

**Columbia River Regional Forum
SYSTEM CONFIGURATION TEAM
May 15, 2014
Final Minutes**

1. Introduction and Review of Meeting Minutes

Today's SCT meeting was chaired by Bill Hevlin, NOAA Fisheries. Representatives of the COE, NOAA, BPA, Oregon, Nez Perce Tribe and others participated. Copies of previous minutes, documents mentioned and meeting sign-up sheets are available from Kathy Ceballos at 503-230-5420 or Bill Hevlin at 503-230-5415. Draft and final SCT notes are available on the COE's FPOM/TMT website. The March final notes will be posted today as final. There was no SCT meeting in April.

2. FY15 CRFM Spreadsheet, Budget and Prioritization Process

Randy Chong, COE, distributed copies of the latest FY15 spreadsheet with changes since the last meeting highlighted.

SCT discussed future CRFM budgetary needs for performance standards testing. McNary and Ice Harbor will be tested in FY16, followed by Lower Grantie in FY17. Scott Bettin asked whether the MCN test would include a different setting in the turbines with the gates lowered. This would be a worth a lot to BPA. Further discussion of MCN turbine operations was referred to FFDRWG.

Dave Statler, Nez Perce Tribe, asked whether the FY15 CRFM spreadsheet is dependent on the current President's FY15 budget of \$71 million. Chong said there's always a possibility the President's budget won't be passed by Congress as submitted so CRFM could get less than \$71 million.

SCT decided to cancel its June meeting and will begin ranking projects on the CRFM FY15 spreadsheet during the July 17 meeting with the understanding that some projects might have to be cut if the President's budget doesn't pass. Chong highlighted changes in the FY15 spreadsheet since March:

- #1 Willamette River mitigation, \$22.16 million – This line item estimate is down from \$26 million.
- #5. Ice Harbor Performance Verification, \$9.9 million – This line item is down \$2.5 million from the previous estimate of \$12 million mainly because the COE reduced the number of tags required. A two-treatment test at Ice Harbor is still planned. A one-treatment test would cost approximately \$8 million, or almost \$2 million less. NOAA wants technical discussion of a single-treatment test because there are already 3-4 years of data on two treatments, and fish would get caught in the forebay during

the transition every other day between two types of spill. The biological and statistical effects of this are unclear. Furthermore, the extra \$2 million could be used to improve survival instead of paying for testing. The COE has to decide by February 2015 whether the IHR performance test will consist of one or two treatments. SCT scheduled a special SRWG discussion of this line item on June 5.

- #8. Ice Harbor post-construction evaluation, \$875,000 – SCT discussed the testing methodology used for this evaluation. CRITFC and NOAA agreed that sensor fish are not needed because a full performance test will be conducted at IHR later.
- #10. Little Goose ASW (SAEDC), \$175,000 – There are contracting problems with this project which makes an estimated completion date hard to pin down. The funds will be spent on construction oversight.
- #11. Little Goose - develop alternatives for meeting summer performance goals, \$70,000 – This line item will cover work to identify operational changes at LGS given that the project did not meet its summer performance testing goals. The work will include evaluation of jetty erosion, impacts on egress, and spill patterns that might improve juvenile summer survival rates at LGS.
- #15. Lower Granite overflow weir/orifice lighting closeout, \$70,000 – This line item covers follow-on actions to close out the work.
- #16. Lower Granite juvenile bypass outfall phase 1B, \$1 million – This estimate has been reduced because it no longer covers the cost of the contract. The COE won't be ready to award a contract in FY15.

SCT also discussed recent project updates and specific concerns:

- #12. Lower Granite spillway PIT detection, \$250,000 – The test PIT detection installation in the BON corner collector, which will be used at the Granite spillway, is performing very well.
- #18. Lower Granite adult ladder, \$600,000 – The goal is a temporary solution to overheating of the adult ladder at LGR that occurred last summer. The COE is designing a temporary system now, while longer term solutions are being developed. For this summer only, the COE plans to drop two submersible pumps into the LGR forebay to discharge cooler water in front of diffuser #14 intake to provide cooler water to the trap and mid-ladder. The system is fairly simple, powered by a portable generator, and the pumps are available for rent. A preliminary estimate of the cost to operate it is \$40,000/month. The COE is preparing a letter report now, which will serve as the basis for a decision on whether this system is

affordable. SCT's exchange led to ideas for further FFDWG discussion. The COE needs a timeframe for getting an emergency contract in place, and a written protocol is needed for when the pumps will be used. Hevlin said he is working Ann Setter & Chris Pinney, COE Walla Walla, on a change form for the 2014 FOP addressing how the temperature differential issue will be addressed.

- #20. Lower Monumental summer performance standard near-miss, \$40,000 – This funding is for SRWG to address how to handle the “near miss” of 92.97% survival from the 93% standard for summer at LMN, based on performance testing.
- #23. McNary adult fallback passage efficiency study, \$80,000 – The contract was awarded in August 2013, and the study will continue into 2015. It covers follow-up to the hydroacoustic study contract to be awarded this summer. Survival at the turbines was 91% – much higher than previously thought.
- #25. Lamprey improvements, \$2 million (capacity is \$4.2 million) – The president's budget this year has a line item for lamprey at \$2 million based on the fish accords, but \$4.2 million worth of work could be done if the COE finds additional funds are available.
- #27. Avian island PIT detection, \$425,000 – This project involves installing PIT tag detection equipment on East Sand Island.
- #33. Avian Predation Management Plan, \$750,000 – The COE is looking at building five islands of 2.2-2.3 acres to meet the avian predation control needs of the FCRPS inland and in the estuary. See section 3 of these notes for an update.
- #38. The Dalles adult fishways and AWS study, \$16.02 million – The DDR for this project is finished, and work on plans and specifications is under way. The COE considers even a small risk of turbine failure unacceptable and asked whether SCT is comfortable with current plans. CRITFC would prefer a more robust system, but spending \$45 million is not feasible.

3. Avian Predation Management Actions

Dave Trachtenbarg, COE, gave a presentation on efforts to control avian predators inland and in the Columbia estuary. He discussed a program overview, enhancement site work, efforts this year to control caspian terns, and proposed efforts for 2015 on the Columbia plateau. The COE provided copies of a two-page summary that addresses tern and cormorant management.

Phase 1 of the inland avian predation management program is installation of rope and flagging on Goose Island. Phase 2 consists of building enhancement sites in 2015 to 2018, and dissuading terns from Crescent Island. The first site to be upgraded in phase 2 is the Don Edwards wildlife refuge adjacent to the city of San Francisco. Refuge managers have agreed to improvement of five existing islands of around half an acre each to serve as nesting sites for terns, and also for snowy plovers, a listed species. The overriding goal is to reduce consumption of ESA-listed salmonids by dissuading terns from nesting on Crescent and Goose Islands and on East Sand Island in the estuary.

Tom Lorz, CRITFC, advocated adding a sixth island to the plan for Don Edwards. The cost will be significantly less now than if it has to be added later. Refuge managers are being accommodating, but they might balk if we ask to build another island, Trachtenbarg and Mike Langeslay agreed.

The COE's immediate focus is on getting the Don Edwards wildlife refuge habitat ready for use by next February when the nesting season begins for 2015. A contract for the work will be awarded in October. After the five tern islands are established at Don Edwards, the focus will turn to developing island habitat for snowy plovers. Initial work also consists of installing fences, rope and flagging to dissuade terns from nesting on Crescent Island. These are temporary measures. Bringing in bulldozers to plant willows for permanent dissuasion will be a more intensive effort in 2016.

Trachtenbarg gave an update on 2014 field work to manage avian predators. The 1.5 acres of habitat on East Sand Island are supporting a colony of more than 9,000 terns. In addition, a total of 5.8 acres of additional tern habitat is available this year at six alternative sites in southeastern Oregon and northern California. Harassment by eagles and owls has caused some nesting failures; an owl was removed from the alternative site on Tule Lake.

With rope and flagging in place, as of May 14 Goose Island had 85 attended nests compared to 300 nests on the same date a year ago. Nesting density on the rock outcropping near Goose Island is the highest seen anywhere, with 3-5 nests per square meter. In addition to terns, there are 40-50 ring bills nests and another 20 California gull nests on the rocks. Morning hazing with a green laser tends to discourage terns for the day, but the gulls just come right back.

The COE is working now with the BOR and USFWS on NEPA documentation for the cormorant EIS. Upcoming dates include:

- June 5 – Draft EIS released
- July 27 – EIS comment deadline
- September 25 – Final EIS released
- December 29 – ROD signature

Trachtenbarg will send out a Doodle poll to schedule an adaptive management meeting for this fall re: avian predation management actions in the estuary and the Columbia plateau.

4. Schedule of Upcoming Meetings

- **May 28** – Walla Walla FFDWRG meeting
- **May 29** – AFEP one-pager ranking meeting
- **June 5** – Special SRWG meeting to review the past Ice Harbor juvenile passage and survival studies to determine one treatment spillway operation for the performance test next year.
- **July 17** – Next SCT meeting, which will be held in the 1st floor conference room located in the Lloyd building - just downstairs from where we usually meet in the Mt. St. Helens room on the 10th floor (no need to check in on the 11th).

5. Next SCT Meeting

The next SCT meeting will be July 17 in the main floor conference room of the NOAA building. Scoring of FY15 line items will begin. These notes prepared by technical writer Pat Vivian.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Bill Hevlin	NOAA
Christine Peterson	BPA
Shane Scott	PPC
Kathryn Kostow	Oregon
Trevor Conder	NOAA
Agnes Lut	BPA
Randy Chong	COE
Mike Langeslay	COE
Gary Fredricks	NOAA
Tom Lorz	CRITFC
Scott Bettin	BPA
<i>Phone</i>	
Tim Wik	COE Walla Walla
David Trachtenbarg	COE
Erick Van Dyke	Oregon
Dave Statler	Nez Perce Tribe
Derek Fryer	COE Walla Walla