

Columbia River Regional Forum
SYSTEM CONFIGURATION TEAM
Final Meeting Notes
October 14, 2015

1. Introduction

Representatives of the COE, NOAA, BPA, Oregon, Idaho and others participated in today's SCT meeting chaired by Bill Hevlin, NOAA. Draft and final SCT meeting notes are available on the TMT website under the FPOM link: <http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/tmt/documents/FPOM/2010/SCT/SCT.html>. For copies of documents discussed in the meeting, contact NOAA at 503-230-5420. Comments on the September 17 SCT meeting notes are due at the next meeting November 19.

2. Complete the FY16 CRFM Spreadsheet Line Item Priority Process

SCT's main focus today was to finish ranking candidate projects for FY16 CRFM funding. Randy Chong, COE, distributed copies of the latest spreadsheet. New information as usual is highlighted in rose, including scores added at last month's meeting.

Chong went over the changes to individual line items. By SCT request at the September meeting, the lower river BiOp performance testing (previously line 27 at \$9.1 million) is split into three separate FY16 line items on the spreadsheet: purchase of PIT tags for the test at BON (#27, \$7.1 million), JSATs downsizing efforts (#28, \$750,000), and the COE's contribution to the PIT trawl (#29, \$1.25 million).

Construction items with the highest cost in FY16 are the Little Goose adjustable spillway weir (line 11, \$7 million) and the Lower Granite juvenile outfall phase 1B (line 17, \$10.4 million). These figures could change depending on bids received. Scott Bettin, BPA, asked whether SCT will have an opportunity to revisit projects if the government estimate goes up during the bidding process. The goal of the 60% and 90% design reviews is to double-check the accuracy of government estimates, Chong said.

SCT representatives discussed individual FY16 line items and provided scores as appropriate, using D to defer scoring.

#5. Avian Predation, \$2.9 million – This line item will pay for actions to remove some terns and cormorants from the estuary and to monitor the effects of removal via PIT tag recoveries downstream of BON. Although NOAA gave line 29, \$1.2 million, a score of 5 today (see discussion on page 3 below), Gary Fredricks mentioned that PIT detection on the colonies may be a lower priority in light of findings aired at yesterday's PIT tag technology workshop. NOAA questions the value of funding reach- and ESU-specific predation estimates over time because that goes a step beyond BiOp requirements.

#7. ICR Performance Verification Monitoring, \$8.2 million – Because it's unlikely this work will be finished in FY16, it looks like everything else up for FY16 ranking can be funded, Hevlin

observed. A decision on spill treatment testing at ICR is still needed. No scores were given today due to the likelihood that this item will be deferred to 2017.

#20. LGR Post-Construction Evaluation, \$645,000 – In light of adult passage problems this summer, NOAA proposed including an experiment with rental pumps at LGS in this line item. The COE is reluctant to fund rental pumps at another dam under CRFM until the improvements at LGR are evaluated. Forebay temperature strings at the Snake River projects make it possible to track reservoir stratification and determine whether there was enough cold water in the forebay to cool the LGS ladder last summer. Oregon and Idaho advocated further evaluation of temperature string data during periods of adult delay. Because three quarters of this year's Snake River sockeye run were lost in the lower river, the COE and BPA characterized sockeye passage delay as a system-wide problem, not specific to one dam. Oregon and Idaho supported actions to evaluate LGS temperatures. Given SCT's concerns, Chong will add a line item to do further analysis of temperature, operations, and fish passage data, and develop potential operational and configuration alternatives to address the issue. The study will be used to determine the feasibility of any permanent alternatives.

#27. Lower River BiOp Performance Testing, \$7.1 million – This item, the first of three split apart by request at the last SCT meeting, covers PIT tags for the survival test at BON. Tags can be ordered at any time from the supplier. Chong will delete the comment from the spreadsheet that says cost increases are due to FY15 contract deferral. There was discussion of whether to continue deferring scores based on two concerns, lack of a decision on the operation to be tested, and the risk of wasted investment if BON fails another test. Scores today were:

- NOAA – 1 The BON spillway needs repairs and is probably not ready for another round of BiOp testing. Recommends finishing the FGE improvements study, assessing needed spillway repairs, and doing a post-construction evaluation before testing again.
- Idaho – 1 Agrees with NOAA.
- BPA – D
- COE – D This is still in process.
- Oregon – D consistent with other scores on funding performance standards testing.

#28. Lower River BiOp Performance Testing – JSATs Downsizing, \$750,000 – The purpose of this effort is to prove that downsized JSATs tags work and can be manufactured on an assembly line. This effort can proceed independently of lower-river BiOp testing because there are many other uses for JSATs technology, such as tracking lamprey and subyearling chinook. The government holds the patent on JSATs tag production and won't have to pay the manufacturer royalties. NOAA considers this item high-priority because smaller tags will provide more complete information on survival. Scores were:

- NOAA – 5
- BPA – 1 Who will pay for the test next time?
- COE – 5 A lot of money has been invested in smaller tags to date.
- Oregon – D Although JSATs technology is important, it competes with other efforts to improve PIT tag technology throughout the region.
- Idaho – 4

#29. Lower River BiOp Performance Testing, \$1.2 million – This covers the COE’s share of PIT trawl funding. There was discussion of yesterday’s PIT tag workshop, specifically how the NMFS Science Center and researchers use BON counts vs. PIT trawl counts at East Sand Island to determine cormorant predation rates. At issue is whether fish were dead or alive when detected. Scores were:

- BPA – 5 A lot has been invested in the PIT detection system, and this is a critical piece.
- COE – 5
- NOAA – 5 Supports this as long as the PIT trawl is working.
- Idaho – 4
- Oregon – D

#31. Turbine Passage Survival Program, \$200,000 – Chong recently sent SCT members the TSP work plan. Development of new runners to increase survival at Ice Harbor has been one of the TSP’s main benefits, Hevlin noted. The TSP will also help shape runner development at McNary. Scores were:

- BPA – 5
- NOAA – 4
- COE – 5
- Idaho – 3
- Oregon – D

#36. Inland Avian Predation Management Plan, \$850,000 – The cost came down from \$1.52 million because the COE was able to award a contract for construction of Crescent Island using FY15 year-end funds. The comment that says the cost increased due to FY15 deferment of the dissuasion contract will be deleted from the spreadsheet.

#38. Lower River Adult Studies, \$550,000 – This cost will probably come down. Recently SRWG had a lengthy discussion of this item, and the COE distributed a draft work statement for comments. The effect of river temperatures on adult migration in recent years will need careful attention. Information on many CRFM-related projects is available online at the University of Idaho website. There was general consensus that a summary of previous studies and findings (i.e. a history of FCRPS adult passage) will become increasingly valuable as people retire and institutional memory is lost. This needs to be done before key players leave. SCT members agreed that a published hard copy reference volume is needed, with annotated bibliography. A vital piece of this historical account will be details and findings regarding operational changes over the decades, such as when LGS unit 1 went out of service during court-ordered spill in 2007 and adult passage stalled. Was it the reduction of spill to 30% or the return of unit 1 to service that got adults moving? The answer is unknown. Scores for this effort were:

- NOAA – 4 It’s a great idea, but it’s not a structure for saving fish.
- BPA – D Supports the idea, but needs more detail.
- NOAA - 4
- COE – 4 It’s not critical, although it would be extremely useful.

- Idaho – 5
- Oregon – 3

#39. TDA Adult Fishways and AWS Study, \$3 million – This \$3 million contingency fund for SAEDC will probably come down based on resolution of the protest against the contract award. The cost of the project could go up over time.

3. Upcoming FFDRWG, SRWG and Other Meetings

- **October 27-29** – ERDC modeling trip to study low flow operations
- **November 12** – FPOM meeting
- **November 19** – Next SCT meeting
- **December 3** – Portland FFDRWG
- **December 7** – Walla Walla FFDRWG in the afternoon in Walla Walla
- **December 8-10** – Annual AFEP review in Walla Walla
- **December 10** – TSP meeting in the afternoon in Walla Walla
- **December 17** – FPOM meeting

3. Next SCT Meeting

SCT will meet next at 9 am, November 19, in the Mt. St. Helens room at NMFS Portland office. These notes prepared by technical writer Pat Vivian.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Bill Hevlin	NOAA
Sean Tackley	COE
Randy Chong	COE
Pat Vivian	Notetaker
Scott Bettin	BPA
Gary Fredricks	NOAA
Erick Van Dyke	Oregon

Phone:

Russ Kiefer	Idaho
Derek Fryer	COE Walla Walla