

# **COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM**

## **TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM**

April 23, 2003

### **FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY NOTES ON FUTURE ACTIONS**

Facilitator: Robin Harkless

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.

#### **Welcome and Introductions:**

This week's TMT meeting was held in Spokane during the Lake Roosevelt Forum conference. Local members of the public and other attendees to the conference sat in on the TMT meeting and were able to comment and ask TMT members questions about their issues.

#### **Vernita Bar:**

Chris Carlson, Grant County PUD, gave his weekly update on Vernita Bar. The expected end of emergence is April 28. The information he shared for April 14-20 is posted on the TMT web site. Oregon and NOAA expressed concerns with fluctuating flows and stressed the importance of maintaining smooth flows for the fish. Paul Hoffarth, WDFW, reported on fish monitoring for the area and provided mortality and "at risk" data for the study area.

Cindy Henriksen, COE, reported on the TMT conference call that was held last Thursday, April 17, to discuss SOR 2003-8. The SOR called for minimizing fluctuations at Hanford Reach/Priest Rapids. Paul Wagner, NOAA Fisheries, also provided a follow-up email regarding Hanford operations, which he shared with the group. Weekend operations seemed to improve but week day operations became a concern. Paul's message expressed a hope that operations would improve throughout the week in the future.

**ACTION:** There will be a meeting in Seattle for discussions on Vernita Bar issues. Joe Lukas is the contact for this meeting. Paul Wagner will attend and report back to the TMT at the May 7 TMT meeting. Other TMT members are encouraged to attend.

#### **Public Comment:**

Questions were raised about the notification process for emergency TMT calls. Some members of the public would like to be notified of these emergency meetings and expressed concern that they were not aware of last week's TMT call. TMT acknowledged this concern and will discuss the issue at their next process meeting. Other public members said there has been an improvement and thanked the TMT for this.

**Water Management Plan:**

The Spring/Summer update will be finalized at the May 7 TMT meeting. It was noted that the update is very close to being final, so anyone with specific suggestions for changes/additions to the WMP should contact Scott Boyce from the COE as soon as possible, before May 7.

Kyle Martin, CRITFC, requested comments from TMT on CRITFC's document on an alternative to the WMP. There is a link on the TMT web site from the March 19 agenda; comments should be sent to Bob Heinith by Wednesday, April 30.

**John Day Spill Pattern:**

Cindy Henriksen, COE, reported that after the last TMT meeting at which the John Day spill pattern issue was raised, the COE and the Towboat Association reached agreement on how to improve safe navigation through the John Day locks. The captain of the towboat will call the operators to go to a flat spill pattern at night when the towboat enters or leaves the lock. This issue will be monitored and addressed again if flows drop to levels where a flat pattern may not be possible. Cindy reported that over the last two weeks, if any change occurred, it was an increase in spill. The duration of the change is only about 10 to 15 minutes.

The COE said there have been no reports that there is a navigation concern because of the ongoing Lower Granite RSW test.

**Fish Spill Status and Tracking:**

The COE provided a handout of the average 12-hour TDG percentage for April 15-21, as well as highlighting when and where there were TDG exceedances. Paul Wagner expressed appreciation for the COE's coordination with NOAA on Ice Harbor spill as there is a desire to spill to the gas cap as often as possible at this project. A suggestion was made to track which projects are being operated to the gas cap. Oregon said there has been improvement from last year and encouraged continuing coordination to get as close to the gas cap as possible.

**Upriver Tribal Issues:**

Deanne Pavlick and Chuck Lee from the Spokane Tribe, and Monty Miller from the Colville Tribe shared upriver Tribal issues and information with the TMT. For the Spokanes, elevation and water retention time are the most important concerns at Lake Roosevelt. Boat ramp access is critical in January and February for Kokanee fisheries and in August for recreation and cultural preservation. Access into the tributaries and Sherman Creek are very important for smolt collection. Net pen damage is also a concern, particularly just before the month of June. Studies show that high numbers of fish pass damaged nets which could also cause a problem for Lower river stocks. Deanne and Chuck stressed the Tribe's perspective that anadromous and resident fish are both important to the Tribes. Monty Miller, a project biologist for the Colville Tribes, explained cultural resource concerns at Lake Roosevelt and the reality of trade-offs for anadromous and resident fish.

**ACTION:** Deanne will email Cindy Henriksen the slides she presented today as well as a summary of specific requests from the upriver Tribes to TMT, which will be posted on the TMT web page.

**ACTION:** Shane Scott, WDFW, requested that Tribal concerns be shared with him as a TMT representative, specifically on chum issues. TMT expressed an interest in working with the up-river Tribes, continuing to build strong relationships, and maintaining a balance between Upper and Lower river needs.

**Current System Conditions:**

*Fish migration status:* Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported that juveniles at Lower Granite appeared to be at peak passage on April 22. The trends are similar to prior years in timing, but there are higher numbers of fish this year than previous years. He reported high numbers of adults at Bonneville.

**ACTION:** Paul will share a spill criteria list from NOAA with TMT at the May 7 meeting.

*Chum:* Dave Wills, USFWS, provided a handout of chum information for Hamilton and Hardy Creeks. He reported that there is a downward trend in emergence, and that the end of emergence will likely occur in the next two weeks. Shane Scott, WDFW, reported on the data collection being conducted jointly by Oregon and Washington in the Ive's Island area. The data showed a downward trend in Chinook but still some emergence for chum. The end of emergence date is not yet known.

**ACTION:** Shane will organize a seining field trip on Friday, May 2. Anyone interested in participating should contact him.

*Reservoir operations/water supply/power:* Cindy Henriksen, COE, briefly explained how the Q Adjust model works. The model showed a ~50/50 chance that Priest Rapids can maintain a weekly average flow of 135 kcfs through June and Grand Coulee will refill. The Priest Rapids operation will need to be continually monitored throughout the season. The mid-month water supply forecast shows a slight increase from before. The COE will continue to monitor snow pack and the May final forecast.

Bob Hallock, USFWS, reported that there will likely be an SOR for sturgeon operations at Libby toward the end of May. TMT requested a "heads up" memo of different options for this operation from USFWS as soon as possible. Libby is currently releasing 4 kcfs and is about 55' from full.

Grand Coulee is at elevation 1281.5'. Hungry Horse is at 3518.6' and filling 6/10' per day. Dworshak is releasing 16 kcfs. There is a projected increase in in-flows during the month of May at Dworshak. Lower Granite flows have dropped to about 63-65 kcfs.

**SOR 2003-7:**

Dave Wills, USFWS, presented the SOR to begin a ramp-up at Priest Rapids on April 21 to meet 135 kcfs on April 24. Then, maintain a weekly average of 135 kcfs at Priest Rapids through the end of June while refilling Grand Coulee by the July 4 weekend. CRITFC would like to see any extra storage available during this operation to be shaped

in the middle of May. Paul Wagner reported that this operation should coincide with steelhead passage and will help with the lower volume issues at Hanford Reach.

**ACTION:** The SOR will be implemented until May 7, when TMT will revisit the issue. Two typos within the SOR were noted, and will be corrected and added to the TMT web site. (Under Specifications, bullet 2 should read 80% instead of 85%; under Justification, the STP model run is from 4/15/03, not 4/08/03.)

**Next Meeting, May 7, 9am-noon:**

**Agenda:**

- Vernita Bar Update and Report from 5/1 Meeting (Chris Carlson, Paul Wagner)
- Report from Seining Field Trip (Shane Scott)
- Fish Spill Status and Tracking (Laura Hamilton)
- SOR 2003-7 Update (All)
- NOAA Spill Criterion (Paul Wagner)
- USFWS Memo on Upcoming Sturgeon Operations at Libby (Cindy Henriksen, Dave Wills)
- CRITFC Spring Treaty Fishery SOR (Kyle Martin)
- Current System Conditions
- Other