

**Columbia River Regional Forum
System Configuration Team Meeting
September 19, 2024
Official Notes**

Representatives of Corps, ODFW, WDFW, BPA, NOAA, and others participated in today's SCT hybrid meeting facilitated by Blane Bellerud, NOAA. Ian Chane, The Corps of Engineers, hosted the WebEx.

Draft and final SCT notes are available on the COE's TMT website under the [FPOM link](#). For copies of documents discussed, contact Bonnie Hossack at Bonnie.Hossack@noaa.gov. See the final page of these minutes for the list of attendees of today's meeting.

1. Update on Budgets

- SCT met to discuss budgetary concerns and the Corps' new method of designating funding within their programs.
- Spill wall rework project has been funded through O&M. Ida Royer, Corps, who was unable to attend said that there was a hiccup of a concern moving forward. Chane said that they are moving to address the fish passage asset backlog and where CRFM can be used and there will be better guidance in the near future.
- CRFM funding can be described generally as:
 - Funding for fish passage.
 - Funding for anadromous fish, only not for resident fish like bull trout.
 - The driver can be found in the BiOp, EIS, and NEPA. This also includes the RCBA and other Commitments.
- What is it going to be funded?
 - Capital projects – research for Capital improvements.
 - This does not cover routine improvements which are completed under O&M funding
 - CRFM is a construction general appropriation
 - CRFM is applied geographically and specific to species.

Tom Lorz, CRITFC, brought up the murky nature of some of the needs in the Basin like the Bonneville (BON) rock removal. He said that it would tick most, if not all of the requirements. SCT discussed the difference between a permanent fix and annual rock removal. O&M would be used for annual rock removal. A wall would be something that could be purchased with CRFM monies. Chane did qualify this saying that projects that have already been funded cannot be shifted to another funding source. Shifting to another funding source would require Congressional notification. He was asked if O&M and CRFM could be used in tandem for a project. Chane said that there can be only one line of funding.

Jay Hesse, Nez Perce, asked if there is money to complete the entire BON stilling basin project. Chane said that he still needed confirmation that it is funded. He will make sure that it is passed on in the next FFDWG meeting.

Trevor Conder, NOAA, asked about the Lower Granite (LWG) Pump #1. He said that higher spill levels at lower flows trip breakers. The fishway is not meeting FPP and has been continuously violating. Conder asked if solving the fishway issue would meet the CRFM budgetary objectives. He said that originally it was an O&M structure. Chane said that it would likely qualify for a modernization or betterment. Replacing in kind would likely be difficult because it is so old it would be difficult to find parts to replace in kind. The focus of O&M is maintenance. It was discussed that the Pumps as a fish asset have been identified and the region is aware. Chane asked that it be elevated to FPOM.

It was discussed that there is a whole host of concerns on the list. There are many on the O&M list that may have the potential to cover under CRFM. There is a bit of a gray area of what can qualify for CRFM. The concern is if the auxiliary water supplies for TDA, JDA, and MCN would all blow at once. Chane said that CRFM would likely qualify because the dams were built 50+ years ago and many are operating beyond what they were designed for. Chane said that they are having those conversations and are aware of the needs. They are working on the budgets and with the region to move the projects forward.

SCT wanted to know how specific they would have to be to be able to move the fishways forward. There is a pressing need for the fish pumps and the adult passages. Jonathan Ebel, IDFG, asked what would happen if the pumps and/or passages suddenly went downhill. Chane said that they would have to use emergency capital improvement money which is a non-routine O&M line item. There was a concern that this money would be slow to access. Ebel asked in the case of operational failure if carryover could be used in this type of scenario. Chane said that they would not want to do that because we cannot have carryover.

If OMB see a carryover, they may assume that there is not a need for that line item anymore and risks future funding.

Blane Bellerud, NOAA, said that he thinks it is important to fix these issues before they break. It would be good to fund a individual line item and make a schedule to fix the fishways; MCN, JDA, etc. Chane said that accounting needs it to be specific and for the actions at the different dams. There is no single line item for upstream passage.

The was discussion about FPOM's role in the budget decisions. Chane referred to the FPOM list and FPOM where status updates as it relates to O&M.. The list si provided to FPOM for regional input on prioritization. Van Dyke said that ODFW would be willing to reengage with the prioritization idea. Chane recognized that the prioritization is important. There was a concern that the list was not shared so CRFM is not aware of what is on it. The concern is that every site needs modernization. Chane said that the plan forward is that the status of the projects will be updated in the FPOM list.

Chane said that there are still discussions ongoing . There was a consideration to the conversations that will need to be held about FY2027 in FY2026. There was some commentary about the push and pull nature of these discussions between the region and the Corps. Bellerud said that specificity about the concerns will bring focus.

Discussion occurred about whether adult and juvenile passage modernization would be a cost through O&M. Chane stated that the information would be either on the O&M list or on CRFM list. That way the region will be able to prioritize the needs. Van Dyke stated that it is a huge list, and it is a list that has been around for a long time. He asked if there was a way to speed up the process by using the FPOM list as a guide for a CRFM list for modernization, only including the refurbing of a current asset or a replacement. Chane said that it would depend on whether the project was a betterment or an operational component. Van Dyke pointed out that betterment could include a different type of concrete. He asked Chane to allow the region to help because what the region and the Corps has been doing has not been working so some modernization would be good too. Chane said that there has been a change at the Corps, and they are working through things, and it is in a good place.

Conder asked if listing the Region's Top 5 O&M projects would be helpful. Chane said that it would be highly beneficial because it would allow them to help refocus and allow more time for specifics. Van Dyke said that he did not mind prioritizing the top 5, but if there are more than 5 it may take away from other

potential concerns. Conder stated that it would be only considering the funding in the near term.

Carolina Andes, BPA, discussed SATOC and MATOC (5 year) topics. There was some discussion around this topic as it relates to execution, rewind contracts, and fish pump budgetary constraints. There was also some discussion about competing with Missouri and the Everglades.

Hesse asked when/where the list would be released.

Chane said that the FPOM list and the CRFM list will be two separate lists. The information for CRFM will be available by the next meeting. Things will not be perfect, and the Corps are trying to address those needs.

2. Other Topics

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Next Agenda Topics

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Next meeting: October 17, 2024 (Hybrid)

NOAA offices at 1201 NE Lloyd in Portland (11th floor)

Today's Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
Ben Hausmann	
Caroline Andes	
Christine Petersen	
Ian Chane	
Erick Van Dyke	
Jay Hesse	
Kelsey Swieca	
Tom Lorz	
Kate Self	
Ebel	
Bellerud	
Conder	
Tammy Mackey	
Andrea Ausmus	<i>BPA Notetaker</i>

Minutes by Andrea Ausmus, CorSource Technology Group LLC, Contractor for Bonneville, amausmus@bpa.gov (971-442-5931).

Please send any requested edits to Bonnie Hossack, NOAA, Bonnie.Hossack@noaa.gov