey Swieca, NOAA
Leslie Bach, NPPC
Melissa Haskin, BPA (CONTR)
Scott Bettin, BPA
Tom Lorz, Umatilla/CRITFC
Trevor Conder, NOAA

Minutes by Melissa Haskin, CorSource Technology Group LLC, Contractor for Bonneville, mahaskin@bpa.gov (971-373-1288). Please send any requested edits to Kathy Ceballos, NOAA, kathy.ceballos@noaa.gov.