

**TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM
MEETING NOTES
September 19, 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.

TMT Emergency Protocol: Offset vs. Mitigation:

Regarding the language used in the Emergency Protocol, Oregon prefers “mitigate” over “offset”. They requested a written explanation from the COE regarding the need to change the language. Paul reported that he found no offset language in the Biological Opinion; NMFS suggested the use of “offset for mitigation”. Because of the legal nature of this issue, BPA, COE, Idaho, Oregon and Washington attorneys will meet to discuss and finalize this matter.

ACTION: TMT representatives will contact Cindy Henriksen with a name and number of each respective attorney so she can coordinate a meeting. An update on the group’s progress will be on the agenda of the next meeting.

ACTION: Paul Wagner will circulate his proposed changes to Emergency Protocols for review.

Status of Lower Snake Operations:

Cindy reported that the COE is unable to maintain normal flow and operate within a 1.5 foot range at Lower Granite and Little Goose. One big problem with this is the danger created for fish passage. The Action Agencies’ suggested solution was to stop flow for a few hours at night in order to fill Lower Granite for storage. Idaho Fish and Game said they are opposed to a continuous regime of zero nighttime flow. However, they would support a one-time only no-flow operation. Steve Pettit reminded the group that adult issues are now a priority so thermal impacts and adult flows are a concern. Idaho Power was asked if they could increase weekend flows. John Bowling replied that they are operating for navigation flows and preparing for fall chinook operations so may not be able to provide any more flow.

The Action Agencies developed a proposal of no spill for six hours per night for up to seven days to fill Lower Granite. The Salmon Managers requested Idaho Power to maintain 9 kcfs out of Hell’s Canyon through the weekend instead of reducing to 7 kcfs,

until Lower Granite is full. Idaho Power asked for a written request and promised a response as soon as possible.

ACTION: Paul Wagner and Cindy Henriksen will write the requested operation on behalf of TMT and email it to Idaho Power and TMT members. An emergency conference call will be organized if an alternative operation is necessary. Salmon Managers will consider other options to meet the goal of minimizing impacts to fish.

Status of Autumn Treaty Fishing:

Kyle Martin provided a handout of the fishing status, commenting that no problems with nets had occurred. This, he said, has been an excellent fishing season due to minimal fluctuations. Cindy said that the main objective each year is to minimize fluctuations regardless of water levels. The operation may continue through one more weekend – Kyle will notify the COE as soon as the Tribal Compact decides.

Year End Review:

IT requested initial information from TMT for the IT's October 4th meeting. Jim Ruff, IT chair, developed a list of questions for TMT to discuss and bring answers to the IT meeting. Christine Mallette requested that the list of questions be sent to IT representatives as well. In the meantime, TMT will move forward and expect to finalize the answers at the next face-to-face meeting, October 3rd.

ACTION: Donna Silverberg will contact Jim Ruff to send the questions to IT representatives and ask for immediate responses regarding approval or changes to the list. Changes will be forwarded to Cindy Henriksen, who will then forward them to TMT members.

ACTION: Work product for IT questions should be circulated prior to the next TMT meeting.

Review Current System Conditions:

The target at Grand Coulee is still 1283' for the end of September; it is currently at 1282'. Libby is operating at 6 kcfs outflow. Regarding winter reliability, the target of 28.5k mw/mos by October 1st remains and looks as though it will be met.

BPA and the COE are running studies regarding chum operations given the current power and water situation. Paul Wagner gave a heads-up that NMFS and Washington have a chum operation contingency plan that will be introduced for discussion at the next meeting.

ACTION: Paul and Shane Scott will set up a TMT field trip to Duncan Creek to coincide with discussion of the contingency plan.

Regarding fish status, adults are at record breaking numbers. Some think the migration peaked two weeks ago. Migrating juveniles are still in the river, but numbers are down.

Develop Recommended Operations:

An emergency TMT conference call was scheduled for 3:30 September 20th to discuss Lower Granite operations.

Next Face-to-Face Meeting, October 3rd, 9-12:

Agenda items:

- IT preparation discussion
- Chum studies
- Attorneys meeting update
- Lower Granite spill weir test – Tim Wick (if possible)

1. Greeting and Introductions

The September 19 Technical Management Team meeting, 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. TMT Emergency Protocols.

Christine Mallette said she had forwarded the most recent draft of the TMT's emergency protocols to the Oregon Governor's office and to ODFW legal staff; the upshot is that Oregon would prefer the word "mitigation" rather than "offset." If the Corps is going to insist on that wording, she said, ODFW would like a written explanation of why. Henriksen suggested that a meeting between COE and Oregon attorneys would probably be the most efficient way to resolve this issue.

Paul Wagner said the explanation he has heard is that "offset" is needed to be consistent with the language in the BiOp; however, after reviewing the Biological Opinion, he noted that the BiOp doesn't say anything about "offset," beyond the fact that offset actions may be proposed. However, said Wagner, the purpose of those offset actions is to mitigate for the effects of emergency operations.

Wagner noted that NMFS has several other comments on the emergency protocols; it was agreed that he will distribute them for TMT review, pending the resolution of the "offset" vs. "mitigate" question. Henriksen said she will organize the attorney's meeting to address this question.

3. Status of Lower Snake Operations.

Henriksen said Ice Harbor and Lower Monumental have now filled to the top foot of their operating range. The Corps is having problems at Lower Granite and Little Goose, however; there simply isn't enough water in the Snake to maintain minimum pool, provide attraction flows and operate within 1% peak efficiency. Usually, she said, it's the weekend when we have problems; we need a longer-term solution which will allow us to refill the Little Goose pool while staying within the various criteria. One possibility is zero nighttime flow at Lower Granite, Little Goose, and Lower Monumental for at least a few hours, she said.

Steve Pettit noted that there is a removable spillway weir test coming up at Lower Granite, which will involve filling the pool daily so that spill can occur at night. Will that be possible? Pettit asked. We'll have to see, Henriksen replied – it will depend on the weather. Right now, the reality is that we need to get through the next few weeks operating Little Goose and Lower Granite within the various criteria we want to maintain.

We need to get some water stored at Lower Granite, Henriksen said; however, Little Goose has a higher minimum project flow than Lower Granite, and is currently lagging below MOP. We need to store some water at Lower Granite so that, when Hells Canyon outflow is reduced over the weekend, we have enough water to maintain operations at Little Goose. However, if we're going to store some water into Lower Granite pool, she said, we're going to need to make some operational changes.

The group weighed various options for solving this dilemma, the main one being a limited zero nighttime flow regime, for a few hours each night for a limited period, to allow some refill of Lower Granite pool. Steve Pettit made the point that the system is now transitioning from a juvenile-driven to an adult-driven mode; he suggested that another option would be to operate Little Goose below its minimum outflow for a few hours each day. Vern Parry replied that Little Goose is already operating at the minimum possible flow needed to avoid cavitation of the generating units. You could also go to zero generation at Little Goose for a few hours, and spill a lesser amount, Pettit suggested. The Corps would not recommend that solution, Henriksen replied; it would only shift the problem to Lower Monumental.

Ultimately, Pettit observed that it would be helpful to have a strawman proposal to discuss. It was agreed that the action agencies will attempt to develop such a proposal before the end of today's meeting.

Is there anything Idaho Power can do to avoid the sharp drop in weekend outflow from Hells Canyon? Mallette asked. Right now we're operating on the weekends according to minimum navigation flows, John Bowling replied; we're gearing up for the fall chinook program. We plan to continue to operate Hells Canyon to the navigation minimum, unless loads pick up, he said. Once we see the first fall chinook redd, we'll go to the fall chinook operation; the first redd detection flyover is scheduled for October 9. The spawning flow will be about 9 Kcfs, once it begins, Bowling said.

At this point, the operating agencies requested a caucus break. When the meeting resumed, Henriksen said flows are expected to be in the 12 Kcfs range at Lower Granite over the next few weeks, barring rain events; based on this, what the action agencies are proposing is to go to zero nighttime flow at Lower Granite, Little Goose and Lower Monumental in order to store water at Lower Granite – six hours per night, for as long as seven days. Lower Granite will then use its full operating range to augment flows downstream over the next week or so, said Robyn MacKay. In response to a question from Pettit, Henriksen said the elevation goal at Lower Granite would be 738 feet. The duration of the zero nighttime flow operation will depend on inflow, MacKay added; if flows are higher than 12 Kcfs, it will take less time to fill the pool.

In response to another question from Pettit, Henriksen said the Corps has no authority to order Idaho Power to maintain 9 Kcfs Hells Canyon outflow during weekend hours. Mallette said that, given the fact that there are still numerous juvenile and adult migrants in the system, and the fact that extended periods of zero nighttime flow will increase water temperature, the salmon managers would request that IPC provide more than the navigation minimum flow from Hells Canyon during the next two to three weekends; 9 Kcfs would be very helpful. In response to a question from Bowling, Mallette said the salmon managers would request that this operation continue until the fall rains begin – perhaps as long as three weeks from now, based on the most recent forecast information.

Basically, we need to ensure that we have at least 11.5 Kcfs outflow at Lower Granite, Henriksen said. Pettit noted that as soon as the irrigation season ends, probably around the end of September, there should be about a 500 cfs improvement in Salmon River flows.

Bowling said he will need a written or email summary of what is being requested of Idaho Power, so that he can provide that information to others in his office. Wagner and Henriksen said they will draft this memo and send it to Bowling. We need a quick turnaround, said Henriksen, because if IPC says no to this request, we're back to square one.

Henriksen suggested that the TMT develop an alternate operation, in the event that IPC refuses to implement the requested operation. The group discussed the following possibility: if IPC is unwilling to maintain 9 Kcfs from Hells Canyon over the next several weekends, the action agencies' proposed operation – fill Lower Granite pool with six hours of zero nighttime flow, probably from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m., over (at most) the next seven days – be implemented. It was agreed that, if IPC is unwilling to exceed minimum navigation flow from Hells Canyon over the weekend, a TMT conference call will be convened tomorrow, September 20.

4. Status of Autumn Treaty Fishery.

Kyle Martin reported that the third week of the Treaty fishery is now complete; there may be one more fishery before the season is over. He distributed a graph showing

the frequency of compliance with the tribes' requested pool elevations and with the 1.5-foot operating range the Corps has agreed to maintain. He noted that compliance at The Dalles has been much better this year, in the 90% range; particularly during weeks 2 and 3, fluctuations were very minimal in the Bonneville pool as well. We haven't heard of any nets being lost this year, which is very good news, Martin said; that is primarily because river flows are so extremely low. The Treaty fishery will likely be completed by Saturday of this week, Martin added.

5. Year-End Review Agenda.

Silverberg noted that, at the last IT meeting, the IT requested that a portion of the TMT's year-end review be completed in time for the TMT to provide a report at the October IT meeting. She noted that the Federal Caucus' hydro work group has developed a list of questions they would like the TMT to answer in time for a presentation at the IT's October 4 meeting.

Malette said she is concerned that this list of questions has not yet been reviewed and approved by the IT. The main thing IT is interested in is the effects of the 2001 operation and flow year on fish, Silverberg said. It was agreed that the TMT will start to develop that information, even as they await a final list of the questions the IT would like answered at its October 4 meeting. It was agreed that the Corps, BPA, NMFS and the Fish Passage Center will take the lead in assembling the requested flow, temperature, fish passage, survival and operational data. Martin said he will also develop a report on 2001 weather conditions. Silverberg said she will check with NMFS' Jim Ruff about IT buy-in on the hydro work group's list of questions later today, and will distribute his response via email.

6. Current System Conditions.

Tony Norris reported that current Grand Coulee elevation is 1282.1 feet; the project is releasing 80 Kcfs, and filled about a quarter-foot over the past week. The goal is still to achieve elevation 1283 at Grand Coulee by September 30. MacKay said Albeni Falls is starting to draft; Canadian storage water is also being delivered from Arrow. In response to a question from Wagner, Henriksen said Libby continues to release 6 Kcfs; the project is on track to draft to elevation 2411 by December 31.

In response to a question from Malette, MacKay said the federal system reliability storage target is still 28,500 MW-months by October 1. We actually stored above that target, and given the expected low flows in the system, are now starting back down, she said. However, the federal operators are confident that we will meet the 28,500 MW-months target on October 1, said MacKay. In response to a question from Wagner, MacKay said both BPA and the Corps are running studies to show the probability of meeting both the chum flow and winter refill targets this year.

The group discussed a potential TMT field trip to the Duncan Creek chum spawning area; Wagner and Shane Scott said they will take the lead in coordinating this

field trip. The group also discussed chum spawning salvage contingency plans if low flows in the Columbia continue; Wagner said this is a heads-up that the TMT may well be asked to make a decision about when to implement the chum salvage contingency plan.

Moving on to the status of 2001 fish passage, Wagner focused primarily on adult returns, noting first that the 2001 fall chinook run is now the largest on record, although the peak of the run has now passed. He also touched on the most recent wild and hatchery steelhead numbers. With respect to juveniles, Wagner said chinook numbers at Lower Granite, Little Goose, Lower Monumental and Ice Harbor are now averaging a few hundred per day; the emphasis has definitely shifted to adults at this point in the season, he said.

7. New System Operational Requests.

No new SORs were submitted prior to today's meeting.

8. Recommended Operations.

Henriksen noted that the key here is the Lower Granite operation; that will be decided later today, once Idaho Power Makes a decision about the request to maintain 9 Kcfs weekend outflow from Hells Canyon.

9. Next TMT Meeting Date.

The next meeting of the Technical Management team (a conference call) was set for Wednesday, September 26. The next face-to-face meeting of the TMT was set for October 3. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA writer-editor pool.

TMT MEETING PARTICIPANTS September 19, 2001

Name	Affiliation
John Bowling	IPC
Scott Boyd	COE
Mike Butchko	PowerX
Margaret Filardo	FPC
Russ George	Water Management Consultants Inc.
Robin Harkless	Facilitation Team
Tim Heizenrater	Enron
Cindy Henriksen	COE

Robyn MacKay	BPA
Christine Mallette	ODFW
Kyle Martin	CRITFC
Doug Marx	Attorney, Lake Pend Oreille Idaho Club
Pat McGrane	Reclamation
Tony Norris	Reclamation
Mike O'Bryant	Columbia Basin Bulletin
Steve Pettit	IDFG
Chris Ross	NMFS
Bill Rudolph	NW Fish Letter
Shane Scott	WDFW
Donna Silverberg	Facilitation Team
Maria Van Houten	Enron
Paul Wagner	NMFS
Victoria Watkins	Pyra Energy Group
Darren Wilkens	Puget Sound Energy