

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM MEETING NOTES

July 30, 2003

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

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.

Operations Updates:

Dworshak: Cindy Henriksen, COE, provided handouts and reported that operations at Dworshak are ‘on track’; the reservoir is 20’ from full. The model run provided by the COE puts Dworshak at an elevation of 1535’ by August 31. The model run ramped the project down on Monday, August 4 to 10 kcfs. TMT discussed operations for the next week at Dworshak. The Salmon Managers support targeting 1535’ with temperatures as the top priority. Air temperatures are expected to be high in the Lewiston area. The Salmon Managers would like to check on temperatures in the area again on Friday before making operation decisions about Dworshak.

ACTION: As agreed to by the TMT, Cindy Henriksen, Paul Wagner, and Greg Haller will hold a conference call this Friday to discuss temperatures and operations at Dworshak. Paul will email the operating decision to TMT members after the call on Friday afternoon. Flows will be reduced on Monday, August 4. TMT will revisit this issue during a conference call next Wednesday, August 6.

Libby is operating at 17 kcfs outflow, and is five feet from full and drafting.

Hungry Horse is at elevation 3550.5’ and releasing 5 kcfs out. Tony Norris reported that the BOR will continue to monitor the project through August and may operate Columbia Falls at minimum flows ahead of schedule.

Grand Coulee is at elevation 1283’. Banks Lake is scheduled to be drafted around August 1 with a target of 1565’ at Grand Coulee before Labor Day weekend.

Jeanne Cozad from the Transmissions Business Line (TBL) joined the TMT to answer questions about Tuesday’s outage at Libby. She gave TMT a heads up that a power circuit breaker will need to be replaced, which will require restrictions at Libby for three

weeks. The proposed schedule for this is October 27-November 14. TMT will revisit this issue at a future meeting.

ACTION: John Wellschlager, BPA, will coordinate with Tracy Rolstad and a policy person from the TBL to present information to TMT about power outages. Specifically, they will present information about configuration problems (and fish interaction with transmission stability) and the request to upgrade the transmission. John will check on their availability to present at the August 13 or 27 TMT meeting.

Ice Harbor Spill Update:

Paul Wagner reported that the results from the Ice Harbor spill test are not yet available. FDRWG was scheduled to discuss the results during a meeting after today's TMT discussion. NOAA recommended that the bulk spill pattern continue until the information is available. A survey was done by the COE to look at effects of a bulk spill pattern on the spillway at Ice Harbor. The results of the survey should be available later this week.

SOR 2003-13:

Dave Wills, USFWS, presented a request for the Action Agencies to mitigate for losses in BiOp. spill at Ice Harbor by increasing spill at Lower Columbia projects, (e.g. McNary) through the spill season. Some TMT members felt that until there is known data about the effects of the Ice Harbor spill test on fish, it is not known whether the reduction in spill had a positive or negative impact so mitigation is not required. Those that signed onto the SOR disagreed with the spill test operation, feeling that it was a 'rapid' decision based on preliminary data that wasn't made available to everyone. They would like to see spill elsewhere in the system to make up for lost spill at Ice Harbor. Paul Wagner, NOAA, noted that better communication was needed between the co-managers on this issue to avoid the perception that the spill test was a decision made in haste. Cindy Henriksen noted that this was a planned test that requires adaptive management and that the COE would not support mitigating for a planned study. Due to uncertainty at McNary regarding temperature and other factors, NOAA did not sign on to the SOR and expressed a desire to have a more informed discussion.

ACTION: If information is available, there will be a conference call this Friday, August 1 at 1:00 p.m. to discuss Ice Harbor operations. TMT hopes to have more concrete data from the spill test, and the COE may have results from the survey conducted last week.

Zone 6 Treaty Fishing Report:

Kyle Martin, CRITFC, reported on the latest summer treaty fishery and offered comparative statistics to the last spring fishery. Overall he noted that there seems to have been an improvement in the COE's operations; the fishing was slow but good and no damage to nets had been reported to date. Kyle's handout can also be found on the TMT web page.

ACTION: Jim Litchfield requested information on spring chinook and steelhead numbers at the next TMT meeting, which Kyle Martin will provide.

Review Current System Conditions:

Fish: Paul Wagner reported that adult total numbers were high. July 18 is the predicted 95% passage date at Lower Granite for Snake River wild fall Chinook. Paul pointed out that it was an early run for juvenile out-migration.

Reservoirs/power/water quality/water supply: Jim Adams, COE, reported that there were six TDG exceedances at McNary, most likely due to high temperatures over the last two weeks. Operators did a good job of staying very close to the gas cap at Dworshak even during a transition in operations. Cindy Henriksen said there will be observed runoff data available at the next TMT meeting.

Other:

- Shane Scott, Washington, shared with TMT that he will be leaving his position at WDFW on July 31 and joining the Public Power Council on September 1. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work with members of the TMT. TMT members thanked him for his contributions to the team and wished him well in his new position.
- Rudd Turner, COE, noted that there will be a special operation at Ice Harbor this Saturday, August 2, to allow for a dive to retrieve a portion of a turbine blade. This will require some minimum flows at Ice Harbor. TMT members agreed that health and safety issues are a priority. If the COE needs to change the operation to no spill, TMT will be notified of this action.

Next Meeting, Conference Call, Wednesday August 6, 9 am:

NOTE: There may be a conference call this Friday, August 1, to discuss Ice Harbor spill data and the COE survey, if the information is available. This will be followed by a TMT conference call next Wednesday, August 6, at which Dworshak operations will be discussed. If there are agenda items to add to the August 6 TMT call, please contact Cindy Henriksen at the COE or Robin Harkless at DS Consulting. Thank you.

1. Greeting and Introductions

The July 30 Technical Management Team meeting was chaired by Cindy Henriksen of the Corps and facilitated by Robin Harkless. 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.

2. Operations Updates: Dworshak, Libby, Hungry Horse.

Henriksen distributed a handout showing the currently-modeled Dworshak operation for August, noting that Dworshak is releasing 12 Kcfs and is near elevation 1570, about 30 feet from full. One of our goals for today's meeting is to revisit the Dworshak operation in light of the current water temperature information from Lower Granite, she said. In our modeling this week, we put our priority of reaching elevation 1535 by August 31; that translates into a flow across the month of August that is about 1 Kcfs less than the flows requested in SOR 2003 C-4. That means we would need to reduce Dworshak outflow to 10 Kcfs, rather than 11 Kcfs, on August 4, she said.

At Libby, we're continuing to release 18 Kcfs except for a short rampdown yesterday for a transmission system outage, Henriksen said; the project is five feet from full and drafting. Hungry Horse is at elevation 3550 and five feet from full; we're looking at whether or not we need to step down to the Columbia falls minimum to reach 3540 by the end of August, she added. Norris reported that Grand Coulee is now at elevation 1283, said Tony Norris; Banks Lake is within two feet of full pool and will begin drafting on August 1, with the goal of reaching elevation 1565 by the Friday or Saturday before the Labor Day weekend. The Columbia Falls minimum is 3,372 cfs; the Hungry Horse minimum outflow is 687 cfs, at least until the January forecast is available.

Is there TMT agreement that we should be shaping our operation to hit elevation 1535 at Dworshak on August 31? Henriksen asked. FPAC discussed this issue yesterday, Paul Wagner replied; while there was some difference of opinion, there was general agreement that we should be targeting elevation 1535 by August 31, subject to regular review of the water temperature situation at Lower Granite. Despite the recent hot weather at Lower Granite, tailrace temperatures continue in the 65-67 degrees F range. In other words, he said, the 12 Kcfs from Dworshak seems to be doing the job, in terms of keeping water temperatures at Lower Granite below the 68-degree threshold. The weather continues to be very hot in Lewiston; it's supposed to be 107 degrees today, but the trend over the next week is downward, beginning Friday – in the mid-90s, rather than 100 degrees+, said Kyle Martin.

Wagner touched briefly on the temperature situation in 2003 compared to previous years, noting that there is little difference between the temperature situation in 2003 and 2000, 2001 and 2002. We're doing what we've been doing, said Wagner; I would like to check in on Friday, to see whether or not we want to go to 10 Kcfs from Dworshak on Monday. Wagner said the salmon managers will review current air and water temperature information and will contact Henriksen on Friday afternoon with their recommendation.

Martin said that, based on his forecast, the peak of summer air temperatures is likely just about over; the traditional late summer jet stream pattern is setting in and temperatures should begin to moderate somewhat from here on out. Shane Scott noted that, at yesterday's FPAC meeting, while there was agreement that the Corps should structure the Dworshak operation to target elevation 1535 by August 31, temperature control at Lower granite is actually the highest priority. After a few minutes of additional discussion, it was agreed that, unless there is a radical departure from the planned operation, there is no need for a TMT conference call on Friday. Instead, Wagner will send out an email to the TMT membership describing the Dworshak operation. It was agreed that there will be a brief TMT conference call next Wednesday, August 6, to revisit the Dworshak operation.

The discussion then turned to yesterday's transmission system emergency at Libby Dam; Avista had a circuit breaker problem at Noxon, so outflow was stepped down while the problem was corrected. Avista plans to replace the PCBs at that station from October 27 through November 14; that will require the Corps to reduce generation to a 240 MW maximum at Libby during that period. Henriksen suggested that the TMT discuss that planned maintenance operation at an upcoming meeting. Litchfield noted that

there are currently a number of transmission-related voltage stability issues in the system, many of which could impact fish operations. John Wellschlager offered to have personnel from Bonneville's Transmission Business Line come to a future TMT meeting to provide a presentation on this topic, either August 13 or August 27. It was agreed that this would be useful.

3. Ice Harbor Spill Update.

Wagner said his understanding is that FFDRWG will be discussing results from the Ice Harbor balloon-tag and PIT-tag survival tests at its meeting today; he said no additional data from these tests has been provided to NOAA Fisheries since the last TMT meeting. As a result, said Henriksen, we're continuing with the bulk spill operation we discussed last time. The surveys of the spillway were concluded earlier this week; no information from those surveys has yet been provided.

4. Zone 6 Treaty Fishing Report.

Martin said there is a hotlink to the report on the most recent tribal treaty fishery on the TMT homepage; he went briefly through the contents of this report. He noted that the Corps had agreed to implement a 1.5-foot operating range at Bonneville only; he said that the bottom line is that Bonneville pool was in compliance with the operating range requested by the tribes only 22 percent of the time; it was in compliance with the operating range agreed to by the Corps 100 percent of the time. Overall, compliance was somewhat better during the summer fishery than it was during the spring treaty fisheries at Bonneville. It was slightly worse at The Dalles and John Day pools, in comparison with spring fishery compliance, Martin said. Martin added that his understanding was that the overall quality of the fishery was good, although the fishing was a little on the slow side in comparison to the spring fishery. There have been no reports of damage to the nets during the summer fishery, although there were reports of six nets being destroyed by floating debris during the spring treaty fishery in Bonneville pool. No boat damage or injuries to fishers were reported.

Litchfield noted that he had observed two damaged nets on the banks of The Dalles pool over the weekend; Mary Karen Scullion said there were reports of very high winds during the latter part of the summer fishery, and nets that weren't promptly retrieved were often damaged.

In response to another question, Martin said the next tribal treaty fishery will likely occur in mid-August.

5. Current System Conditions.

Wagner started this agenda item with a report on the status of the summer chinook adult migration: a total of 113,000 fish past Bonneville, much better than the 1999, 2000 or 2001 runs, but slightly less than the 126,000 seen in 2002. With respect to the status of the Snake River fall chinook subyearling outmigration, the indices of marked wild subyearlings continue to show a downward trend at Lower Granite; in general, they have closely mirrored Billy Connor's preseason forecast. The current model

run shows that 93% of the Snake River PIT-tagged wild subyearling chinook run has now passed Lower Granite. Wagner noted, however, that river flows have fallen since many of those smolts passed Lower Granite, with migratory conditions degrading as river flows have receded and water temperatures rise.

Wagner said the combined yearling chinook index at Lower Granite is now about 1.35 million; at McNary, just over 6.9 million. Again, however, daily passage indices have now fallen to below 1,000 at Lower Granite, he said. The 1.35 million index at Lower Granite is far in excess of anything that has been seen at that project in recent years, he said.

Moving on to the current reservoir operation status, Henriksen noted that this information was covered earlier in today's meeting. One additional note on operations, said Henriksen, is the Libby outflow operation in August. Because of the recession of inflow to the reservoir, the outflow from Libby will likely have to be reduced from 18 kcfs in August, so as to achieve elevation 2439 feet at the end of the month. Right now, the Corps is exploring the option of reducing outflow to 14 kcfs the last week of August, to not draft below elevation 2439. Wellschlager said that, currently, there are no problems to report on the power system. Jim Adams said there were six water quality standard exceedences in the McNary forebay last week; those exceedences were due primarily to the high air and water temperatures, which have caused TDG production to rise. Adams also described recent operations to regulate the 45-degree release temperature at Dworshak.

Henriksen said she will provide observed summer runoff data at the August 13 TMT meeting.

6. New System Operational Requests.

On July 29, the action agencies received SOR 2003-13. This SOR, supported by USFWS, IDFG, ODFW and CRITFC, requests the following specific operations with respect to mitigation for losses in BiOp summer spill at Ice Harbor:

- Mitigate for losses in Biological Opinion spill levels at Ice Harbor Dam since the beginning of the spill season (July 21) by increasing spill at the Lower Columbia projects. Mitigation should be volume-for-volume, ie, volume-neutral. Increases in spill in the Lower Columbia River should be equivalent to the combined 2003 seasonal deficits, past and future, from the required Biological Opinion spill operation at Ice Harbor.

Wills went briefly through the contents of this SOR, the full text of which is hot-linked to the TMT's Internet homepage. He noted that, while the SOR does not specify where this mitigation should occur, McNary, where temperatures are very hot and large numbers of fish are passing, might be one possibility.

Aren't we still determining whether the spill program at Ice Harbor was good or bad? Wellschlager asked. Doesn't the evidence suggest that, by reducing the spill at Ice Harbor, we are actually producing a greater biological benefit? Your understanding is

correct, but the jury is still out on the data from the 2003 biological tests at Ice Harbor, Wills replied. In the interim, we do have a BiOp spill program that is based on the best available information, and we expect it to be implemented. I'm unfamiliar with the volume-for-volume concept you've included in the SOR, said Litchfield – I don't recall seeing that in the BiOp. Aren't spill volumes constantly changing based on total river flow through the system? The language in this SOR is simply an attempt to capture the intent of the BiOp, Wills replied -- we have an opportunity to provide some extra benefit elsewhere in the system, since we're not able to do so at Ice Harbor. We thought it would be equitable and useful to transfer that benefit to McNary, since we're not getting that benefit at Ice Harbor, he said.

The group discussed the validity of the results from the 2003 survival tests at Ice Harbor; Wills said there is still considerable uncertainty around those numbers, and there will continue to be uncertainty until they have undergone peer review. Litchfield noted that the peer-review process could take years; in the interim, he said, the preliminary numbers we've seen – injury rates of 20%+ under the BiOp spill program at Ice Harbor – suggest that we should use adaptive management to make changes in that program in order to provide the maximum benefit to fish. It seems to me it is our obligation to say that, based on the most recent test data, we shouldn't be spilling at Ice Harbor, said Litchfield; I don't see why it necessarily follows that need to make up that spill volume at some other project.

Henriksen noted that the 2003 Ice Harbor biological testing was coordinated through the 2003 Fish Passage Plan and NOAA Fisheries; the goal was to determine the best route of passage for fish at that project. To say, then, that we need to provide mitigation at another project because we're not providing the full BiOp spill program at Ice Harbor lacks some validity, because this wasn't some sudden choice – it was coordinated in advance. That's true up to the point that the test was over, Wills replied – after that, the BiOp spill program is supposed to resume. That was just a few days ago, Henriksen replied. Any change to the BiOp spill operation needs to be based on a full understanding of what the data shows, Wills said – the results from the 2003 test simply aren't in yet. Rudd Turner took issue with this statement, noting that the results from 2003 are consistent with the results seen from the 2000 and 2002 tests at Ice Harbor. Wills replied that the report on the 2002 testing has not yet been made available for independent review. If the test results had indicated that additional spill at Ice Harbor would be beneficial to fish, wouldn't the salmon managers be pushing for that to happen based on these "preliminary" data? Wellschlager asked. Yes, because that's what the BiOp indicates as well, Wills replied.

In response to a question, Wagner said NOAA Fisheries did not endorse SOR 2003-13; rather, based on the data trend from the biological testing at Ice Harbor, they chose to split the difference, spreading the risk with some spill at Ice Harbor rather than endorsing either the full BiOp spill program or zero spill. The discussion continued in this vein for some minutes. Ultimately, it was agreed that it may be prudent to schedule a Friday afternoon (1 p.m.) TMT call to discuss the Ice Harbor spill program, after FPAC and FFDRWG have had a chance to discuss the results from the 2003 biological testing at Ice Harbor. It was agreed that this call will take place only if the information presented indicates that a change in Ice Harbor operations is warranted. Turner added that

information from the Corps' Ice Harbor spillway hydro survey may also be available by this Friday.

As far as the mitigation question raised in the SOR, said Henriksen, the Corps does not intend to provide mitigation for an operation to support a study that was coordinated with NOAA Fisheries and the region in advance. I guess this SOR just serves to highlight the lack of agreement on that change in operation, Wills observed.

7. Recommended Operations for August 4-17.

Henriksen said Dworshak may go to 10 Kcfs outflow on August 4, as long as the weather and water temperature data supports this change; if needed, there will be a TMT conference call at 1 p.m. this Friday to discuss Ice Harbor spill. There will also be a conference call to discuss the Dworshak operation on August 6. At the Friday call, the TMT may also discuss spill operations at Ice Harbor, again if the data warrants a change.

8. Other.

Shane Scott reported that he is resigning from WDFW effective tomorrow; he has taken a job with the Public Power Council as of September 1. He expressed his appreciation to everyone at TMT, noting that he has learned a lot in this forum. He said he will maintain contact with the other TMT members, and expressed his thanks for the experience. Wills thanked Scott for his input and participation in the TMT process, and said he has been a valued member of the TMT team.

Turner added that there will be a dive operation at Ice Harbor this Saturday, August 2, to retrieve a broken turbine blade; there will be no powerhouse discharge and no pumped water supply to the powerhouse collection channel portion of the adult fishway while the dive is taking place. The Ice Harbor navigation lock will also be shut down during the dive. Ice Harbor will spill 10 Kcfs during the operation to maintain minimum flows in the Snake. It will also be necessary to fill Ice Harbor one foot to pond inflows above 10 Kcfs; the Corps will then release that stored water during the evening hours, Turner said. The outage is scheduled for 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., but may take less time to complete. After a brief discussion, there was agreement that, if it becomes necessary for safety reasons, Ice Harbor may stop spill and go to zero flow during the dive.

9. Next TMT Meeting.

TMT conference calls were scheduled to discuss Ice Harbor spill and operations at Dworshak on Friday, August 1 and Wednesday, August 6, respectively. The next face-to-face meeting of the Technical Management Team was set for Wednesday, August 13. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle.

TMT PARTICIPANT LIST

JULY 30, 2003

Name	Affiliation
Robin Harkless	Facilitation Team
David Wills	USFWS
Mary Karen Scullion	COE
Rudd Turner	COE
David Benner	FPC
Kyle Martin	CRITFC
Shane Scott	WDFW
Paul Wagner	NOAA Fisheries
Jim Litchfield	Montana
Cindy Henriksen	COE
Tony Norris	Reclamation
Tim Heizenrater	PPM
Chris Ross	NOAA Fisheries
Steven Wallace	PacifiCorp
Laura Hamilton	COE
Nancy Yun	COE
Julie Ammann	COE
Tom Haymaker	PNGC
Scott Boyd	COE
Mike O'Bryant	CBB
Maria Van Houten	PGE
Tina Lundell	COE
Jim Adams	COE
Greg Bauers	COE
Tom Le	PSE
Russ George	WMCI
Bill Rudolph	NW Fish Letter
Greg Haller	NPT
Margaret Filardo	FPC

Richelle Beck	D. Rohr & Associates
John Wellschlager	BPA