

**TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM
EMERGENCY MEETING NOTES**

May 17, 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. Greeting and Introductions

The May 17 Technical Management Team emergency conference call, held at the Customs House in Portland, Oregon, was chaired by Rudd Turner of the Corps. The following is a distillation, not a verbatim transcript, of items discussed at the meeting and actions taken. Anyone with questions or comments about these minutes should call Turner at 503/808-3935.

Turner welcomed everyone to the meeting, then led a round of introductions and a review of the agenda.

2. Lower Snake MOP Operations.

Cathy Hlebechuk reported that Lower Snake River flows are, in all likelihood, now peaking for the season. Lower Monumental and Ice Harbor are both currently operating above their desired operating range; Lower Monumental pool elevation is now 538.8 feet, while the project is supposed to be operating in a range of 537-538 feet. Ice Harbor is supposed to be operating in the 438-439-foot range, while current elevation at that project is 439.4 feet. Ice Harbor is running full load, six units, Hlebechuk said; despite that, both projects have been outside of MOP since Tuesday. She added that pool elevations at Little Goose and Lower Granite are within their acceptable ranges.

Why have Lower Monumental and Ice Harbor been operating outside of MOP? Chris Ross asked. It's mainly due to the rise in inflows, Hlebechuk replied – Ice Harbor has been operating at full load since Tuesday, and has not been able to get all of the water out. At Lower Monumental, said Scott Bettin, we've been trying to hold some water back, because we can't get it through Ice Harbor right now. In essence you've been holding water at Lower Monumental to avoid spill at Ice Harbor? Ross asked. Correct, Bettin replied, adding that inflows are now beginning to recede, to the point where it should be possible to start getting the extra water out by tomorrow.

Yesterday's Lower Granite inflow was 88 Kcfs, Hlebechuk said; the RFC forecast is for a day-average of 88 Kcfs at that project today, 82 Kcfs tomorrow and 75 Kcfs on Saturday. Actually, I think Lower Snake flows are falling off more rapidly than that, said Steve Pettit.

We have two options, said Hlebechuk – we can wait a day or a day and a half to get the extra water out of Lower Monumental and Ice Harbor pools, or we can spill the extra water, which could be counted against the 300 MW-months of spill BPA has agreed to provide this

spring. There is a third option, said Bettin – we could also run those projects outside of 1% peak efficiency to increase powerhouse capacity by a few megawatts. Why would this spill be charged against the 300 MW-month spill program? Pettit asked. Because we are still in a power system emergency, replied Therese Lamb; we have agreed to the 300 MW-months because it is based on backup from Grant PUD. Essentially, BPA has agreed to provide 300 MW-months of spill, but no more than 300 MW-months of spill, she explained.

How long will it take to run the water out if we stay within 1% peak efficiency? Jim Nielsen asked. We could be there tomorrow if Snake River flows continue to recede as forecast, Bettin replied. If inflows stay up, it could be as late as Saturday, Lamb added. In response to a question from Ross, Bettin said it should be possible to continue reverse load-factoring to keep flows up at Lower Granite during the 10 p.m.-midnight period at Lower Granite, while the additional water is being evacuated from Lower Monumental pool.

Is the TMT's recommendation, then, to continue running the water out of Lower Monumental pool and get back to MOP as quickly as possible, given Ice Harbor's constraint, while staying within 1% peak efficiency? Bettin asked. Given the other choices, that would be my recommendation, Nielsen replied.

At Nielsen's request, Lamb went through the parameters of the 2001 spill agreement. Where we are with Grant County PUD is that, a week ago, they filed for a fairly broad emergency order with FERC, which would allow for a reduction in spill and transfers of spill, she said. BPA developed a filing, in collaboration with Grant County PUD, which describes an agreement we have reached with Grant PUD with respect to how a trade would work, said Lamb; NMFS is also filing a letter of support, she said.

Embodied in that filing is an arrangement by which we will spill during the month of May, Lamb said; then, based on certain triggers in June – Grand Coulee elevations and volume forecasts – we may ask Grant PUD to reduce their summer spill to eight hours at night at FERC levels, and to send us energy if needed. If Grand Coulee elevations or volume forecasts are above the stipulated levels, said Lamb, we will not trigger the return, and will simply spill. As part of this agreement, Grant PUD has said that, first, they need FERC approval in order to reduce their spill; second, they would like concurrence from various regional parties – specifically, the State of Washington, NMFS, the Yakima Tribe and the Power Planning Council. The State of Washington, NMFS and the Power Planning Council have all given their verbal support to this arrangement, Lamb said; at this time, we do not have support from the Yakima Tribe.

Absent FERC approval, Bonneville is on its own, with respect to providing spring spill in 2001, said Lamb. However, she said, after weighing the power system reliability risks and the dangers of waiting for the FERC process to be completed before providing any spill this spring, Steve Wright has made the decision to go forward with 300 MW-months of spill, with 50 Kcfs of spill at Bonneville for 24 hours and 30% spill at The Dalles for 24 hours.

In response to a question from Turner, Lamb said the triggers are a Grand Coulee elevation of 1260 or below on June 1 and a runoff volume forecast of 57.5 MAF or less on June 1. There are also July 1 triggers, she said – a Grand Coulee elevation of 1280 or less and a runoff

volume forecast of 57.3 MAF or less.

Turner observed that what the trigger means is that, if these levels are not achieved, then BPA has the option of asking for an exchange; depending on economic and system reliability concerns, they may or may not do so, even if the triggers are activated. Correct, said Lamb, adding that, while the FERC approval process normally takes up to four weeks, it is possible for the FERC commissioners to expedite this request if circumstances warrant. In response to a question from David Wills, Lamb said the 300 MW-months of spill at The Dalles and Bonneville should last approximately 21 days.

As most of you are aware, the spill program started last night, said Turner; how do the TMT members feel about the timing of this operation, given the fact that we have only 300 MW-months to work with this year? I think it's appropriate to continue the spill operation as planned, given the amount of fish movement we're seeing currently, Nielsen said. Ross agreed, saying substantial numbers of juvenile spring chinook, coho and steelhead have been counted past John Day and Bonneville dams over the past week. Is the spill occurring during the peak? Turner asked. We don't know that for sure at this point, Ross replied; however, it is safe to say that we have substantial numbers of juvenile migrants passing the lower river projects, currently, and this spill will provide good protection.

The group then devoted a few minutes of discussion to next week's spill survival test at The Dalles; in particular, the question of whether to spill 30% or 40% of river flow during the test. Turner said the researchers would like to begin marking fish on May 21, then start their releases on May 22. The test would last four days, through Friday, May 25, Turner said; the researchers have requested that spill be increased from 30% to 40% during that period, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. The consequence is that BPA has agreed to a total of 300 MW-months of spill, said Turner; increasing the spill volume during the test at The Dalles will mean that we will exhaust that spill volume sooner, perhaps as much as a day sooner.

The researchers can conduct the test at 30% spill, Turner added; however, they feel 40% spill would be a more direct test of the conditions prescribed in the new BiOp. After a few minutes of further discussion, Nielsen said that, given the fact that the higher spill volume during the test would total only about 3 MW-months, he would have no objection to doing the test at 40% spill. Wills said the Fish and Wildlife Service agrees; Ross said NMFS does as well. It sounds, then, as though we have agreement on this point, said Bettin; no disagreement was raised to this characterization.

The discussion returned to Snake River operations; Nielsen said that, if spill at Lower Monumental will be charged against the 300 MW-month "account," he would prefer to see the extra water evacuated from the Lower Monumental and Ice Harbor pools over the next several days, without spill, and without any exceedence of 1% peak efficiency. Ross said NMFS agrees with Washington's position; Wills said the Fish and Wildlife Service does as well. To clarify, said Bettin, Ice Harbor and Lower Monumental pools will be returned to their respective MOP elevations as soon as we can get the water out through Ice Harbor.

The next TMT meeting was set for Wednesday, May 23 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Custom House in Portland, Oregon (this will be a face-to-face meeting). Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.

TMT PARTICIPANT LIST

MAY 17, 2001

Scott Bettin	BPA	503/230-4573
Dick Cassidy	COE	
Jim Nielsen	WDFW	360/902-2812
Rudd Turner	COE	503/808-3935
Paul Wagner	NMFS	503/231-2316
David Wills	USFWS	360/696-7605
Cathy Hlebechuk	COE	503/808-3942
Chris Ross	NMFS	503/230-5416
Steve Pettit	IDFG	