

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM MEETING NOTES

September 5, 2001

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

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

FACILITATOR'S NOTES ON FUTURE ACTIONS

Facilitator: Donna Silverberg

The following notes are a summary of issues that are intended to point out 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.

MOP at the Lower Snake Projects:

The current operation is at MOP+1 at all the projects. Operations are moving in to adult protection so FPAC requested that the projects begin filling as soon as possible at an hourly rate of 2 kcfs. The action agencies said there is very little water to do this, so they suggested to remove the 1% efficiency constraint and attempt to refill Ice Harbor first.

ACTION: Operations will occur outside of 1% efficiency at Lower Granite, Little Goose and Lower Monumental for 0600-1800 hours if necessary to maintain a minimum discharge of 11.5 kcfs. The MOP restriction will be removed at Little Goose, LoMo and Ice Harbor. An attempt will be made to refill Ice Harbor first at no more than 2 kcfs per hour. When Ice Harbor reaches full, action agencies will consider the Salmon Managers minimum fluctuations request. Operations will then attempt to fill LoMo.

Algae Bloom in the Lower Snake River:

The Walla Walla District is in the process of collecting and sharing information with the COE. Steve Pettit asked whether the algae has affected fish screens and as of yet, no problem like this has occurred. Cindy Henriksen said it is mostly a problem of aesthetics, as it has taken over many recreational areas. More information will be emailed out to TMT members upon availability.

Other:

Power outage at Lower Granite: Cathy reported that a 1.5-hour outage occurred last Thursday during the completion of Dopple testing that was being done at Lower Granite.

Summer spill: Spill ended August 31 with a total of 433.5 mw/mos for the summer program. Fish attraction flows remain at Bonneville bays one and eighteen. Flip lip work began yesterday.

ACTION: The COE will convert summer spill to water volumes.

Emergency protocols:

ACTION: Oregon, Washington, COE and NMFS attorneys will review offset vs. mitigation language and have recommendations at the next face-to-face meeting.

Chum scenarios: Cathy asked if the Salmon Managers would like the COE to run some scenarios. This item will be discussed in more depth at the face-to-face meeting.

ACTION: Any requests for chum modeling should be referred to Cathy Hlebechuk at the COE.

Dworshak: Temperatures have been and remain at the undershot of 43-45 degrees, although some at the hatchery have expressed concerns. Monitoring will continue.

Power emergency: The power emergency has been extended until the end of the month. Shane Scott (Washington) questioned the rationale behind this, expressing that it interferes with the Biological Opinion. Scott Bettin said that this matter should be raised at IT.

ACTION: Scott and Shane will speak to their respective IT representatives regarding this matter so that it may be raised at tomorrow's IT meeting.

Grand Coulee: NMFS asked whether there will be a problem maintaining and filling Grand Coulee with the 70 kcfs minimum at Bonneville? BPA responded that they foresee no problems with this operation.

Finalize Agenda for September 19 Face-to-Face Meeting:

Agenda items:

- Emergency Protocols – Offset vs. Mitigation language
- Chum
- Update on Snake MOP Operations
- Review Tribal Fishery
- River Operations Update
- Year-end Review Check-in

Note: At the IT meeting today a request was made to step up the timing on the year end review. IT will forward a list of priority items to be reviewed at our Sept. 19 meeting. For the high priority items, IT would like TMT to present information at the Oct. 4 IT meeting. The remainder of items will be reviewed at the Oct. 31 meeting as scheduled.
Thanks, Donna.

Meeting Minutes

1. Greeting and Introductions

The September 5 Technical Management Team conference call, held at the Customs House in Portland, Oregon, was chaired by Cindy Henriksen of the Corps and facilitated by Donna Silverberg. 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 Henriksen at 503/808-3945.

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

2. MOP Operation in the Lower Snake River.

Cathy Hlebechuk said all four Lower Snake projects are still at MOP+1. There is so little flow in the river right now that the Corps has instructed project personnel at Lower Granite, Little Goose and Lower Monumental to operate outside of 1% peak efficiency between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. in order to maintain a little higher flow in the river, she said. Paul Wagner noted that the day-average flow in the Lower Snake was 12.6 Kcfs yesterday; if we operate within 1% peak efficiency, he said, flows would be less than 12 Kcfs. It was noted that the projects are running outside of 1% peak efficiency during daytime hours because smolt passage is lower at that time.

Christine Mallette said the salmon managers discussed the MOP refill operation at yesterday's FPAC meeting, and did develop a recommendation. Paul Wagner said juveniles are the major beneficiary of MOP operations; given the downward trend of juvenile numbers and the increasing adult passage, the salmon managers recommend that the Corps begin filling the Lower Snake pools, beginning with Ice Harbor, to improve adult passage conditions. Obviously we don't want to reduce flows any more than we have to, given the current flow situation, Wagner said; we request that refill take place at a rate no greater than 2 Kcfs. We recognize, however, that refill is going to be a very slow process this year, he said. The salmon managers would also like to avoid zero flow during nighttime hours, Mallette added.

Is this requested operation doable at projects that need station service? Steve Pettit asked. Actually, said Hlebechuk, we can't go below 11.5 Kcfs minimum flow in the Lower Snake until November. Once MOP ends, there is no operating range restriction, added Scott Bettin. We would prefer to see pool fluctuations minimized, Mallette said. Our thinking is that we don't want to exceed a 2 Kcfs fill rate, said Chris Ross – we don't want to fill faster than 2 Kcfs. The other issue is the operating range; in the past, we have recommended that the pools stay within a 1-foot operating range of whatever elevation they're at to keep the fishways within criteria, Ross said. However, I believe the last two years we have not implemented an operating range restriction, Bettin said.

Bettin noted that the decision is essentially moot, at this point; there simply isn't enough water in the Lower Snake to refill the pools and maintain project minimum flows. We will, however, try to fill as much as possible, as flows allow, starting at Ice Harbor,

Hlebechuk said; we need to rescind the MOP operation and instruct the projects to begin refill, she said.

What about Hells Canyon discharge? Hlebechuk asked. We plan to release about 9.8 Kcfs for the foreseeable future, John Boling replied. Lower Granite inflows have been averaging between 12.3 Kcfs and 15 Kcfs over the past six days, Hlebechuk said – do the salmon managers want to go to the minimum flow of 11.5 Kcfs? I don't think refill from MOP is that important, said Wagner – it probably makes more sense to make this a soft constraint, to fill as opportunity arises in the form of rain events. I agree, said Mallette – I would not want to go to minimum flow in order to refill. I feel the same way, said Pettit; however, how long do you estimate it would take to refill Ice Harbor if we go to minimum flow at that project? Ice Harbor's minimum is 7.5 Kcfs, Bettin said. It might be possible to go to 11.5 Kcfs at that project and still stay within 1%, Wagner said. Do we want to rescind the MOP operation at that project, and instruct them to refill while staying within 1% peak efficiency? Hlebechuk asked – just tell them, “attempt to refill?” Yes, Ross replied.

In summary, Hlebechuk said the instruction will be to operate outside 1% peak efficiency to maintain the minimum flow of 11.5 Kcfs during daytime hours at Lower Granite, Lower Monumental and Little Goose, then attempt to refill Ice Harbor pool first while staying within 1% at that project. We'll revisit this operation at our next meeting, Bettin said.

If we do have a rain event and Lower Snake flows increase, can the Corps incorporate some of the salmon managers' recommendations – the 2 Kcfs refill rate and the 1-foot operating range? Mallette asked. Once you get into the top foot, you want to stay there? Bettin asked. Yes, Mallette replied. We should be able to do that over the next two weeks, Bettin said – we will fluctuate up, but not down. It's highly unlikely that we'll be able to fill much over the next two weeks, however, he said, unless we get a really good thunderstorm.

So once we reach full at Ice Harbor, we will need to issue another teletype instructing the project to maintain the 1-foot operating range at that project? Henriksen asked. Correct, Bettin replied.

So what I think I heard is that the teletype should say operate outside 1% peak efficiency if needed to maintain the 11.5 Kcfs minimum during daytime hours; rescind the MOP operation, attempt to refill Ice Harbor at a rate of no more than 2 Kcfs, and once Ice Harbor reaches full, send out a new teletype instructing Ice Harbor to maintain a 1-foot operating range, Hlebechuk said. Once Ice Harbor is full, do we want to start refilling Lower Monumental next? Correct, Ross replied – fill them in sequence.

3. Algae Bloom in the Lower Snake River.

Walla Walla District is gathering information on the algae blooming in the boat basins in the Lower Snake River, similar to what happened below Libby Dam, Hlebechuk

said. We expect that algae to die off, she said; essentially, I just wanted to give you a heads-up, and as more information becomes available, I will send out an email to the TMT membership. It's mostly an aesthetic problem with the swimming and boating areas, Henriksen said; we have requested more information from Walla Walla District, but have not yet received it. Again, once we get that additional information, we'll pass it along, Hlebechuk said. In response to a question from Pettit, Henriksen said her understanding is that the algae is not causing problems with the Lower Snake fish facilities.

4. Other.

Hlebechuk reported that, last Thursday, August 30, there was a 1.5-hour outage at Lower Granite. They were completing their Doble testing, a breaker was open, and station service was lost. Lower Granite went to about 300 cfs outflow for an hour and a half, and service to the fish facilities was lost for that period. After about two hours, the whole plant was back in service. Do you know why it happened? Pettit asked. The station service was configured out of normal sequence, Hlebechuk replied, due to the Doble testing; the operator, who was new, opened a breaker, and service was lost. In other words, she said, it was an accident. There were no mortality problems that we've been notified of.

The summer spill program ended August 31, Hlebechuk said; the total energy equivalent was 433.5 MW-months. End-bay attraction spill at Bonneville is continuing around the clock, at a rate of 2.5 Kcfs total for both bays, she added. Larry Beck added that the end-bay spill will continue through December 1; there is no safety issue for the contractor.

Hlebechuk noted that the most recent version of the TMT emergency protocols is now available on the TMT homepage; she asked that any attorneys who need to look at that language do so as soon as possible, so the protocols can be finalized. Mallette said Oregon will provide its feedback at the next face-to-face TMT meeting on September 19.

With respect to chum, said Hlebechuk, do the salmon managers want the Corps to run any chum scenarios? Also, she said, when do you anticipate those chum flows will need to start, and at what volume? That's another item on the September 19 TMT agenda, Silverberg said; meanwhile, if the salmon managers want to run any scenarios to help with that decision, they should contact you.

Finally, said Hlebechuk, Dworshak is releasing minimum flow while trying to avoid any exceedance of the 110% TDG standard; the water temperature is 43-45 degrees F. The project is continuing to operate in undershot mode. Temperatures are expected to continue in that range for at least the next two weeks, until the thermocline moves deeper, Dick Cassidy said.

Is it still the goal to fill Grand Coulee to elevation 1283 by September 30? Shane Scott asked. That's still the goal, Bettin replied. Also, said Scott, why is the power

emergency still in effect? Because we're still storing for winter power system reliability, Bettin replied – the emergency is expected to be lifted by the end of the month. In response to another question from Scott, Bettin said the 28,000 MW-months storage target has been met; that volume is currently in federal storage. Scott said WDFW executives are questioning the need to continue the power system emergency; Bettin suggested that WDFW's representative bring that issue up at tomorrow's IT meeting.

5. Next TMT Meeting Date.

The next meeting of the Technical Management Team was set for Wednesday, September 19. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA writer-editor pool.

Attendance List

Name	Affiliation
Larry Beck	COE
Scott Bettin	BPA
John Boling	IPC
Scott Boyd	COE
Ruth Burris	PGE
Margaret Filardo	FPC
Russ George	Water Management Consultants Inc.
Cindy Henriksen	COE
Cathy Hlebechuk	COE
Ningjen Liu	IPC
Christine Mallette	ODFW
Mike O'Bryant	Columbia Basin Bulletin
Steve Pettit	IDFG
Chris Ross	NMFS
Shane Scott	WDFW
Donna Silverberg	Facilitation Team
Paul Wagner	NMFS
Nancy Yun	COE

