

**COLUMBIA RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT GROUP
MEETING NO. 487**

1. ATTENDANCE

The following met at 9:30 a.m., on Thursday, December 11, 1997, in the Custom House, Portland, OR.

Members or Alternates Present

Ted Day, US Bureau of Reclamation, Chair
Nancy Stephan, Bonneville Power Admin
Walter Boyle, Federal Energy Regulatory Comm
Michelle Schmidt, National Weather Service-RFC
Ed Hubbard, U.S. Geological Survey
Jon Lea, Natural Resources Conservation Svc
Doug McChesney, Washington Dept of Ecology
Roger Ross, Corps of Engineers

Others Present

Ken Dragoon, Pacificorps
Tim Heizenrader, Pacificorps
Dana Reedy, Northwest Power Pool
Cheryl Sokolowski, National Weather Service-RFC
Ray Fukunaga, National Weather Service - RFC
Mark Jones, Federal Energy Regulatory Comm
Jim Ruff, Northwest Power Planning Council
Cathy Hlebechuk, Corps of Engineers (NWD-NP)
Ed Magner, Corps of Engineers (NWP)

Members Not Present or Represented

Jack Gakstatter, U.S. Environ'l Protection Agy
Bruce McCammon, U.S. Forest Service
Marvin Yoshinaka, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bill Brooks, Bureau of Land Management
, National Marine Fisheries Svc
B Ondrechen, Idaho Dpt Water Resources & Cons
Barry Norris, Oregon Water Resources Dept
Mike Turnipseed, Nevada State Engineer
Gordon Fassett, Wyoming State Engineer
Jack Stults, Montana Dept of Natural Res & Cons

2. WEATHER SUMMARY

Warm and dry conditions prevailed as the big "El Niño" manifest itself as reported by Michelle Schmidt (Enc 1). A strong ridge of high pressure and westerly split flow aloft dominated the basin through the 18th. For the following ten days a series of storms passed through the region delivering most of the month's precipitation, causing a few western Washington streams to exceeded their flood stages. Mean monthly temperatures were 2.1°F above normal with mean monthly station temperatures varied from 3.9°F to -0.3°F from normal. Several stations recorded record high daily temperatures during the first part of the month.

Monthly precipitation was 58% of normal for the Columbia River above Grand Coulee, 67% of normal for the Snake Basin above Ice Harbor, 60% for the basin above The Dalles, 52% for the Willamette Basin, and 71% in Northwest Washington. **Seasonal (Oct-Nov)** precipitation was 99%, 89%, 98%, 97%, and 116% of normal, respectfully.

3. STREAMFLOW

Ed Hubbard stated that the residual of October's above normal monthly flows was still being reflected in the November flows at most of the 14 index stations (Enc 2). In addition the November precipitation, although well below normal in most locations, fell mostly as rain and kept the streamflows high and delaying the start of the snow accumulation season. Adjusted streamflow for the month for the Columbia River at The Dalles was 115,409 cfs, 128% of normal, and for the Willamette River at Salem the adjusted flow was 19,887 cfs, 75% of normal. The runoff for the water year for these two rivers was 149% and 106% of normal, respectively.

4. SNOWPACK

Although no formal numbers are available at this time Jon Lea reported that all Oregon and Washington SNOTEL sites now have snow, with the exception of several stations in the coastal range. This is considerable behind schedule. By January 1 the snowpacks are normally at 40% of their peak water content for the year.

5. SURFACE WATER SUPPLY INDEX

Oregon SWSI on 1 November indicated a near normal water supply available in most of the Oregon basins, although the western basins are showing a slight decline, according to Jon Lea (Enc 3).

6. RESERVOIR OPERATION

Irrigation carryover to next year appears to be excellent with greater-than-normal storage according to Ted Day (Enc 4). The high runoff this year accounted for the good irrigation supply and carryover. Operations in the Yakima Basin are adjusted to aid salmon spawning. Even with a normal water supply next year, spilling will be required on the upper Snake projects to lower the reservoirs for flood control.

Active content available on the end of November at **Franklin D Roosevelt Lake (Grand Coulee Dam)** was 4,888,500 af--94% of capacity, 122,100 af more than last year, and 158,200 af less than normal. Active content of **Hungry Horse** was 2,339,300 af--78% of capacity, 57,200 af more than last year, and 16,200 af less than normal.

Cathy Hlebechuk summarized the operation of the Corps' projects (Enc 5). **Libby** draft outflow was shaped to meet daily power demands, except steady on weekends. For three days over the Thanksgiving weekend the flow was reduced to 4 kcfs for an Idaho burdot fish study. Lake Pend Oreille (**Albeni Falls**) continued drafting throughout November. **Dworshak** pool remained near 1500 ft throughout November to permit the completion of the grouting work at the dam. At the four **Lower Snake Projects Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, and Little Goose** were at their normal operating pool levels on December 1 and **Lower Granite** was operated between 734 and 738 ft on November 15. The construction of a flip lip at **Ice Harbor** was completed on November 7.

All **Willamette basin projects** were drafting to their winter pool elevations and are at or near their rule curves. Studies are underway for early refill due to the anticipated El Niño drought conditions.

7. POWER OPERATIONS

On November 30 the Federal System of reservoirs was at 76.8% of full storage capacity and the Coordinated System was 77.6% of full, according to Nancy Stephan. The net monthly energy delivery over the Pacific Northwest/Southwest intertie was from the north to south with a net delivery of 2,428,346 MWh. System firm loads ran near the estimate at 96.7% (after correction for temperature deviation from normal).

Jim Ruff asked the rhetorical question if BPA was considering purchasing power now to put water in storage for the anticipated low spring snowmelt runoff.

Dana Reedy said the power system was on its energy content curve.

8. FISHERIES

Between 4,000 and 5,000 new fall chinook redds have been discovered below Bonneville Dam in the vicinity of Hamilton and Ives Islands. Jim Russ suggested this may call for the initiation of minimum flow limits from Bonneville that will prevent dewatering of the redds during fish incubation.

9. HYDROMET

NRCS has completed the installation of a low elevation (near 2000 ft) SNOTEL site on the White River near Huckleberry Creek for the city of Puyallup with two more sites to be installed, according to Jon Lea.

A new streamgauge was installed on the Payette River at Squaw Creek.

10. OTHER

The western Governor's Conference has been discussing the possibility of a drought in the Northwest next summer and what action they should be taking at this time. Doug McChesney said this is currently occupying a major portion the state hydrologists time.

The WY 97 Blue Book will be published on the Group's web page and will be readable with the free Adobe reader. The web page will be found under the Corps' web site. This page will also contain future agenda and minutes plus other information pertaining to the CRWMG.

The consensus of the members was to stay with a 30 year updated period, unless the WMO (World Meteorological Organization) has changed their recommendation or other pertinent reasons. This decision will be delayed until input from the WMO is received.

11. NEXT MEETINGS

The next meetings are tentatively scheduled for 9:30 am, in the Customs House, Room 118, on January 13, February 12, March 12, April 14, May 12, and the travel meeting on June 11.

Roger L. Ross
Secretary

Enclosures

1. Weather Summary
2. Streamflow Summary
3. SWSI
4. USBR Project Summary
5. Corps Project Summary