

## **COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM**

### **Implementation Team**

#### **Issue Elevated from TMT to IT**

**ISSUE:** 1) Should the region rely on data and analysis from NOAA to make decisions about spring spill in the Lower Snake River to satisfy Action 51, 2000 FCRPS BiOp?  
2) Do discussions in the Regional Forum, and TMT specifically, meet the “COE & BPA, in coordination with NMFS through the annual planning process, shall identify and implement appropriate measures” requirements within Action 51?

**BACKGROUND:** The salmon managers brought forth SOR 2004-3 on spring spill at the Lower Snake projects during a TMT meeting on Monday, April 12<sup>th</sup>. The SOR, relying on NOAA’s analysis of Snake River transport studies, proposed that spill be implemented at Lower Granite, Little Goose and Lower Monumental through April 30<sup>th</sup> and then continue spill as necessary to complete ongoing research at the projects (see the SOR for more details found on the TMT webpage linked to the agenda for the 4/12 meeting). A concern was raised that the salmon manager request was a large departure from the recommendation in the 2000 BiOp to use 85 kcfs flow in the Snake River as the threshold below which spill should not begin and transport should be used instead. Projections show that the seasonal average flow is expected to be below 85 kcfs.

There was no consensus at TMT about whether to recommend and implement the SOR on Monday. Instead, they reviewed more data and asked BPA, NOAA and the COE to coordinate, as recommended in RPA 51. On Wednesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> TMT members met and discussed the SOR and other proposals for Spring spill:

1. Implement SOR 2004-3, which would include spill at all three projects through the end of April and then continue where necessary to complete research.
2. Spill at all three projects through April 23<sup>rd</sup>; continue spill just at Lower Monumental to support research on the spillway and RSW, likely through the end of May. (This was NOAA’s alternative proposal to the SOR.)
3. Continue spill at Lower Granite and Little Goose until April 22<sup>nd</sup> (this date was selected based on the expected start of the juvenile steelhead migration). Do not begin spill at Lower Monumental. (This was BPA’s alternative proposal to the SOR.)
4. The COE discussed a number of alternative operations, including a) re-focus research at Lower Monumental so that research could be completed but would not require spill, or b) complete the research at Lower Granite through May 15. The COE expressed willingness to hear other options such as these. Salmon managers were not supportive of changing the focus of the research at Lower Monumental.

BPA was not able to accept the SOR as written, nor did BPA agree with the other options suggested. Instead, BPA expressed a concern with regards to process of the issue and coordination/consultation requirements and requested that the issue get raised to IT.

TMT developed the above policy questions for an emergency IT meeting on April 15<sup>th</sup> at **NOON** in NOAA’s 1<sup>st</sup> Floor conference room. The call in number is 503-326-7672.