

System Configuration Team (SCT)

**Reasonable & Prudent Measure #26
Meeting Notes
June 21, 1999**

DRAFT

Greetings and Introductions.

The June 21 meeting of the System Configuration Team was held at the National Marine Fisheries Service offices in Portland, Oregon. The meeting was co-chaired by Bill Hevlin of NMFS and Jim Ruff of the Northwest Power Planning Council staff, and was facilitated by Cathryn Collis. The agenda and a list of attendees for the June 21 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.

I. Update on John Day E-Screen Tests, Decision on Whether or Not to Support Portland District's Proposal to Fund John Day E-Screen Maintenance Pits.

The Corps' John Kranda said there was an SCT conference call last Thursday to discuss the plan to go forward with maintenance pit construction in 1999; the plans and specs are ready to go, and the Corps is currently negotiating with the contractor. It was agreed that we would hold off on actually awarding the contract until the full SCT had an opportunity to discuss certain facets of this issue at today's meeting, Kranda explained. He distributed copies of the minutes from the June 10 SCT conference call (Enclosure C).

Stuart Stanger provided an overview of the history of the John Day e-screen program, then explained that, because the construction period for the maintenance pits is limited (it must

be completed by December), the contract needs to be awarded soon if this work is to be completed prior to next spring; in addition, there is currently FY'99 money available which could be used for this project. After discussing this issue at FFDRWG and the June 10 conference call, what the Corps really needs to know is, where does the region want to go with screens? Stanger said. If extended-length screens are off the table at John Day, there is no need to modify the maintenance facility. If e-screens are going to be used in the future at John Day, the Corps' position is that these maintenance facility improvements are needed.

Ruff said he isn't prepared to venture an opinion on this question until he hears more biological data from the 1999 test. NMFS' Gary Fredricks replied that, for the 1999 test, yearling chinook FGE averaged 91%; steelhead FGE was 90.6% and sockeye FGE was 76.5%. No significant descaling problems were observed, he added. In terms of the latest survival study information, the mortality for fish released into gateway 7B and recovered at the sampling facility ranged from 10% to 29% for three releases. For fish released into Gateway 6B, mortality ranged from 0- 2%; for fish released into the collection channel, 0-3%. In general, Fredricks said, the FGE results from the 1999 studies comport well with the 1996 data; from a guidance standpoint and a fish condition standpoint, the information looks good – there is no information that would suggest that the original reason we decided to move forward with this test is no longer valid.

Is there a plan to address the mortality problems we've seen in this year's prototype test? Ruff asked. There are a couple of options, Steve Rainey replied: the Corps can drop further John Day e-screen development, or they can do a new prototype development phase to address the problems that were seen this year. The Corps has developed a proposal for how they would approach that additional prototype development work, which was discussed at the June 9 FFDRWG meeting.

My understanding, from the last FFDRWG meeting, was that the Corps would be laying out a scope for VBS flow control modeling and 2000 biological testing at today's SCT meeting, said Ron Boyce. Based on the decisions made by SCT last year, Stanger replied, until the SCT gives us the go-ahead to move into that technical phase, we're not going to spend any additional money – in other words, that scoping has not yet been done. He added that it has been suggested that the Corps put the prototype screens back in place to take velocity measurements, and, possibly, to run further lamprey tests in 2000; if that is to happen, he said, there will be a need to handle the screens further.

Hevlin noted that the real question, for today's meeting, is not how the Corps should proceed with further e-screen testing at John Day, but whether that program should continue. After a few minutes of discussion, there was general SCT agreement that there is interest in continued e-screen testing at John Day, but before a formal SCT recommendation can be made, there is a need for further information about scope, cost and other items that may fall off the table at WES if the additional John Day gateway modeling is done. Stanger said the cost of this program will depend on the scope the SCT has in mind; a limited WES modeling program is expected to cost \$300,000-\$400,000; to do all of the technical work the Corps believes needs to be done on the e-screen project is expected to cost \$1.9 million. Kranda added that a maximum

of \$200,000 in FY'99 funds would be needed for this work. Tom Lorz observed that it may be too late, realistically, to expect the Corps to develop a modified prototype for use in the spring of 2000 anyway; if that's the case, he said, it probably makes more sense to discuss it as an FY'00 budget item.

Ultimately, it was agreed to defer further discussion of the John Day e-screen testing and prototype development issue until FFDRWG has an opportunity to discuss the scope of the FY'00 e-screen testing and development program.

Returning to the maintenance pits issue, Hevlin provided an overview of the June 10 conference call; essentially, the Corps would like to use some of the available FY'99 funds to accelerate construction on the maintenance facility, but this decision really hinges on the SCT's outlook on the future direction of the John Day e-screen program. Essentially, it's a safety issue, Kranda said; if we're going to use screens at John Day in the future, these deeper pits are needed to facilitate handling of that equipment.

Boyce reiterated that there is a need to see a fully fleshed-out scope of work for the Corps' FY'00 John Day e-screen program, with detailed cost information, before the SCT can make a recommendation on this issue. After a brief discussion, there was a lack of SCT consensus about whether or not the maintenance pit work is needed, given the uncertain future of extended-length screens at John Day; there was also some concern about what might fall off the table for FY'99 funding if the decision is made to go forward with this project.

If this is a handling and safety issue, why does the funding for this item have to come out of the CRFM program, rather than O&M? Ruff asked. Because it is an improvement that is needed specifically to handle the extended-length screens, Kranda replied -- the existing facility is adequate for maintenance on the standard-length screens that are already in place at that project.

Ultimately, Collis polled the SCT for their positions on whether or not to fund the maintenance pit work using FY'99 dollars; ODFW, WDFW and CRITFC voted to defer funding for this item until a prototype design is developed; BPA, NMFS and the Corps supported the maintenance pit work in 1999; Ruff abstained until after the discussion of the following agenda item.

II. Identification and Discussion of Remaining FY'99 Add-On Proposals for Funding.

The group identified the following list of items proposed for funding using the remaining FY'99 dollars:

- 1) Little Goose adult fishway modifications (FY'99 cost: \$500,000)
- 2) Lower Monumental juvenile bypass outfall relocation (\$500,000)
- 3) Snake River temperature model and monitoring (\$565,000)
- 4) John Day flow deflector investigation (\$10,000)
- 5) John Day dewatering/adult delay (\$10,000)
- 6) John Day e-screens maintenance pits (\$800,000)

- 7) Receivers for radio tracking (\$1 million)
- 8) Adult radio tags (\$500,000)
- 9) Pilot study for adult temperature impacts (to test thermal tag technology) (\$58,000)
- 10) Phase III of gate raise (\$300,000)
- 11) Lamprey evaluation (\$200,000)
- 12) John Day e-screens modeling (\$50,000)

After a lengthy discussion, the SCT recommended that Items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 receive FY'99 funding; there is adequate funding available to cover all of these items. It was agreed that, although there is some SCT support for Item 6 (Oregon, Washington, CRITFC and the Council do not support it at this time), this project still needs additional discussion; it was agreed that the Corps will make a decision on whether or not this work will go forward in 1999, and that Collis and Kranda will organize an SCT conference call once the Corps makes its decision. In all likelihood, said Kranda, the Corps will move forward and award the contract for this work in 1999; if we are going to be handling the extended-length screens in the future, the maintenance pits are needed, and I haven't heard anything at today's meeting that would indicate that no further e-screen testing will be taking place at John Day in the future.

With regard to Item 11, while there was general SCT support for this projects, it was felt that it is too late to do the evaluation in 1999. With respect to Item 3, Snake River temperature modeling and monitoring, the Corps argued that this project, as currently scoped, cannot be funded using FY'99 CRFM monies. The SCT agreed that this work should be a high priority for FY'00, when it can be tied to another CRFM research item.

III. Review and Discussion of FY'00 Line Item Ranking/Score Results from Federal, State and Tribal Committees.

Hevlin reminded the SCT that, at the April SCT meeting, the federal, state and tribal caucuses were all tasked to take the SCT prioritization criteria and develop their rankings of the FY'00 CRFM line-items. The federal and state caucus groups have developed their scores, he said, but we have yet to receive any information from the tribal caucus. There was some concern about releasing the federal and state scores and rankings before the tribal participants have completed this process, Hevlin said; we want to be sure the tribes have an opportunity to rank these projects objectively, without being influenced by anyone else's scores.

In response to a question from Ruff, Tom Lorz said he is not sure when the tribal ranking process will be completed, although it is underway. In the absence of the tribal input, Hevlin distributed Enclosure D, a ranked list of FY'00 projects, based on the state and federal scores. What this list does not show, Hevlin explained, is the individual scores each item received in this year's state and federal ranking process.

Kranda noted that there is some sense of urgency, from the Corps' perspective, to lay out for the region what they propose to do in FY'00. Certainly we want to incorporate the tribes' thinking, he said, but we need to move forward on this as quickly as possible. Ruff noted that the John Day extended-length screen project currently falls right at the cutoff line, based on the fact that the Senate has approved a \$70 million CRFM budget for FY'00, and the House is unlikely to increase that amount.

The group spent a few minutes going through this list, discussing both individual line-items and the ranking process itself. Ultimately, Collis identified the following next steps: first, that the tribes need to submit their FY'00 rankings. Lorz reiterated that he does not know when this will occur; Collis said she will contact the tribes directly to see whether they can submit their priorities by a week from today. Second, said Collis, the state caucus will go back through their list and assign ranks to all of their unranked projects. Third, once all of the priorities are received, the three lists will need to be integrated; this integrated list will be distributed to the full SCT membership by email. Further discussion of the FY'00 priorities will take place at the July 22 SCT meeting. Collis asked Lorz to inform CRITFC's policymakers that the SCT will be moving forward on its FY'00 prioritization process at that meeting; the tribal priorities need to be submitted prior to that date if they are to receive full consideration. Lorz said he will pass this message along.

IV. Introduce FY'01 CRFM Program Scoping Spreadsheet.

Kranda distributed Enclosure E, a spreadsheet showing the Corps' FY'00 and preliminary FY'01 CRFM program items, by project, with cost estimates; he noted that the cost estimates for FY'01 projects will disappear once the Corps' budget request is submitted to Congress. In other words, don't lose this list if you want to refer to it in the future, he said. Generally, these lists are simply a continuation of ongoing projects from FY'99 and FY'00, he explained, noting that the FY'01 cost numbers are extremely preliminary, and will change. Kranda said the Corps' total FY'01 CRFM budget request will probably be in the \$100 million range. He asked the SCT to look at the items and scope proposed for the FY'01 CRFM program, and let the Corps know if there is anything missing, or if there are any items that should not be on this list.

V. FFDRWG and SRWG Updates.

The Corps distributed Enclosure F, a summary of items discussed at the May 24 Portland District FFDRWG meeting; these items included the John Day ESBS system, Bonneville surface collection, the Gas Abatement Program, The Dalles combined sluiceway outfall relocation, John Day end bay deflectors, Turbine rehab and the turbine

survival program, juvenile lamprey studies, Bonneville 2 DSM and outfall, Bonneville 1 FGE, Bonneville 2 FGE and Bonneville 1 JBS improvements. Please see Enclosure F for details. The next Portland District FFDRWG meeting is scheduled for July 19, beginning at 9 a.m. at The Corps' Portland District headquarters.

Steve Rainey briefed the SCT on 1998 and 1999 spill and TDG data from the John Day tailwater sensor. There has been some discussion of the variability of the gas cap at John Day this year, Rainey explained; he distributed plots of these data for both 1998 and 1999 (Enclosure G). Rainey spent a few minutes going through this information, noting that, despite the fact that the 1999 spill cap at John Day was reduced to the 110 Kcfs-130 Kcfs range (down from 140 Kcfs-160 Kcfs in 1998), the project has consistently seen TDG levels at or above the 120% waiver standard. We're not sure why this is happening, Rainey said; the Water Quality Team suggested that there may be a problem with the sensor itself, but there has been considerable discussion within NMFS and the Corps about the poor performance of the John Day flow deflectors, and the disparity in the level of gas abatement they appear to be providing. NMFS has had some informal discussions with the Corps' DGAS staff to try to get to the bottom of this problem, said Rainey, and we're trying to look at all aspects of the situation so that we can get a higher volume of spill at John Day. He noted that FFDRWG will also be addressing this issue at its July meeting.

VI. Next SCT Meeting Date.

The next meeting of the System Configuration Team was set for Thursday, July 22 from 9 a.m. to noon at NMFS' Portland offices. The August SCT meeting was set for Monday, August 16. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.