

**COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM**

**TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM  
MEETING NOTES**

**May 31, 2001**

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

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

Emergency Conference Call

**FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

Facilitator: Richard Forester

The following notes are a summary of issues that are intended to point our future actions or issues that may need further discussion at upcoming meetings. These notes are not intended to be the record of the meeting, only a reminder for TMT members.

**SOR 2001-5:**

An emergency TMT conference call was held, at the request Christine Mallette, ODFW, beginning at 1500 hours PDT to discuss SOR # 2001-5, regarding Albeni Falls operation, submitted on May 30th, by ODFW, USFWS, WDFW, and CRITFC. The SOR requested immediate pass inflow at Albeni Falls maintaining the current lake elevation at 2058.2 through June 30, 2001 and to refill the lake to 2062.5 at an even rate beginning July 1 and extending through July 22nd or later depending on in-season observation of bull trout passage conditions at the mouth of Trestle and South Gold creeks. It was estimated that this may result in additional 201.8 ksf for augmentation in Mid Columbia River during June. Mallette and Howard Schaller (USFWS) stated that the biological objective of the request is to improve passage for fish in the Mid-Columbia and Hanford Reach by providing higher flows in that area. Pat McGrane (BOR) stated that, even without Albeni Falls increases, there should be no problem reaching 60+ kcfs at Priest Rapids while maintaining minimum elevations at Grand Coulee which required 10 additional feet to reach the required elevation (1280) and is expected to be at 1275 by June 1. Short-term flows could reach up to 90 kcfs.

**Conclusion:** There was no disagreement with shelving the SOR consideration until June 6 TMT meeting with the understanding that without any additional inflow from Albeni Falls, that the goal for flows at Priests Rapids will be 90 kcfs on week-days and 65+ kcfs on the week-end. The COE will continue its planned operation to refill Albeni Falls by the end of June.

## **Next Meeting:**

The next TMT meeting will be face-to-face, held **June 6 from 9-12.**

## **Meeting Minutes**

### ***1. Greeting and Introductions***

The May 31 Technical Management Team conference call, held at the Customs House in Portland, Oregon, was chaired by Rudd Turner of the Corps and facilitated by J. Richard Forester. 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 conference call, then led a round of introductions.

### ***1. Albeni Falls Operations.***

Forester briefly reminded the group of the general rules of discussion in the TMT Guidelines. Turner said that, following yesterday's TMT meeting, the Corps received SOR 2001-5. This SOR, supported by ODFW, USFWS, WDFW and CRITFC, requested the following specific operation:

- Pass inflow at Albeni Falls beginning immediately.

Since receiving SOR 2001-5, said Turner, we have had some additional discussion between the salmon managers and the action agencies; we think it would now be beneficial to have some larger-context discussion of the objectives of and biological need for this SOR, he said, in particular, the salmon managers' desire to increase flows in the Mid-Columbia reach during June.

Christine Mallette noted that there are two Fish Passage Center memos attached to SOR 2001-5, depicting the status of the 2001 migration; she referred the TMT participants to these documents for the justification behind this request. In general, she said, the intent of SOR 2001-5 is to improve flows in the Mid- and Lower Columbia River during the month of June; the volume of water this SOR would free up for flow augmentation is about 200 Ksf.

Are you intending to focus on the whole month of June, or a specific part? Turner asked. We would like Albeni Falls to pass inflow starting immediately, and continuing through the end of June, Mallette replied. Refill would then recommence on July 1, with the project reaching elevation 2062.5 by July 21 or later. The answer to Rudd's question is that the intent of this SOR is to improve flows in the Mid-Columbia through the month of June, Howard Schaller said,

adding that the salmon managers would like to see Mid-Columbia flows of at least 60 Kcfs during June.

What if we don't use Albeni Falls? Turner asked. Could we use Grand Coulee to provide at least 60 Kcfs, on average, at Priest Rapids during the month of June, and still reach elevation 1280 by June 30? I don't think that will be a problem, Pat McGrane replied. What Reclamation is now proposing is a series of interim minimum elevation targets for Grand Coulee – 1275 on June 11, 1278 on June 18 and 1280 on June 30. Frankly, even as we meet these elevation targets at Grand Coulee, I think June flows at Priest Rapids will be much higher than 60 Kcfs, McGrane said – we're at elevation 1272 right now, and could be at elevation 1275 as early as Monday, June 4, regardless of what the Albeni Falls operation is. After that, said McGrane, we've only got five feet to fill during the month of June to reach elevation 1280, and right now, Grand Coulee is filling one foot per day.

Would it work from a power standpoint if we were to use Grand Coulee to maintain 60 Kcfs at Priest Rapids during June? Turner asked. Yes, Scott Bettin replied – from BPA's perspective, that would not be a problem. In response to a question from Rob Lothrop, Bettin said there is a good chance Grand Coulee will fill above elevation 1280 by June 30; the Executives have said that is a desirable operation, if it can be done. The TMT will need to decide whether they want to use that water for flow augmentation in the spring, or store it for use later in the summer, Turner said.

With respect to the Albeni Falls operation, said Turner, given the fact that there appears to be enough water in Grand Coulee to meet the requested 60 Kcfs flow at Priest Rapids during the month of June, is there still a need to alter the refill schedule at Albeni Falls? Turner asked. Yes, from the salmon managers' perspective, Mallette replied – that is the intent of the SOR. The additional water from Albeni Falls could be used, given TMT flexibility, to extend the time period of Grand Coulee flow augmentation. You're talking about additional flow augmentation in June? Turner asked. I don't see a necessity to pass inflow at Albeni Falls at this time, if we can meet the 60 Kcfs flow objective at Priest Rapids with water from Grand Coulee, said Schaller.

Jim Nielsen noted that the requested flow level is 60 Kcfs or greater at Priest Rapids. We will exceed 60 Kcfs at Priest Rapids if we operate Grand Coulee to achieve elevation 1280 on June 30, rather than storing the additional water for use in summer, Cindy Henriksen replied. In response to a question, Henriksen said the average flow at Priest Rapids would likely be about 70 Kcfs through June 30, if that is the recommended alternative. As we have heard, she said, Reclamation and BPA are willing to implement that operation.

Wagner suggested that it would make sense, from the standpoint of providing higher flows, to stretch out Grand Coulee refill to the next target of 1275 feet until the target date of June 11, rather than this Monday. I can't promise that we can do that, but we will make our best efforts, Bettin replied. Just so the record is clear, that is what we're requesting, said Schaller.

It would be helpful to have a clear picture of how much volume we'll have above elevation 1280 at Grand Coulee in June, said Lothrop – that would be useful in making this

decision. The fish are hung up in the Mid-Columbia, he said; we need to figure out a way to get them out, probably through a spike in flows. I think we agree, Henriksen replied – my understanding is that the objective is to maintain a minimum flow of 60 Kcfs at Priest Rapids; based on current information, it appears that we can maintain a flow of closer to 70 Kcfs on a month-average, if we want Grand Coulee to be at elevation 1280 – no higher – on June 30. We could then choose to reduce Grand Coulee outflow in a couple of weeks, to store more if we see that the Mid-Columbia outmigration is over, she said.

Again, the objective is to get the fish out, Lothrop said – it may take more than 60 Kcfs flow to do that. Washington agrees, said Nielsen; we need a spike. I agree with Paul Wagner, said McGrane – we need to look at the shorter-term Reclamation targets; if we defer refill to 1275 until June 11, chances are we’ll see flows of closer to 90 Kcfs in the short term, while still being able to meet that elevation target. That will give you a decent surge of water through the Mid-Columbia, just by slowing Grand Coulee refill, McGrane said.

Kyle Martin said that, according to his most recent analysis, it should be possible to achieve flows of 100-110 Kcfs over the next two weeks by doing as Reclamation suggests.

Bettin suggested that the TMT agree to this operation through Wednesday, at which point it can then be discussed again. Loads are lighter over the weekend, he said; still, it should be possible to maintain 65-70 Kcfs over the weekend, and on Monday, loads will pick up significantly.

What I’m hearing, then is that flows will be maintained at 65-70 Kcfs over the weekend, flows will be higher starting Monday, closer to 90 Kcfs, and the TMT will revisit this operation at its Wednesday meeting, said Forester. We can do that, Bettin replied – we’ll set the weekend minimum at 65 Kcfs, shoot for 70 Kcfs, target 90 Kcfs during the week, then revisit topic this on Wednesday. No TMT disagreements were raised to Bettin’s suggested operation. And on the other hand, said Turner, we will continue to refill Albeni Falls.

I just want to be on the record as saying we have many concerns about the non-refill of Albeni Falls, said George Eskridge, and if you propose making any changes to the current operation, we would like to be kept informed.

The next face-to-face meeting of the TMT was set for Wednesday, June 6 at 9 a.m. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.

#### TMT PARTICIPANT LIST

May 31, 2001

Jeff Allen	Sen. Mike Crapo’s office
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Scott Bettin	BPA
Scott Boyd	COE
Chip Coursey	
George Eskridge	Idaho State Rep.
J. Richard Forester	Facilitation Team
Mike Gerald	Sand Point (ID) <i>Daily Bee</i>
Cindy Henriksen	COE
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Pat McGrane	USBR
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