

Final Meeting Notes
CRCIP AMT Quarterly Meeting
January 9, 2008

The CRCIP Adaptive Management Team held its quarterly meeting from 9:30 am – 3:30 pm on January 9, 2008 at the Robert Duncan Plaza, Executive Office Team Room. The following AMT members and technical support personnel participated in person:

Laura Hicks, COE	Agnes Lut, ODEQ	Doris McKillip, COE
Kim Larson, COE	Loree` Randall, WDOE	Paula Ehlers, WDOE
Marci Cook, COE	Dianne Perry, Sponsor Ports	Dale Blanton, DLCD
Robert Anderson, NMFS	Cathy Tortorici, NMFS	Steve Bartell, E2 Inc.
Jon Gornick, COE	Rick Parkin, USEPA	

The following topics were addressed by the AMT participants during the meeting:

October 2007 AMT Meeting Notes

With the correction of a single typographical error, the notes for the October 2007 AMT meeting were approved the final notes will be uploaded to E2 CRCIP web site and placed in the folder for the October 2007 AMT meeting.

Project Update

Laura Hicks presented an excel spreadsheet chart that summarized the current and proposed project construction. The spreadsheet conveniently illustrates Columbia River miles for which CRCIP construction has been completed, is underway, or is intended for future contracts. There is some additional overwidth dredging intended as part of the Project that is not shown on the spreadsheet. The spreadsheet will be uploaded to the E2 CRCIP web site and placed in the MW-2 Dredging Summary folder.

Project construction continued in December 2007 at CRM 90. Project construction will emphasize CRM 48-58 to be completed by the end of FY08. The Great Lakes vessel is under contract to perform this work. In addition, the Megan Reeve – essentially a barge-mounted backhoe, is also under contract for work in CRM 70-104. This work might be completed by the middle of February 2008. It was noted that there were some discrepancies between the areas under construction and the areas approved by ODEQ (i.e., sediment quality) and these discrepancies will be addressed by the Corps and ODEQ.

2007 Annual Report

E2 will provide a draft of the 2007 Annual Report for the CRCIP AEM Project to the AMT for review and comment prior to the April 2008 Quarterly AMT Meeting. The draft will be similar in format as the 2006 Annual Report and will review the key findings of

the 2006 report to help maintain reporting continuity throughout the Project. Any delays in the availability 2007 CORIE physical-chemical data for November and December might influence timely completion of the draft annual report.

E2 Web Site Revisions/Updates

E2 has revised and updated the CRCIP web site. One intention is to make the organization of materials on the web site congruent with the structure of the physical Project AEM Workbook. Another intention was to reduce the number of hard copies of AMT materials (e.g., summaries of MA-1 analyses) provided by the Corps at each meeting. In addition, E2 will include read-ahead instructions in the folder for each upcoming AMT meeting. This document will identify the specific files that need to be addressed by the AMT members prior to the meeting. Information needed to access the E2 password-protected CRCIP web site will be provided to AMT members with each notification that information is available for reading. Note that, for convenience, many internet browsers permit the user to privately save this access information.

AEM Workbook 4th Quarter Review

The AMT Meeting continued with presentations of results and analyses and discussion of the Project monitoring activities.

MA-1 CORIE Analyses

Steve Bartell presented the results of analyzing the CORIE temperature, salinity, and depth data available for 2007 at the MA-1 sampling stations. The presentation underscored recent problems (e.g., biofouling) in maintaining the stations and obtaining the necessary data to support the analyses. Data have been reported through November 2007 for several parameters and stations; some data are available only through October. The red26 station has been lost indefinitely. However, analysis of temperature and salinity data for the tansy station indicated that tansy could be substituted for red26. E2 will also check on the availability of depth data for the tansy station. Therefore, corresponding decision criteria have been estimated for tansy using the pre-Project data (i.e., 1996-2004). Tansy results have been included in the 4th quarter analyses.

Inspection of the temperature, salinity, and depth data obtained since the October meeting indicate no exceedances of the 90th percentile decision criteria with the exception of very low salinity values for the grays and cbnc3 stations. Monthly summaries in relation to the decision criteria correspondingly show few exceedances of the 60th percentile decision criteria. The updated presentation and spreadsheet summaries will be placed in the MA-1 CORIE Analyses folder on the E2 CRCIP web site in the AEM Workbook.

The single outstanding item for MA-1 is an examination of salinity outliers values reported for the cbnc3 station in Jan 2007. E2 will review these data in relation to Columbia River flows and local/regional climatic information characteristic of January 2007.

MA-2 Dredging Summary

The spreadsheet summaries of dredging volumes and disposal locations will be updated when the volume and disposal data are reported upon completion of this years dredging contract.

MA-3 Crossline Surveys

No new data were available.

MA-4 Estuarine Studies

No new data will be obtained until contract end.

MA-5 Sediment Quality

Discussion ensued concerning the communication of sediment quality data by the Corps to ODEQ. The point was also raised concerning the Corps' need for ODEQ approval for federal projects. Prior emails were checked to confirm whether approval had been granted for Project construction in CRM 29-35. Additional questions were raised regarding conversations between Mark Sippola (Corps) and ODEQ about sediment quality data relevant to Reach 7.

ODEQ has provided a summary of Project river miles that have been approved for dredging based on evaluation of sediment quality. This information will be summarized by E2 in a spreadsheet table and uploaded to the E2 CRCIP web site. This file will reside in the folder for MA-5 Sediment Quality.

MA-6 Fish Stranding

No new information was available.

Sediment Management

(See separate discussion of sediment management below).

Sturgeon

The Corps is still waiting for the sturgeon habitat analysis report, which should be available for the April AMT meeting. Questions were raised about any follow-on Project activities in relation to green sturgeon, which have been listed as threatened or endangered in the Lower Columbia River and estuary. Little information is available to support the assessment of environmental impacts on green sturgeon. For new projects under negotiations with NMFS, potential impacts on green sturgeon must be addressed.

Smelt

No new information was presented in relation to possible Project impacts on smelt. However, there was some discussion of the importance of smelt in the diet of sturgeon. It has been known for some time that smelt, when abundant, are readily consumed by sturgeon. In most instances, the scavenging sturgeon are likely feeding on dead smelt that settle to the river bottom.

Crab

Dale Blanton indicated that the ODFW has not yet responded to the crab report. It is likely that ODFW will not have any outstanding issues concerning the crab studies. Dale will double-check with the ODFW and report at the July AMT meeting.

401 Applications

Laura Hicks summarized Corps mitigation planning activities in support of the 401 Applications. It was noted that the 401 Applications required that mitigation be done on lands owned by the Corps. Originally it was proposed that a single 401 would be issued to cover both the CRCIP construction and the general Operations and Maintenance (O&M) work. It now looks like the two projects will need to be evaluated separately so CRCIP doesn't hold up the issuance of the O&M project's water quality certification. The CRCIP 401 needs to be in place by June 23.

Sediment Management

The main item on the January agenda was a continuation of discussions about the relationship between the CRCIP and recognized needs for regional sediment management for the Lower Columbia River and estuary. Concerns were expressed that opportunities for beneficial uses of Project dredged materials are being missed. Emphasis on upland disposal appears to continue to take precedence over possible flow-lane or shallow water disposal. In addition, opportunities for the CRCIP to assist in beach nourishment also seem to be missed. Importantly, an overall desire was expressed to retain as much of the dredged material in the Columbia River system as possible.

Opportunities for CRCIP contribution to regional sediment management appear limited to: (1) the Project can identify beneficial uses in relation to its construction and dispose of dredged materials accordingly, (2) other sediment management projects can make use CRCIP-generated dredged materials and acquire them, and (3) the Project dredged materials that are disposed on upland sites can be made available for relocation for beneficial uses. The latter two options might prove prohibitively expensive.

In response, it was noted that the Corps is bound by its Congressional authorization to use the disposal sites that were identified in the EIS developed for the CRCIP. In this context,

Project funds are tied to specific construction contracts. Firms that bid on construction contracts propose disposal areas from among those that have been approved within the EIS. There are also issues regarding the high costs of repeatedly dredging the same materials disposed in the flow lane or in shallow water. The contracting process for Project construction would likely have to be modified to permit the evaluation of beneficial use sites by the AMT or other relevant stakeholders. Such a modification might force reopening of the NEPA process.

Doris McKillip (COE) presented a comprehensive description of the various sediment management activities that have been undertaken by the Corps in relation to regional sediment management. Different Corps projects (e.g., MCR) and O&M activities have been contributing to several regional sediment needs. For example, O&M activities have been using flow-lane disposal up to Puget Island. The presentation has been uploaded to the E2 CRCIP web site and placed in the Sediment Management folder.

The AMT discussed the benefits of devoting the April 2008 quarterly meeting to assessing the opportunities for Project contributions to regional sediment management. It was suggested that a single river reach be selected for detailed analysis of beneficial uses of dredged materials. Perhaps by working through such an analysis, a process for further integrating the CRCIP with regional sediment management might become apparent. In anticipation of the meeting, it was suggested that participants think about what this kind of integration might entail or what closure (success) might involve beyond the current sediment management language in the Project AEM Plan.

Therefore, the April 2008 AMT meeting will focus on further discussion of a conceptual model for regional sediment management and example application within a selected river reach in relation to the CRCIP. To help facilitate the April meeting, E2 will review language in the current CRCIP AEM Plan concerning sediment management and propose a “strawman” conceptual model for dissemination to the AMT before the April meeting.

Sediment Management Language from the CRCIP AEM Plan

“Concerns have been expressed by the AMT about the potential for the disposal of Project dredged materials to impact valued coastal zone habitats. To address these concerns, the Corps is pursuing a regional sediment management program that encompasses the Channel Improvement Project and other Columbia River navigation projects. Consistent with this sediment management program, higher priority will be given to development of near shore sites where disposal of dredged materials can effectively contribute to the littoral zone sediment budget. Accordingly, when near shore sites are available, they will be given priority over estuarine in-water disposal and deepwater ocean disposal to minimize potential dredged material disposal impacts to coastal zone resources.”

Coordination and Integration

“While recognizing the need and importance of an integrated monitoring approach to effectively managing the LCR in broader terms, the Channel Improvement AEM Plan is more narrowly focused on the potential impacts of channel improvement on the physical nature of the river and estuary. Nevertheless, the AMT could informally contribute to the coordination and integration across the various monitoring programs. Alternatively, the participating organizations could establish a centralized data management system that provides for more formal sharing and archiving of the products of the diverse monitoring activities currently underway. A centralized data management system offers the advantage of accessing various sources of data from a single location, even though the actual data might be distributed among a variety of locations. However, development of such a data management system lies currently beyond the scope of the Channel Improvement AEM Plan.”