

System Configuration Team (SCT)

Reasonable & Prudent Measure #26 Meeting Notes August 23, 2001

Greetings and Introductions.

The August 23 meeting of the System Configuration Team was held at the National Marine Fisheries Service offices in Portland, Oregon. The meeting was chaired by Bill Hevlin of NMFS and facilitated by Richard Forester. The agenda and a list of attendees for the July 26 meeting are attached as Enclosures A and B.

The following is a distillation (not a verbatim transcript) of items discussed at the meeting, together with actions taken on those items. Please note that some enclosures referenced may be too lengthy to routinely include with the meeting notes; copies of all enclosures referred to in the minutes are available upon request from Kathy Ceballos of NMFS at 503/230-5420.

1. Draft Minutes from July SCT Meeting.

Hevlin distributed copies of the July SCT meeting minutes, and asked that any comments be submitted to him as soon as possible.

2. Progress Update on Chief Joseph Flow Deflectors and Status of Grand Coulee Gas Abatement Document.

In response to a request from the July SCT meeting, Hevlin said he had talked to Beth Coffey at COE Seattle District, the leader of the Chief Joseph/Grand Coulee gas abatement project, and discovered that the Chief Joseph flow deflectors are not in the President's FY'02 budget because they have been classified as a new start. We had requested \$800,000 for this project in FY'02, to finish the WES modeling, to do plans and specs and to make a minimal construction start, Hevlin said. We would then need the big bucks – \$15 million, in FY'03 and FY '04 – to finish construction, he said.

The deletion of this line-item caught me by surprise, Hevlin said; since then, I've been

doing some emailing, and discovered, through Witt Anderson, that it may still be possible to get at least a portion of the \$800,000 restored in FY'02 if we can stimulate enough Congressional interest. John Kranda said this likely was not a Corps decision; it was probably the Office of Management and Budget that made this unilateral "no new start" decision.

Additional information from Anderson was that Senator Patty Murray of Washington is on the Appropriations Conference Committee, which will have the major say in what gets restored to the budget, Hevlin said. It might be a good idea for the various agencies around this table to make their support for the Chief Joseph flow deflector project known to Sen. Murray, he said. In response to a question from Hevlin, representatives from BPA and Reclamation expressed their continued support for this project. Hevlin added that the Colville and Yakima Tribes will also be making their support for this project clear to the Appropriations Conference Committee. Tom Lorz said CRITFC will also be sending a letter of support for the Chief Joseph deflectors.

3. Briefing on Draft Bonneville Decision Document.

Doug Clarke led this discussion. He went through a series of overheads (attached as Enclosure D) titled "Bonneville Decision Document – SCT Brief," noting that the draft report was released for comment last Tuesday. Official comments on the decision document are due by September 7, Clarke said.

Clarke touched on the background for the Bonneville Decision Document development effort, the process used to develop and evaluate the list of alternatives considered in the analysis, the alternatives studied, the estimated power impacts of each alternative, the survival estimates generated by each alternative, and the risk assessment developed for the analysis. Clarke noted that there was B1 decision document subgroup agreement on the following areas:

- B2 is the first priority
- Implement B2 corner collector
- Continue studying B2 FGE and implement if warranted
- Rationale: spreads the risk of passage over several routes, provides comparable survival levels at lower cost, provides a potential increase in spill efficiency
- Work to reduce or eliminate multiple bypass mortality risk by understanding of adult fallback
- Evaluate appropriate long-term operational scenario after post-construction monitoring

There were also a number of areas of subgroup disagreement, Clarke said:

- Need for B1 juvenile "fix" (CRITFC opposition)
- NMFS subgroup members: appropriate fix at B1 – defer decision pending additional information (multiple bypass mortality and B2 JBS post-construction monitoring, CC high-flow outfall survival, shallow surface bypass testing, ability to maintain complex JBS systems within criteria)
- COE/BPA subgroup members: B1 JBS/ESBS and no further surface bypass testing,

recognize B1 is not the first priority powerhouse at Bonneville, risk assessment when funds are made available (adult impacts, multiple bypass and water quality issues), verify ESBS/JBS is still the correct choice.

Finally, Clarke touched on the schedule for finalizing the B1 Decision Document:

- 8/21: distributed draft document for official agency comment
- 9/7: comments due
- Early October: incorporate comments and distribute Decision Document for ISRP review.

The group devoted a few minutes of discussion to the conclusions in the B1 Decision Document, as well as Clarke's characterization of the areas of subgroup agreement and disagreement. Ultimately, Clarke asked that any comments about this presentation, and the way the areas of agreement and disagreement have been characterized, be provided to him as soon as possible.

Clarke added that many people from many different agencies expended a great deal of time and effort in developing this report; although it wasn't possible to reach full agreement on every aspect of future system configuration at Bonneville, we did have a great deal of productive discussion, he said. In response to a question from Steve Rainey, Clarke said the schedule for finalizing the B1 Decision Document will depend on the content and controversy of the comments received.

4. FY'02 CRFM Program Funding Priorities – Review of Revised Spreadsheet.

John Kranda distributed a new version of the CRFM measures worksheet, updated to reflect the discussion at the July SCT meeting (attached as Enclosure C). He spent a few minutes going through the changes he made to this document, all of which have been highlighted in yellow. Kranda noted that he has drawn a line following the "Juvenile Passage Temperature Effects" line-item at the \$82.5 million point in the cumulative total, the best estimate, at this point, of the funding level that will be available for the FY'02 CRFM program.

Kranda noted that Congress has not yet decided on a final FY'02 CRFM budget amount. However, the House and Senate Conference Committee are within \$2 million on the FY'02 CRFM budget; if they split the difference, he said, we will be right at \$82 million.

Rock Peters mentioned that the Corps is now proposing another line-item, a \$300,000 placeholder to begin the development of higher-flow PIT tag detection capability. The group spent a few minutes discussing this new line-item; ultimately, Rod Woodin said his initial reaction is that this is a very low-priority line-item. Gray Fredricks said that, in his view, improving detection capability is important; if we don't investigate this technology, we'll never know what might be possible, he said. Christine Mallette suggested that the high-flow PIT detection proposal be submitted to FFDRWG/SRWG for discussion. In other words, said Hevlin, it sounds as though SCT is saying don't close the door on this proposal, but it needs some

additional development and study before it's put into the CRFM mix for FY'02. FFDRWG will discuss it on September 12, Fredricks said.

5. Briefing on Configuration Sections of the Action Agencies' 5-Year Implementation Plan.

BPA's Ken Barnhart briefed the SCT on the configuration sections of the 5-Year Implementation Plan, working from a series of overheads (attached as Enclosure E). Barnhart began by providing a "road map" to the various federal documents (the All-H Paper, the NMFS and Fish and Wildlife Service BiOps and the various action agency decision documents, Environmental Impact Statements and implementation plans).

Barnhart went through these documents and the schedule for public comment and finalization for each (please refer to Enclosure E for details). He then touched on the purpose of the Implementation Plan ("To develop a comprehensive plan that identifies progress made and actions needed to achieve hydro and offsite mitigation performance standards"), the Implementation Plan's goals, performance standards, implementation strategies and regional coordination mechanisms.

Barnhart briefly discussed how action items will be prioritized, prioritization criteria, the timeline for implementation of the 2000 BiOps, and cost and funding issues. Barnhart concluded his presentation with the following key considerations:

- Avoidance of jeopardy and All-H approach require contributions from a number of federal agencies
- Biological Opinions for federal agencies are inter-dependent
- Due to past investments and improvements, the FCRPS can only provide 5 percent to 10 percent survival improvement with dams in place
- Other survival improvements are likely to be incremental – there is no "silver bullet."
- A comprehensive, All-H approach provides the best prospect for avoiding jeopardy.

In response to a question from Bruce Suzumoto, Barnhart said that, while the action agencies are focusing on the hydro "H" in their implementation planning effort, they are also contributing significantly to planning and funding actions in the other "Hs" – habitat and hatchery, for example -- through this BiOp. Basically, it's all going to be a function of how much money we have available, Mike Mason observed. Certainly one of our main goals, in this implementation planning effort, is to make our available funds go as far as possible, Barnhart said.

6. Next SCT Meeting Date.

The next System Configuration Team meeting was set for Thursday, September 27. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA writer-editor pool.