

**Columbia River Regional Forum
System Configuration Team Meeting
July 22, 2022
Final Official Notes**

Representatives of Corps, OR, WA, BPA, NOAA, and others participated in today's SCT meeting facilitated by Blane Bellerud, NOAA. Draft and final SCT 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. Budget Update

Ida Royer, Corps, gave an update on the FY23 Budget.

The federal government is starting the year under a continuing resolution. A continuing resolution means that the CRFM budget starts as either the PBud or last year's budget, whichever is lower.

- For FY23, the lower of the two was the PBud (\$29.175 M).
- Typical continuing resolutions provide small drops of money throughout the year.
- Instead, they have requested full PBud funding upfront. This was approved.
- They are tracking a \$61M capability for the whole CRFM program
 - \$55 M – Willamette injunction related activities
 - \$6.5 M – Columbia activities
- They met with their division counterparts to discuss strategy for the year.
Options:
 - Fund a few projects
 - Fund more and potentially run out of money
- The strategy the Corps decided to employ at the start of FY23 is to fully fund more projects upfront, which means they are partially funding Columbia River projects that require funding in Quarter 1 or 2.
- She believes that this is good news because they are trying to weigh Columbia obligations equally to Willamette and trying to get projects moving forward.

Questions and Comments:

Tom Lorz, CRITFC/Umatilla, requested that Royer try to send budget prior to meetings. He also asked if of the \$29 M if the \$6.5 M is what will be provided to the Columbia projects.

Royer responded that the \$6.5 M is the capability.

Royer continued with her explanation of the PBud allocations and reallocations. She wanted to emphasize a few points.

- She explained that because the PBud is not enough to cover the entire budget the focus is on quarter one and two needs.
- There are currently no earmarks identified for CRFM.
- They are expressing their Work Plan capability.
 - After Congress passes the budget then the Corps has money called Work Plan.
 - They submit projects to receive Work Plan funding. Royer believes that CRFM has a good case to do so.
 - The timing of any Work Plan funding will depend on when Congress approves the budget.
- There are not currently funds allocated to the 2024 PIT trawl.
 - The PIT trawl contract is later in the year so the plan is to request Work Plan funding.
- Focus will be on projects that will need their funding upfront.
 - Bonneville sluiceway PIT has been started, a PM has been assigned and she is having meetings and trying to get the PIT prototype reviewed.
 - Providing funding for ongoing work like, the Dalles AWS debris removal issue. It is not enough for the whole year but they are focusing on the first few quarters.

Ida apologized that she was not able to get the budget out prior to the meeting. She was hoping to get some internal input before presenting to the group. She added that there can be more review and feedback next month.

Continued resolution is scheduled to go into December. If Congress passes a budget in December it would be 45-60 days before Work Plan funding would hit.

Questions and Comments:

Charles Morrill, WDFW, asked if the 45-60 day window would create a problem for implementing trawl operations for FY23.

Royer responded that trawl operations are usually done optimally in quarter 3. For the trawl, she is confident that if Work Plan funding is approved for CRFM, she will have the

funding in plenty of time. For FY22, the Corps started the contract late in FY22, and it takes a while to execute the contract. There is a possibility to carry over the funding for the trawl if needed.

Morrill then asked what projects Royer is worried about on the high priority list.

Royer responded that all of the Willamette projects are on that list. On the Columbia side she said that it is more being able to continue some of the PDTs. She would like to understand what the Dalles AWS alternative would be for planning purposes. The impact to Columbia projects are considerably less than the Willamette. Her biggest concern would be for Lower Granite and the ongoing contract work, there is no funding currently for follow-on work. She added that labor is easier to pause than other activity.

Erick Van Dyke, ODFW, asked if Royer's concern about AWS is related to less money being available.

Royer confirmed saying that as it is a continuing resolution they are relying on the PBud amount and that is not enough to cover all of the requirements. She is disconcerted because she is not sure what will happen with the budget so they are working on moving forward on all projects and working their communications up the chain to find more funding.

Lorz asked if the PIT work being pushed to next year means that it will be installed next year or if it is still all planning.

Royer responded that it depends on timing, it would likely be next winter.

Morrill added that he talked to Don Warf (PSMFC) on October 20, and Don anticipates that they would be ready to install in FY23/24.

Lorz asked because the PIT trawl funding has already been allocated for this spring whether the budget item then refers to the next year, FY24.

Royer confirmed that FY23 funding would be for the summer of 2024 (budgets are always a year out).

Lorz asked about the B2FGE hydraulic report and the expectations therein. He showed frustration about not having a meeting as promised. He asked if the Corps are still continuing forward with B2FGE.

Royer said that they were supposed to schedule a special FFDRWG. They are planning the meeting but she is going off the current budget until she hears of any changes.

Jacob Macdonald, Corps, said that the final report was delayed so it will be in the next FFDRWG meeting. He confirmed that the Corps are moving forward with construction. They are looking at post construction evaluations with NOAA to keep it up in the top 1%.

Lorz is glad they are talking to NOAA. He would recommend that they share it with the region because he is concerned that there is a report that says one thing and the Corps appears to be moving forward. He also is concerned that they are not including a monitoring program but there is no money available in the budget for a monitoring program. He also does not see any money available for Bonneville system monitoring. He showed frustration about the budget and promised programs.

Royer reminded him that the sheet is for FY23 and her understanding is that for the system monitoring type, SRWG, planning is ongoing. They are planning on putting something in the FY25 budget. She also mentioned that there may be room for FY24 Work Plan. The FY23 PBud moneys are all allocated.

Lorz showed more frustration that they put no capability for system monitoring or general research into the budget.

Royer reminded Lorz that the capabilities expressed for FY23 were submitted in 2021.

Lorz showed more frustration that the budgets are not matching up to the funding. He also showed frustration that the largest spill operation changes and the monitoring systems are inept. He also was frustrated because the funding for all of this will not be available until FY25.

Royer responded that it is the federal budgeting system.

Lorz understands but he knows that there is more funding available. He said that they are looking for additional funding and hopes the Corps will do the same. He hopes that the Columbia gets more funding and it does not all go to the Willamette.

Royer said that she understands and for example, they are looking for funding in the FY23 Work Plan for unfunded FY23 projects. The next opportunity for new projects will be in FY24 Work Plan.

Lorz asked about the Build Back Better plan, he asked why all of the money went to the Willamette.

Royer explained that the infrastructure funds were earmarked for the Willamette.

Morrill asked why the money was earmarked for Willamette when need is great for the Columbia. As the Columbia is under the BiOp should be a higher priority.

Royer responded that there is a BiOp on the Willamette and there is an equal ESA requirement. The Corps received an injunction in September of 2021 and a FY22 PBud of \$3.5 M. They needed money for immediate injunction needs. CRFM did receive an earmark in appropriations for both Columbia and Willamette (FY22). Royer also added that toward the end of FY22 they did move forward to fund the PIT trawl and other activities. For FY23 they plan to put more emphasis on Columbia but they are limited in their funding. Overall, they are trying to meet all of their commitments and balancing is difficult.

Cindy Studebaker, Corps, acknowledges that Ida is in a precarious spot, she appreciates the work Ida is doing.

Today's Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Blane Bellerud	<i>NOAA</i>
Charles Morrill	<i>WDFW</i>
Christine Peterson	<i>BPA</i>
Cindy Studebaker	<i>Corps</i>
Erick Van Dyke	<i>ODFW</i>
Ida Royer	<i>Corps</i>
Kelsey Swieca	<i>NOAA</i>
Scott Bettin	<i>BPA</i>
Shane Scott	<i>PPC</i>
Steve Sipe	<i>Corps</i>
Jacob MacDonald	<i>Corps</i>
Sean Tackley	<i>Corps</i>
Tom Lorz	<i>Umatilla/CRITFC</i>

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