Cowlitz Fish Technical Committee **2024-02**
Decision Document

Project Name	SA3: CRR Program, Cispus Floodplain Reconnection (CRR21-01) amendment
Date Proposal Summited	4/2/2024
Date of Requested Decision	5/6/2024
Requested By	Steve Manlow
Date of Decision	5/6/2024

[1] Decision will become final if committee members who were not present at this meeting do not oppose this proposed decision within 7 days

FTC Decision and Justification

The Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board (LCFRB) consulted with the FTC and the decision was approved..

The following FTC members were present at the FTC meeting:

Travis Nelson	TPU
Bryce Glaser	WDFW
Amy Kocourek	NMFS
Jonathan Stumpf	TU
Anne Baxter	ECY
Bill Sharp	Yakama Nation

Proposed Decision for Consideration

The LCFRB recommends that the Fisheries Technical Committee (FTC) approve the Cowlitz Indian Tribe's (CIT's) amendment request for project #CRR21-01, "Cispus Floodplain Reconnection Project". This amendment covers an increase in cost, scope, and time.

Initial Project Cost (IPC): $194,200
Requested Cost Increase (RCI): $168,000
The RCI represents an approximate 87% increase in the IPC, and represents approximately 46% of the proposed total project cost. Approval of this amendment would increase the total project cost to $362,200.

Initial Scope: This is a design-only project. The CIT, in partnership with the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, will develop preliminary design to relocate Forest Road 2801 near Randle, WA, and address flood conveyance under Forest Road 28 to reduce river valley constriction and increase floodplain interaction. Design alternatives will include in-stream structures to enhance floodplain connection after road removal. The resulting project will support natural habitat forming processes and increase floodplain rearing habitat for Lower Columbia coho, steelhead, and Chinook while preserving emergency egress for the local community. Work to date includes completion of a geomorphic assessment and associated modeling of various project alternatives. The proposed preferred alternative includes construction of three bridges along Cispus Road to restore floodplain connectivity.

Requested Scope Increase: The proposed Amendment requests funding to complete a total of three sonic borings (e.g., one boring at the north abutment of each of the three proposed bridges). The analysis of the subsurface information from the three boring sites will provide

structural engineers the geological details necessary to inform the development of the bridge footing/foundation design. This amendment would provide the necessary resources for a geotechnical report that would better inform both preliminary and future final design products.

Current End Date: 12/31/2024
Proposed End Date: 3/15/2025

Background

The Cispus Floodplain Reconnection Project was scored and ranked by the LCFRB TAC and LCFR Board as the third alternate in the 2021 grant round. The LCFRB introduced the project and reviewed the scoring and ranking process at the October 5, 2021 FTC meeting. At its November 2021 meeting, the FTC agreed by consensus to approve the project for funding (DD 2021-09 available at the FTC public website). The overall project meets high geographic and population priorities for the CRR Program.

In 2022, the CIT initiated field work and desk top analyses in coordination with their design engineers. The early preliminary design completed in late 2023 demonstrates that to accomplish the USFS' and the Tribe's goals, construction of three large bridges within the FS 28 roadway footprint would be necessary. The development of this bridge concept alternative has resulted in an in-depth review of the previous geotechnical studies completed to support construction of the Tom Music Bridge. This review confirmed that additional geotechnical borings would be necessary at each proposed bridge site to support project design.

The CIT has completed the original design scope and produced all project deliverables outlined in their original grant agreement, including a preliminary design. In completing the scope, one of the outcomes was that the new design of FR 28 would include a heavy civil engineering approach. This approach relies on assumptions that will affect the levels of design of the proposed preferred alternatives and/or need for revisions of that alternative upon completion of geotechnical work. Recognizing and understanding site-specific limitations and project complexities during preliminary design helps ensure that the project will be completed on time and on budget. Completing the geotechnical borings and associated geotechnical report now is more efficient and will allow the project team to incorporate additional information into a more robust preliminary design at the close of their current agreement (if amended to 3/15/2025). Having the more robust preliminary design now will improve the basis of design and substantially shorten the timeline for securing implementation funding and completing implementation. A less robust design for a project of this scale and complexity may require another future step to verify assumptions, and refinement if needed before it is competitive for funding for implementation. Not completing more robust Geotech work now would delay that work for at least two years, and implementation by at least 3 years (or more depending on funding source). If this amendment is not approved this spring, the critical geotechnical work, and updated design considerations would not be accomplished in 2024, thus delaying this work until at least summer 2026, due to the timing of salmon recovery funding cycles. This would result in missed opportunity for anticipated near-term funding availability for large-scale, high priority projects (which this is) and ultimately reduce the likelihood of project implementation in the near future.

The CIT and the USFS have developed an ambitious timeline to implement this restoration

project (see timeline). To keep on track with the design process and current and upcoming funding opportunities, the CIT worked with the LCFRB to develop and vet this project amendment request to support the additional geotechnical work and increase the robustness of the preliminary design.

Coordination Need

Because this amendment includes budget and scope increases it must go through the same process for FTC funding determination approval as the original grant award. This requires initial coordination and discussion between the CIT, LCFRB, Tacoma Power, and the FTC. This has included the CIT's presentation on this request at the March 2024 FTC meeting.

If this proposal is approved, the LCFRB would amend the existing contract with the CIT. The CIT would initiate a geotechnical investigation with Aspect Consulting, NSD, and Sargent Engineers, to complete the Geotechnical Investigation, including 3 Borings (Sonic) and preparation of a basis of design (BOD) report.

Summary of Potential Changes

This amendment proposal requires an additional $168,000 from the CRR Fund to implement the additional geotechnical reconnaissance and BOD report. It also requests that the project end date be extended from 12/31/2024 to 3/15/2025

Approval and subsequent project completion will develop specific project alternatives and inform feasibility for implementation of the Cispus Floodplain Reconnection Project, which contemplates multiple bridges and instream structures. This would set the stage for timely implementation of the preferred alternative. In fact, the sonic borings and subsequent geotechnical assessment would commence early summer 2024, and the final project report and improved preliminary design will be submitted no later than March 15, 2025. This timeline allows the CIT and the USFS to build a more realistic design and implementation strategy, with an anticipated construction start date of summer 2027. Timely approval of this amendment means the project could be considered during the 2025 funding cycles, likely including a combination of Salmon Recovery Funding Board, CRR Program, and other state and federal funding sources.

Disapproval of this request would result in this geotechnical study not being funded in 2024. While disapproval does not mean that this critical project element would never move forward, it does mean that the additional geotechnical work would be delayed by at least at least two years, whether as a stand-alone proposal or as the first step in an implementation (construction) proposal. The next SRFB or CRR grant round would not open until February 2025, and if approved for funding, those funds could not be accessed until late September 2025. Under this scenario, the geotechnical survey could not be completed until summer 2026. A two-year delay of the geotechnical study would likely result in a significant delay in completing final project design and overall project construction.

The 2023 year-end balance on the CRR Fund was $17,985,023.73. To date, the FTC has approved $3,817,453 in CRR grant awards.