

**TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM
MEETING NOTES
October 30, 2003
CORPS OF ENGINEERS NORTHWESTERN DIVISION OFFICES – CUSTOM
HOUSE
PORTLAND, OREGON
Facilitator: Donna Silverberg**

The following is a summary of the discussion between members of the Technical Management Team on 10/30/03. The notes are not intended to be a verbatim account of the meeting nor do they serve as the official “record”. They are intended to highlight discussion points, decisions, and actions.

Albeni Falls Operations Update:

Cindy Henriksen, COE, reported that information that was requested from the Lake Pend Oreille Lake Commission, USFWS, IDFG and NOAA were sent to the COE. This information and the discussions at TMT regarding Albeni Falls operations aided in the COE’s decision to operate to meet elevation 2051’ at Lake Pend Oreille for 2003-2004. Outflows will be increased to 26 kcfs on 10/31 a.m. to reach 2051’ around November 15th.

SOR 2003-15:

Dave Wills, USFWS, introduced SOR 2003-15, requesting a minimum tailrace elevation of 11.5’ at Bonneville, beginning no later than November 1st, and continuing until further notice, to support chum spawning needs. 300 chum have been observed in Gray’s Creek this week, none at Ives Island. Generally, Dave noted, it takes one to two weeks for the chum to reach Ives from Gray’s. 10 live Chinook were observed at the Ives Island complex on Tuesday, October 27th.

The following comments were expressed by the TMT representatives:

- BPA proposed, since there are no chum currently present, to start operating the project on Monday, November 3rd, to 11.2’ minimum and 11.5’ maximum (daytime), then revisit the issue at next Wednesday’s TMT meeting.
- NOAA expressed agreement, given the current information, with BPA’s proposed chum operations as long as the chum operation begins around the BiOp proposed November 1st date (and Nov. 3rd does this).
- USFWS expressed no disagreement with BPA’s proposed operation but would like to keep in mind the desire NOT to wait too late to ramp up the project to the 11.5’ elevation.
- Cindy Henriksen, COE, noted her understanding of the NOAA criteria: presence of fish, available water and adaptive management. Since there is not a presence of chum in the Ives area, the COE agreed with BPA’s proposed operation.
- Oregon expressed a preference to observe the Ives area again tomorrow, and as soon as results are in and IF there is a significant increase in observed chum (75), to call a TMT meeting on Monday to discuss whether to change operations.

ACTION: The COE will operate the BON tailrace at an 11.2'-11.5' daytime elevation (7 am-7 pm) and 11.2' minimum nighttime elevation beginning Monday, November 3rd. If the results of observations before that time show a dramatic increase in the presence of live chum (~75), an emergency TMT call will be held at 1 pm on Monday. Otherwise, TMT will revisit chum operations at the beginning of the TMT year end review meeting, Wednesday November 5th.

Next Meeting, YEAR END REVIEW, November 5th, 10am-3pm:

A detailed agenda will be sent to TMT members prior to the meeting. The year end review will be held at the Water Resources Education Center in Vancouver, Washington. The address and directions will be included with the agenda. Food will be provided at a cost of \$5. **If you have not already done so, please notify the facilitation team today if you plan to attend the meeting.**

1. Greeting and Introductions

The October 30 Technical Management Team conference call 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.

2. Albeni Falls Winter Operations.

Henriksen said that, following recent discussions on this topic, the Corps asked the resource agencies for their recommendations on the 2003/2004 winter lake elevation at Lake Pend Oreille. Additional information was received from the Fish and Wildlife Service, which indicated that operating to elevation 2051 would not compromise their bull trout operation, Henriksen said; IDFG also sent information about their kokanee protocols. That received, said Henriksen, the Corps has begun drafting Lake Pend Oreille to achieve elevation 2051 by November 15 to 20; today, outflow is being increased from 18 Kcfs to 26 Kcfs. We plan to be at or near 2051 by mid-November, she said.

3. Chum Operations – SOR 2003-15.

On October 24, the action agencies received SOR 2003-15. Supported by USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, IDFG, WDFW, CRITFC, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe and ODFW, this SOR requests the following specific operations:

- As required by the 2000 NMFS Biological Opinion, beginning when chum are present (no later than Nov. 1) and continuing until further notice, provide a minimum instantaneous tailrace elevation of 11.5 feet at Bonneville Dam. On average it is anticipated that daily flows will not exceed 125 Kcfs.

David Wills went briefly through the background and justifications for this SOR, the full text of which is available via hotlink from today's agenda on the TMT homepage.

Have you seen any fish in the Greys River or at Ives Island? Scott Bettin asked. About 300 adult chum have been observed to date in the Greys River, but none have been seen at Ives Island to date, Wills replied; you will recall that, typically, there is a one- to two-week lag time between the arrival of chum in the Greys River and their arrival at the Ives Island spawning grounds. We saw 10 live chinook, a couple of coho, and no chum in our last Ives Island field survey, added Ron Boyce; we don't expect the chum to arrive at Ives Island in significant numbers until next week.

For that reason, we were hoping to start off at an 11.2-foot minimum and 11.5-foot maximum daytime tailwater elevation at Bonneville on Monday; we can then discuss the operation further once chum are observed at Ives Island, Bettin said. We'll need to talk about that, Boyce replied – the problem is, if you don't have the water, you don't have proper hydraulic conditions over the spawning areas, and you won't see any fish in the preferred areas. That hasn't been the case in recent years, Bettin said. We'll be doing another field survey tomorrow, said Boyce, but bear in mind that the chum arrive at Ives Island during the first week in November just like clockwork, and we have a very narrow window of opportunity here.

John Wellschlager noted that last year's chum operation didn't begin until November 4, and it started at the lower tailwater elevation, not 11.5 feet. Boyce replied that research indicates that starting the chum operation later and at a lower elevation led to egg-to-fry survival problems last year. I understand the argument, said Wellschlager, but I don't necessarily agree that tailwater elevation is the only factor in lower egg-to-fry survival – the large number of returning adults, for instance, likely scoured out a number of earlier redds. You're correct, that is a factor, which is one reason we want to provide the higher tailwater elevation this year, Boyce replied. I don't think you'll hear any arguments about that, said Wellschlager; the only thing we're arguing is that we should wait until we actually have fish on the Ives Island spawning grounds before we start sending a lot of water down the river.

In response to a question from Silverberg, Kyle Martin said CRITFC has no problem with using a "ramp-up" approach to this year's chum spawning operation; Paul Wagner said NOAA Fisheries has no problem with waiting a few days before the 11.5-foot tailwater elevation goes into effect. I guess the Fish and Wildlife Service would agree with that assessment, said Wills, but I don't want to leave it too late.

The group devoted a few minutes of discussion to previous years' operations, with Boyce noting that water conditions are looking much better this year than they have in the previous two years. Bettin reiterated that, while Bonneville is not opposed to the operation requested in the SOR, they would prefer to wait until chum are actually present on the Ives Island spawning grounds before providing the water to meet the requested 11.5-foot minimum tailwater elevation. It's also about providing proper hydraulic conditions over the seeps, Boyce replied.

My understanding is that the NOAA Fisheries criteria for the start of this operation include the presence of fish, agreement at TMT that there is enough water in

the system to sustain this operation, and having enough information to engage in adaptive management, Henriksen said. We have heard that the chum will not be arriving at Ives Island until next week, she said; beyond that, we don't have any more information on the Ives Island area. Thus far, there have been no chum sightings, so that particular criteria has not yet been met, she said. Another survey is scheduled for this afternoon, she said, but until that information is available, we can't really say much more. We have agreed to provide a Bonneville tailwater elevation of 11.2-11.5 feet starting Monday morning, she said; that will wet the perimeter, so if fish enter the spawning grounds, they will find suitable habitat watered up.

Wellschlager noted that, with the weather getting colder, Bonneville will be operating to a tailwater elevation of about 11 feet just to meet load. He added that it is too soon to assume that there will be plenty of water in the system this year. With respect to next steps, said Boyce, we will be surveying at Ives Island later tomorrow and Tuesday, and will check in at TMT next Wednesday. If we find anything striking – say, 75 adult chum on the Ives Island spawning grounds this afternoon – we can convene a conference call at 1 p.m. Monday, Boyce said. That's understood in the TMT protocols, Silverberg replied.

Is everyone OK with the proposed operation? Silverberg asked. One question, said Henriksen – it sounds as though we're in agreement to start maintaining an 11.2-11.5-foot daytime tailwater elevation range at Bonneville starting Monday morning. The problem is that Bonneville's nighttime tailwater elevations have been higher than 11.5 feet recently. We need to prevent that, said Boyce – there is evidence, compiled by the Fish and Wildlife Service, that shows that chum spawn at night in the Ives Island mainstem area. We don't want nighttime tailwater elevations to be too high, otherwise those redds could be dewatered later in the year, he said.

The group devoted a few minutes of discussion to this issue; ultimately, Wellschlager said that, before this discussion continues, he would like to check with project personnel to see what is physically possible, in terms of limiting nighttime tailwater elevations at Bonneville. In the meantime, said Boyce, ODFW will be intensively documenting this year's chum spawning, in particular, the location of the highest redds.

Do you expect nighttime tailwater elevation to go below 11.2 feet? Wills asked. Not after Monday, Bettin replied.

To summarize, then, said Silverberg, further field surveys are planned over the next few days; if a significant number of chum are observed, there will be a TMT call at 1 p.m. Monday. If not, we will discuss this operation further at Wednesday's TMT meeting. In the meantime, starting Monday morning, we will operate Bonneville to an 11.2-foot minimum, 11.5-foot maximum tailwater operation from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., with the possibility of somewhat higher tailwater elevations at night.

4. Next TMT Meeting Date.

If large numbers of chum spawners are observed today or tomorrow, it was agreed to convene a TMT conference call at 1 p.m. Monday, November 3. The next regularly-scheduled TMT meeting was set for Wednesday, November 5. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle.

**TMT Participant List
October 30, 2003**

Name	Affiliation
Donna Silverberg	Facilitation Team
Cindy Henriksen	COE
Ron Boyce	ODFW
David Wills	USFWS
Scott Bettin	BPA
Kyle Martin	CRITFC
Scott Boyd	COE
Richelle Beck	D. Rohr & Associates
Russ George	WMCI
Tim Heizenrater	PPL
Tom Le	PSE
Tony Norris	USBR
John Roche	USBR
Russ Kiefer	IDFG
Paul Wagner	NOAA Fisheries
Tom Haymaker	PNGC
Chris Ross	NOAA Fisheries
Mike Buchko	Powerex
Robin Harkless	Facilitation Team