

**Columbia River Regional Forum
System Configuration Team Meeting
October 20, 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.

Ida Royer, Corps, introduced staff changes in the Corps, Steven Sipe taking over for Doug Newton in Walla Walla.

1. Initial CRFM Budget Rankings

FY22 working on execution. Allocations from last month have not changed.

FY23 rankings needed to allocate for the next fiscal year. Note: there is no money available yet and there is no budget available.

The FY23 President's Budget (PBud) is \$29M but this number is not final until Congress passes it, expected for October 1, 2022.

Rankings go toward the prioritization of future projects. Erick Van Dyke, ODFW, asked whether the ranking recommendations into the future could be considered more flexible as opposed to the previous years. Royer agreed that the rankings could be considered more flexible.

The group came to consensus to rank and discuss today.

Critical Infrastructure List through O&M with items that are not O&M. Royer had heard of discussions with FPOM group to take these items to put on the CRFM list and believes that they should be addressed before the FY25 budget.

Ranking from 1 – 5, five is most important and one, lowest.

Line item 4, PIT trawl:

Bellerud, NOAA, asked about shortfalls to the PIT tag trawl budget. Royer does not have funding this fiscal year but it was funded the year prior to complete fieldwork this summer. Currently it is funded for this season but not next season.

- The fish managers were adamant about the PIT trawl being a necessary inclusion to the budget.
- Jonathan Ebel, IDFG, views the PIT trawl as mandatory and expansion in the future is necessary.
- Erick Van Dyke, ODFW, believes the PIT trawl to be a pivotal project in the basin and should be mandatory.
- Tom Iverson, Yakama, believes that PIT trawling is at the core to the commitment in monitoring of hydrosystem operations.
- Tom Lorz, CRITFC, said that there are better and more cost effective ways to come by this information but it is what is available at this time.
- Blane Bellerud, NOAA, said that it is a BiOp requirement and the evaluation of the spill program requires Lower Bonneville detection.
- Royer, Corps, said that the Corps general approach is to rank non-construction projects up to four (construction rank up to five). Four is the highest rank that they can apply. Lorz asked for the reference to the documentation for this policy, as this has never been an issue before. Royer responded that all are BiOp requirements and it is not a codified policy.
- Ebel and Iverson wanted to make sure to present that all fish managers consider this mandatory and is imperative to proper fish management.

Line item 5, Avian Island PIT Detection:

- Ebel, IDFG, said that there is a need for PIT tag recovery for all avian colonies especially if the Corps does not fund the PIT trawl.
- Van Dyke, ODFW, this is integrated into the same use cases as the trawl. Fits into their adaptive tools that it should not be considered for the chopping block.
- Charles Morrill, WDFW, the regional needs require all of the PIT tag recovery and trawling for monitoring and adaptive management. He feels that the Corps is out of step with the regional needs.
- Iverson, Yakama, reiterated the point that he feels that the BiOp made many requirements that are not being funded. Tom then clarified that the proposed action made many promises that NOAA evaluated assuming the actions would occur, and they are not occurring.
- Lorz, CRITFC, said that there is need for more PIT tags, not less, and this is one way to get it.
- Lynne Krasnow, NOAA there appears to be reason to keep it as a high priority because it accounts for survival counting.
- Cindy Studebaker, Corps, did not commit to collecting PIT tags on East Sand Island. The commitment was to follow the synthesis report and the reassess the need to continue.

- Krasnow, NOAA wanted to add that the original purpose of the tag collection was from predation but now there is an expanded value, to augment or supplement lower river survivability estimates.
- Corps is rating it low because the synthesis report does not show a large need. Analysis is continuing.

Line item 12, Inland Avian Predation:

- Krasnow, NOAA, wants to see a third year as the area still supports gulls.

Line item Caspian Tern Management Plan (Avian Predation Monitoring)

- Corps considers mandatory.
- The line item refers to the transfer of islands from the Corps to Oregon and California. They are alternative tern nesting sites of which the Corps created habitat and planned to turn over.
- Royer had originally thought the item was done but there are some more steps to completion.
- Set to revisit at a later date.
- Lorz, CRITFC, wondered if there is a way to push it off a year but was told the cost of maintenance is prohibitive

Line item Columbia River System Operations (CRSO) EIS

- Corps considers mandatory
- Litigation expenses tied to ongoing litigation. There may be funding required but there is no update available.
- The general Fish Manager consensus is that litigation is not something that should be included in the CRFM funding package and should be funded from somewhere else. O&M should not shift costs onto CRFM.
- Royer clarified that there is a percentage of CRFM budget put towards litigation.

Line item 11, FCRPS CRFM Program Management (NWP) &

Line item 19: FCRPS CRFM Program Management (NWW):

- Program management is the salary for Royer, Corps, as well as other support staff. Corps considers mandatory
- Van Dyke, ODFW, the decline of funding should generate consideration of restructuring.
- Iverson, Yakama, sees the program administration as nondiscretionary for the group. He appreciates the transparency but sees the line items as fixed costs and as something not to be ranked

- Royer, Corps, said that as of FY24 these costs will be absorbed into specific budget line items.
- There is a concern that by splitting the costs into specific budget items, it makes it difficult to cover costs. Van Dyke, ODFW, reiterated that this is one of the reasons that he would be interested in restructuring.

Line item 3 Estuary Habitat Studies

- FY22 budget focus is on completing the Synthesis Memo. It is required every five years. For the last few fiscal years, the project has not had the ability to fund so it has been delayed.
- Original capability, based on the funding request two years ago, allocated \$1M but since then the capability has been downgraded. Plan to reallocate the PBud accordingly. In the past, it has cost \$.5M to write the Synthesis Report.
- NOAA and Corps are willing to look at the scope of the memo depending on the future of the budgetary constraints.
- SRWG study linked to the synthesis memo – reference for the scope of the memo.
- Ebel, IDFG, does not feel that it needs to finish this year.
- Van Dyke, ODFW, in the past Oregon has been supportive of the Estuary Synthesis reports but there have been changes in the value of some of the aspects of the report.
- Christine Peterson, BPA, is open minded to looking at the scope to reduce costs.

Line item 6 Bonneville Powerhouse 2 Fish Guidance Efficiency

- Line item is for contract oversight for construction for the ongoing projects. Corps sees this as mandatory
- Tom Lorz, CRITFC, would like to know if this is necessary given the budgetary constraints.
- The construction currently funded and this budget item is to fund the oversight of the work.

Line item 7 Bonneville PIT Detection

- Project is to fund the installation PIT antenna prototype at BON1 Ice and Trash Sluiceway auto-gate.
- Morrill, WDFW, had understood that this was still on for the fall/winter. Royer, Corps, explained that the project has not been funded because we are spending limited and Hydrosystem Monitoring Group is still deciding the path forward.
- Scott Bettin, BPA, responded that there is BPA funding to build it but they need a review from the Corps in FY22 and they will need to find the funds to review the plan.

- Ebel, IDFG, would like to have it paired with a spillway detector.
- Royer, Corps, Corps score of three is due to the increased spill and because the likely benefit is reduced.
- There is a consensus that there should be a diversification for the PIT routes as it only helps understanding. Van Dyke, ODFW, would like to see documentation that supports the Corps reasoning.

Line item 8 BON Serpentine Weir Modifications

- Line item applies to the cost share with lamprey in FY23 design efforts. So far they have not been able to fund.
- Morrill, WDFW, thought this was mandatory for the fish side to ensure that there is no damage done by the lamprey side for the PIT tag detection.
- Critical path is the construction in FY24.
- Morrill, WDFW, would like to see the costs minimized on the salmon side.

Line item 9 The Dalles East Fish Ladder Emergency Auxiliary Water Supply

- Intent is to continue design efforts for a solution to an alternative for debris management prior to fish units going offline.
- Have provided minimal funds this fiscal year to finish the EDR. FY23 to complete the EDR continuing to the DDR process.

Line item JDA ladder cooling

- For the future FY24 budget.
- Van Dyke, ODFW, wants to understand the scope of the project and increase the efficiency.
- Tom Lorz, Umatilla, believes that an initial possibilities review would seem to be a better and faster way of establishing needs and alternatives.
- Royer, Corps, an evaluation is codified in the Corps process.
- Ebel, IDFG, requested a revisit in August with more clarity and a better project description.

Line item 10 John Day Mitigation

- Item is for the completion of a reevaluation report on utilizing the Umatilla Hatchery as part of the hatchery program and under their fish accords.
- Ebel, IDFG, made a comment that the accord itself should be a better location for funding instead of CRFM.
- Iverson, Yakama, is surprised to see this program in the CRFM. He believes that he needs a little more information, as there are other options of interest to Yakama.

- Morrill, WDFW, thought that the Corps is responsible to John Day mitigation. Royer, Corps, said that the Corps is responsible for the mitigation, those needs are being met, but she is responsible as the CRFM program manager to implement the BiOps.
- The home for this line item (#10) needs to be discussed and more information provided. Revisiting in August.

Line items for McNary, Ice Harbor, and Lower Monumental Cooling Structures

- FY24 budget
- Van Dyke, ODFW, believes that the discussion is the same as the John Day ladder and the conversation should be held at a later date.
- Royer explained that the main difference is that John Day is investigatory and at McNary, Walla Walla is looking to submit a plan for design and construction.
- The cooling solutions are on separate line items for transparency.
- Regional fish managers rank all fish ladder cooling solutions as important. *Prioritization* is indicative of *preference* in order of operations.
- Ebel, IDFG most cooling at Lower Monumental and should be the most important.
- Bellerud, NOAA, Snake tends to be warmer.

Line item MCN Avian Deterrence

- Walla Walla is working on updating their alternatives. Steve Juhnke and others (Walla Walla) are updating the feasibility report to include the most recent information of the lasers, etc.
- Depending the outcome of the discussion there will be some changes being made into the future. The line item will not be included until FY24.
- Morrill, WDFW, said that avian predation at MCN is high and performance is dropping. Avian deterrents are not currently working. Charles finds this to be an important issue.
- Steve Juhnke, Corps, separating added confusion. Project is still investigating alternatives (McNary Avian Deterrent Deficiency Correction and Avian Wire Design Feasibility Report). Past years the project was not able to use tools simultaneously and are using O&M funding. The technologies have been temporary and there was problems with durability, electrical availability, and some other issues that lead to invalidating the tools. The line item allows for a more effective solution.
The feasibility report focused more on structure, water cannon, bird wire. The project came back requesting to research more cost effective methods. The report will be brought back with updated information.

- Revisit in August.

Line item 14 McNary Avian Deterrent Deficiency Correction and Avian Wire Design Feasibility Report

- Moving out of CRFM to O&M.

Line item 15 Ice Harbor Turbine Passage Survival Program

- Oversee the study that is ongoing at IHR. Should have been listed as mandatory as it is contract oversight. FY23 should be the final year.
- The project may be deferred due to readiness.
- Ebel, IDFG, Corps previously stated that most fish are passing through spill why look at turbines.

Line items 16 Little Goose Adult Ladder Temperature Mitigation

- Project is to add a way to allow fish to egress out of the cooling structure. Royer, Corps, is not aware of any mortality.
- Allows the fish a faster passage to get out of the structure.
- Morrill, WDFW, would like to have more information presented from John Lewis and Trevor Conder.
- Will discuss next month if needed.

Line item 17 Lower Granite Juvenile Bypass Facility - Phase 1a (Gateway to Separator), Phase 1b (Outfall

- The last contract will be awarded in the next few weeks. For FY23, it is mandatory for contract oversight.
- Ebel, IDFG, would like to see Ice Harbor receive similar treatment.

Line item 18 Lower Granite Turn Pool Gate

- Project to modify the hoist system to make more usable and improve fish egress in the ladder.
- Currently shelved at the concept level (30%).

Ebel, IDFG, would like to preempt support for the Spillway and Turbine PIT Tag Detection Feasibility Study (Placeholder). All fish managers support PIT tag trawl.

More on the agenda but most was covered in the review.

Agenda will include

Review of CRFM Ranking

Potential lack of funding for PIT tag funding.

Today's Attendees:

Blane Bellerud, NOAA
Charles Morrill, WDFW
Christine Peterson, BPA
Cindy Studebaker, Corps
Doug Newton, Corps
Erick Van Dyke, ODFW
Ida Royer, Corps
Jonathan Ebel, IDFG
Kathy Ceballos, NOAA
Kelsey Swieca, NOAA
Leslie Bach, NPPC
Scott Bettin, BPA
Shane Scott, PPC
Steve Juhnke, Corps
Steve Sipe, Corps
Ben Hausmann, BPA
Tom Iverson, Yakama Nation Fisheries
Tom Lorz, Umatilla/CRITFC

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