

**TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM
MEETING NOTES
March 27, 2002
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 March 27 Technical Management Team meeting was chaired by Rudd Turner 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 Turner at 503/808-3935.

2. Hanford Reach Update.

Chris Carlson of Grant County PUD reported that field personnel had begun doing index studies in early March; we reached the criteria of 50 fish or more on March 19, with 99 fish, he said. The 2002 Hanford Reach fish protection operation started at one minute after midnight on March 21, with the imposition of a 30 Kcfs flow band. On March 23, Carlson said, field personnel sampled for mortality at 10 sites, finding three chinook mortalities. What have your flow fluctuations been? Scott Bettin asked. On March 21, they were a high of 89.5 Kcfs, a low of 79 Kcfs – a band of 10.5 Kcfs, Carlson replied. On March 22, the low was 72.4 Kcfs, and the high was 100.1 Kcfs, a band of 27.7 Kcfs. On Saturday, March 23, the low was 50.8 Kcfs, and the high was 72.3 Kcfs on Saturday. On Sunday, the low was 50.8 Kcfs, while the high was 54 Kcfs. It sounds, then, as though you stayed within the agreement, except for portions of Saturday, Bettin said. That was because we received an estimate of Chief Joseph discharge that was higher than what we actually received, Carlson replied. In response to a question from Rudd Turner, Carlson said the plan is to continue the biological monitoring on a weekly basis, on Wednesdays, for the time being.

3. Libby Sturgeon Pulse Operation.

We're approaching the time period during which the sturgeon pulse normally occurs, said Don Anglin, but beyond that, I'm not sure what the current status of this operation is. Henriksen said this item is on the agenda because the Corps was expecting a request from the Fish and Wildlife Service for this year's sturgeon pulse operation. Since that has not been received, she said, I would suggest we defer this discussion until Dave Wills or Bob Hallock can attend the meeting. It was so agreed.

On a related subject, said Turner, there are two handouts relating to Libby, incorporating the likely sturgeon pulse, bull trout and spill test operations with various inflow, meteorological and elevation predictions, to give us an indication of what daily reservoir elevations are likely to be through the season, with bands of exceedance probability, Turner explained. The bottom line,

as to what this shows, is that it is unlikely Libby will refill by the end of June, but there is a good probability that Libby will refill by the end of July, he said. There is also information about the available flow augmentation volume from Libby under these various scenarios, Turner added. The Libby handouts are available via the TMT's Internet homepage; please refer to these documents for further details.

Jim Litchfield noted that the takeaway message, to him, is that there is a 40% chance that Libby will not refill by the end of June 2002. That's a pretty high probability, he said; with that in mind, I would suggest that we keep a very close eye on the Libby operation, and do everything we can to get Libby as full as possible in 2002.

4. 2002 Water Management Plan – Continued Discussion.

Turner noted that the current draft of the 2002 Water Management Plan is undergoing in-house review at the action agencies; it is hoped that the revised draft, incorporating the action agencies' responses to comments, will be available for review at next week's TMT meeting.

What about the performance standards issue? Silverberg asked. Wagner reminded the group that, due to spillway repairs at Lower Monumental, no spill is possible at that project, which is expected to reduce in-river survival by 1%. The assignment to TMT was to see whether we can come up with any modifications to operations that will offset that expected decrease in survival, he said. I shopped that around among the other FPAC participants, Wagner said, and what they came up with was sort of a package deal. Option 1 would be to spill 24 hours up to the gas cap at Little Goose until May 1, which would put a greater proportion of the run into the river below Little Goose. At Lower Monumental, he said, we're recommending that the action agencies go to full-flow bypass until May 1, due to eddy-induced predation problems at the outfall location. The downside of full-flow bypass is that we would collect no data on the fish passing the project, Wagner said. The rest of the operation would be 24-hour spill at McNary for the entire season. At John Day, we would propose 30% daytime, 60% nighttime spill, through the spill season, he added.

So that's Option 1, Wagner continued. Option 2 is to spill at Little Goose and go to full-flow bypass at Lower Monumental through the entire spring season, rather than just until May 1. The only real difference between the two is the Little Goose and Lower Monumental operations, he explained; the Columbia operation would be the same.

Obviously these options have potential impacts on planned studies, Wagner said; we're in the process of evaluating those effects overall, and by project, as well as the implications for the studies planned in 2002.

Option 3, said Wagner, is no spill at Little Goose, with maximum transport throughout the season, beginning March 29. Option 4 is no spill at Lower Granite or Little Goose, with maximum transportation throughout the system. This would include eliminating the test of the new removable spillway weir (RSW) at Lower Granite.

So you're still evaluating these operations, Silverberg said; do you want some discussion

of those options now, or do you want to wait until that analysis is complete? I would prefer to wait, said Wagner, although I would welcome any comments or suggestions the TMT may have. The group asked a variety of clarifying questions, which Wagner answered.

Ultimately, it was agreed that Wagner will distribute NMFS' analysis of these options to the TMT membership prior to next week's meeting, at which point a more thorough discussion will occur. In the interim, said Wagner, again, if anyone has comments, suggestions or concerns, please contact me directly. Turner noted that, in addition to the potential power impacts of some of these options, the Corps is concerned about the potential impacts to studies, because many of those studies are required under the BiOp.

5. Start of Fish Operations in the Lower Snake River.

Turner noted that the planning dates on which salmon operations are to commence are April 3 in the Lower Snake and April 10 in the Lower Columbia. What TMT did last year was to develop two-week operations, Turner said; if we can reach agreement today on an operation that would take us through April 10, that would be helpful. Offhand, he said, I would think that the operation would be to attempt to meet the Biological Opinion spill, flow, and reservoir refill objectives as soon as TMT agrees that those operations should begin. We would like to get a sense from the salmon managers about the timing of this year's operation, Turner said, and from that determine when operations for fish should begin.

So far, Wagner replied, hatchery releases have commenced on schedule; juveniles have begun showing up at various trap sites in the basin, and how soon they begin to pass the projects is going to depend on how fast flows start to pick up in the Snake and Lower Columbia. In general, he said, our assumption is that the run timing is on schedule, and that April 3 would be an appropriate date to start spill at Lower Granite. We have a TMT meeting scheduled for that date, he said, and can discuss the status of the migration at that point. We would then decide whether the fish passage information warrants starting spill at the other projects, and when, Wagner said. Silverberg polled TMT members, and all supported implementing Wagner's suggested approach, with spill to commence at Lower Granite on April 3. In response to a question, Turner noted that the SSARR is predicting a total flow of about 70 Kcfs at Lower Granite by next week.

We're also heading down toward our MOP elevations on the lower Snake, Bettin observed. Turner said 262.5-264 feet is the planned operating range at John Day beginning about April 10. If there are no objections, said Bettin, we'll be at MOP at the Lower Snake projects by April 3. No objections were raised at today's meeting. Bettin added that there is an option to use the pools above Lower Monumental to curtail or, depending on total river flow, eliminate spill at Lower Monumental. That's a dam safety issue, said Turner, but given the erosion situation there, obviously we would prefer to avoid any involuntary spill at Lower Monumental. The action agencies would like to have the flexibility to pond above MOP at the projects above Lower Monumental, if that becomes necessary during the highest-flow periods this spring, he explained. Such an operation could actually have some biological benefit, Turner said, because it would extend the high-flow period into the time when flows would otherwise be receding. In response to a request from Steve Pettit, Turner said the Corps will develop a proposal for this operation for

discussion at the next TMT meeting.

Turner added that Dworshak went to full powerhouse capacity at 5 a.m. this morning; that operation is expected to continue through the end of March. Turner spent a few minutes going through the most recent histogram flow augmentation volume and refill forecasts for Dworshak; it looks as though, if we feel lucky, we might have up to 1.15 MAF available for flow augmentation from Dworshak this year (30% confidence of refill), he said. At 50% confidence of refill, we would have 952 KAF available for flow augmentation at Dworshak, Turner said; if we assume a 70% confidence of refill, 748 KAF. The group also discussed the most recent flow augmentation volume histogram for Hungry Horse; Turner said the current analysis shows 693 KAF available for flow augmentation from Hungry Horse at 30% confidence of refill, 621 KAF at 50% and 506 KAF at 70% confidence. In response to a question from Litchfield, Henriksen said the Corps believes Hungry Horse is likely to refill in 2002.

6. John Day Pool Elevation for Fish and Irrigation.

Turner reiterated that the plan is to go to an operating range of 262.5 feet-264 feet at John Day beginning on April 10. Any objections? he asked. It was agreed that this is the most likely operation, but the TMT will discuss the John Day operation further at its April 3 meeting.

7. Next TMT Meeting Date.

The next meeting of the Technical Management Team was set for Wednesday, April 3 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Corps Northwest Division offices in Portland, Oregon. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.

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