

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM MEETING NOTES

January 18, 2001

**CORPS OF ENGINEERS NORTHWESTERN DIVISION OFFICES
– CUSTOM HOUSE
PORTLAND, OREGON**

TMT Internet Homepage: <http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/TMT/index.html>

1. Greetings and Introductions.

Trish McCarty welcomed everyone to today's conference call, convened Thursday January 18, 2001 to discuss a power system emergency declared by BPA earlier in the day. McCarty facilitated the conference call. TMT representatives from the states and USFWS were attending a meeting at NMFS at the time of the conference call and were unable to participate. Paul Wagner agreed to pass information on to them following the call.

2. Discussion of Current Power System Emergency.

Robyn MacKay recapped current system conditions; she said that Bonneville flows have begun to exceed the 130 Kcfs flow cap, because of the fact that Grand Coulee is being drafted at a rate of 1.2 feet per day for power production. That water, together with increased outflow from Brownlee, has been piling up in the lower river, because of the 130 Kcfs flow restriction at Bonneville, and because BPA has been purchasing as much power as possible. The bottom line, said MacKay, is that we have to increase flow at Bonneville until we can get the lower river back in control.

Wagner asked whether there are any options for storing the water, in, say, John Day pool. The Corps has authorized half-foot exceedences at Bonneville, Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose and McNary, replied Rudd Turner. The extra storage is authorized through Friday, except at McNary where it is authorized through Sunday. Why not John Day? Wagner asked. I'm not sure that would help at this point, MacKay replied – we need to start moving the water out of the lower river, so that we can start next week's operation in a position to do some balancing.

How will you be shaping these flows? Wagner asked – as the tide recedes, it would be helpful if flows could be shaped higher to fill in the gap in Bonneville tailwater elevation. We can certainly look at that, MacKay replied.

The other thing we need to talk about is ramping rates if we have an opportunity to reduce flows somewhat at night or this weekend, MacKay said. I'm not aware of any imminent stranding issues within this flow range, Wagner replied – stranding below Bonneville generally occurs only at flows in excess of 220 Kcfs. If there is concern about

ramp rates on the down side, please let us know, said MacKay – we need to know what those are. Wagner replied that a conservative ramping rate would be 10 Kcfs per hour, but added that he doesn't see a need to do that at this time– it would be more a courtesy than a firm requirement.

Any idea of the anticipated range of flows we're likely to see at Bonneville as a result of this operation? Wagner asked. We're probably looking at the current flow of 160 Kcfs as an upper bound, MacKay replied. Are you going to back off Grand Coulee outflow? Pat McGrane asked. As soon as we can, but we have to balance that with the amount of energy we're bringing into the system, said MacKay.

Is the load decreasing somewhat as temperatures begin to increase? Turner asked. That's unclear at this point, MacKay replied.

The other issue is that we are running out of markets, and prices are becoming prohibitive, said MacKay. Therese Lamb added that BPA has purchased well over \$50 million worth of power during the past week; the feeling within the agency is that we need to pause and re-evaluate, she said. We have been developing economic criteria, and will be discussing those at tomorrow's executive conference call, in terms of how they might guide our purchasing over the next few weeks, Lamb said. In terms of how this might impact the operations discussed here at TMT, she said, it may be necessary to exceed the 11.7-foot tailwater criteria at Bonneville starting next week.

Turner said that, in his reading of the email from this morning, the current emergency appears to be a sufficiency issue. That's correct, said MacKay, although we are also concerned that we are having to draft Grand Coulee and fill the lower river projects. Basically, we need to stop and ensure we're being prudent, and are not jeopardizing Bonneville's future financial health through our management of this crisis, said Lamb.

If it is decided, at tomorrow's executive call, to continue the emergency for a longer duration, the TMT will probably need to reconvene to talk about that, said Lamb. Also, if we can come up with acceptable economic criteria, we may want to talk about incorporating those into the TMT's emergency protocols, she said.

How long is this emergency expected to persist? Turner asked. The current RCC teletype allows flows of up to 160 Kcfs at Bonneville until Saturday morning – any sense of how long it may be necessary to continue that operation? We should know more about that tomorrow, after the executive conference call, said MacKay. In response to another question from Turner, MacKay said California is scheduled to return some power to BPA over the weekend, at which point it may be possible to back off the Grand Coulee draft rate somewhat. Basically, said MacKay, I suggest that we wait until the executives talk tomorrow, then set up another TMT conference call if needed. It was so agreed.

With that, the conference call was adjourned. Notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.

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