

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

October 27, 2004

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.

Vernita Bar Update:

Chris Carlson, Grant County PUD, reported that a redd count was taken on Wednesday (10/20), at which time flows were at 36 kcfs. Six redds were counted within the index area, between 36-50 kcfs. There will be another survey on Sunday, 10/31. The PUD has requested 50 kcfs out of Priest Rapids over the weekend. So far, spawning patterns are similar to previous years. The PUD expects to see five spawning chum during the next survey. Chris will continue to update TMT on Vernita Bar at future meetings. Information from the surveys will also be posted on the TMT web page.

Chum SOR: 2004-19:

The salmon managers developed an SOR for chum operations this year, requesting that Bonneville be operated to the 2000 BiOp recommendation – beginning when chum are present, operate to a minimum 11.5' daytime tailwater elevation to provide adequate coverage for chum spawning. A specific date was not given in the SOR. Ron Boyce, Oregon, reported that a survey taken yesterday (10/26) found no coho or chum, but an increase in chinook numbers was observed. Cindy LeFleur, Washington, reported that chum are present in the Grays River basin. The salmon managers expect that, based on what has happened during the previous six years, chum will arrive around November 4-6. It was further clarified that the SOR is requesting 11.5', and the salmon managers are expecting that elevation to equal 125 kcfs daily average flows. The salmon managers do have concerns about night time flows, and for now will wait to see the results of this year's USGS test which is scheduled to begin on 11/10.

After further discussions, TMT agreed to the following guidelines for chum operations:

Effective Thursday 10/28 at 0700 hours:

24 hours/day Hard constraint minimum 10.5' Bonneville tailwater

24 hours/day Soft constraint minimum 11' Bonneville tailwater

If chum are present on Friday, 10/29, Dave Wills or Paul Wagner will notify Cathy Hlebechuk or Julie Ammann.

Effective 0700 - 1900 hours daily starting Saturday, 10/30, target tailwater 11.5' and soft constraint 11.3' - 11.7'

Effective 0700 - 1900 hours daily starting Monday, 11/1, target 11.5' and hard constraint 11.3' - 11.7'

If chum are NOT present on 10/29:

Effective 0700 - 1900 hours daily starting Monday, 11/1, 10.5' - 12' hard constraint

If chum are present Tuesday 11/2, Dave Wills or Paul Wagner will notify Cathy Hlebechuk or Rudd Turner

Effective 0700 - 1900 hours daily starting Wednesday, 11/3, target tailwater 11.5' and soft constraint 11.3' - 11.7'

Effective 0700 - 1900 hours daily starting Thursday, 11/4, target 11.5' and hard constraint 11.3' - 11.7'

Autumn Treaty Fishing Summary:

Kyle Martin, CRITFC, provided a summary of the five SORs presented by the tribes for Autumn treaty fishing in 2004, and described how often the COE operated to meet the requests over the season. At Bonneville, the COE met the request 81% of the time, 72% at The Dalles, and 51% at John Day. Overall, operations were good for the fishery. One concern and suggestion Kyle offered was that the John Day pool, which has become more important to the tribes in recent years, was at times operated to low elevations. Kyle suggested that in future years, the COE's teletype say something like: 'Operate to the upper range at John Day to accommodate access for the tribal fishery'. There was an agreement in 1996 between the tribes and the COE that, from CRITFC's perspective, is now out-dated and needs to be re-examined due to changes in the fishers' needs. Kyle acknowledged that pool fluctuations were kept to a minimum this year, and that this was appreciated. A survey will go out to the tribal fishers that will help inform the COE and TMT of their needs for operations in future years.

Kyle also handed out a notice of the annual "What Will the Winter Be Like" event at OMSI on Thursday, October 28th. All were welcome to attend.

Burbot SOR:

The Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative is developing an SOR which will request cooler water in November and December for burbot. Amy Reese, COE, said the SOR should be out by Thursday (10/29). It will be posted on the TMT web page as soon as it is available. TMT will be informed via email of any actions taken on the SOR, and will re-visit the issue at the next TMT meeting.

The following email update was sent to TMT members on Thursday, 10/29 from Cathy Hlebechuk, COE: 'As soon as a signed SOR is received, the Corps plans on implementing the temperature recommendation. It's going to take at least 1 week to pull the selector gates and adjust them properly.'

Libby Operations:

Cathy Hlebechuk, COE, reported that Libby is currently at elevation 2447', releasing 4.7 kcfs and filling slightly. The COE is operating to reach elevation 2411' by the end of December. Project flows will increase starting Monday, 11/1, using BiOp ramp rates to get up to 19 kcfs on 11/2, then down to 14 kcfs over the weekend.

Albeni Falls:

The COE is operating to reach elevation 2055' by November 15th. The project is releasing 24 kcfs out, and the current elevation is 2056.5'.

Water Management Plan Comments:

The action agencies will post the latest draft 2005 WMP on the TMT web page on November 3rd. The action agencies are requesting that comments be received by November 24th. Cathy Hlebechuk, COE, will also forward the draft WMP to TMT members next week to remind folks that it is on the web.

Status of Operations:

Reservoirs: Dworshak is operating at minimum flows. TMT was notified that a unit was tripped off on 10/20 for approximately 5 hours; 1 kcfs was spilled through regulating outlets; no known problems resulted from this incident. The Bonneville spill bay calibration work was done last week (10/18-20); now the 18 spill bays are appropriately calibrated. Hungry Horse is at elevation 3541.2' and Grand Coulee is at elevation 1285.9'.

Fish: Adult coho and chinook are spawning; chum are about to arrive.

Water quality: The Dworshak outage on 10/20 caused an increase in TDG, up to 118%. A question was raised for the TMT to consider: In a future similar event, would you prefer releasing the 1 kcfs and resulting in up to 130% TDG, or do not release any cool water, resulting in warmer temperatures? Jim Adams, COE, also noted that the next Water Quality Team meeting will held on Monday, November 8th, at which a person from Aquatic Informatics, Inc. will speak to the group about a data correction software program. All are welcome to attend this meeting.

Next Meeting, November 10, 10-3 YEAR END REVIEW:

An agenda for the TMT Year End Review will be sent out and posted on the web sometime next week. The meeting will be held at CRITFC, in the basement conference room. Presenters should contact Kyle Martin with any special A/V needs. Power point presentations should be saved on a disk, and will be run through Kyle's laptop.

November 24 Meeting Agenda:

- Vernita Bar Update
- Update on Chum Operations
- Libby Operations
- Burbot SOR
- WMP Comments
- Status Update

Technical Management Team Meeting Notes

October 27, 2004

Corps of Engineers Reservoir Control Center, Portland, OR

1. Greetings and Introductions.

The October 27 meeting of the Technical Management Team was held at the Corps of Engineers' Reservoir Control Center in Portland, OR. The meeting was chaired by Cathy Hlebechuk and facilitated by Robin Harkless. Harkless led a review of today's agenda and a round of introductions.

The following is a summary – not a verbatim transcript – of the items discussed and decisions made at this meeting. Anyone with questions or comments should contact Hlebechuk at 503/808-3942.

2. Vernita Bar Update.

Chris Carlson said Grant County PUD conducted its most recent redd count on October 24; field personnel saw a number of fish spawning in deeper areas, and counted six redds. That meant the initiation of spawning for the 36-50 Kcfs zone started on October 20. Our daytime target was 55 Kcfs; the indications are that the fish are really into spawning at this time. Our request is for a flow out of Priest Rapids of 50 Kcfs for the coming week, Carlson said.

How does 2004 compare to last year? Paul Wagner asked. The timing is very similar, Carlson replied – we're on track with previous years. We are seeing a bit more activity at this point in the season than we have in most previous years; there are more fish this year – close to 100,000, up from 88,000 last year – which may be influencing spawning behavior. In response to a question, Carlson said he anticipates that spawning above the 50 Kcfs zone should begin by October 31. The final redd count will be done on November 28, to be sure that the end of spawning has occurred. The group devoted a brief discussion to the mechanics of Grant County PUD's redd surveys. Carlson said he is available to provide a report at a potential TMT meeting on November 3.

3. Chum SOR.

On October 26, the action agencies received SOR 2004-19. This SOR, supported by NOAA Fisheries, USFWS, IDFG, ODFW, WDFW, IDFG, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and CRITFC, requests the following specific operations:

- As required by the 2000 Biological Opinion, beginning when chum are present 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 average flows will not exceed 125 Kcfs.

David Wills provided an overview of this SOR, the full text of which is available via hotlink from today's agenda on the TMT's Internet homepage. Please refer to this document for full details and justification. Have any chum been observed on the Ives island spawning grounds yet? John Wellschlager asked. There was a survey yesterday, replied Ron Boyce; no chum or coho were observed, but the number of fall chinook had really increased – to 52 lives and 22 redds. Any reports from Grey River downstream? Scott Bettin replied. There are fish down there, Cindy LeFleur replied; chum are one to two weeks early in that basin, and are present in significant numbers – up to 300 fish have been counted on a given day. Normally, in past years, we've used the Greys River chum as an indicator that chum will be arriving at Ives Island a week or two later, Bettin observed. I don't know when the Greys River fish began to arrive, LeFleur replied – it could be that they've been there for awhile. She added that surveys will begin at the Multnomah Creek spawning grounds on Friday, October 29.

What indicator do you want to use for the start of the chum operation? Bettin asked. The presence of chum in the Ives Island area, Wills replied. How many chum? Wellschlager asked. We can't give you an exact number, Boyce replied; typically, over the past six years, within a day or two of seeing the first chum arrive, the fish begin to spawn, something that has occurred no later than November 6 each year. Once those fish start to show up, they need the water, because they start spawning as soon as they appear. Boyce said he has requested that WDFW do their survey on Tuesday or Thursday of next week; once the results of that survey are available, I would suggest that we convene TMT immediately.

Hlebechuk noted that the SOR specifications request an instantaneous 11.5-foot tailrace elevation, and it is anticipated that daily average flows will not exceed 125 Kcfs. We have no way of knowing what other factors – rainstorms etc. – might influence the amount of water needed to maintain that tailwater depth, she said. We were just giving you a ballpark estimate, Wills replied – we weren't trying to constrain you, operationally. And would that be during daytime hours only? Hlebechuk asked. We were thinking that would be a viable tailwater operation 24 hours a day, Wills replied – that's our request. And it's OK for us to conduct our planned test beginning November 10, covering the next six weeks? Bettin asked. Yes, Wills replied.

Given that there is a lot of water in the river right now, said Wellschlager, it would be prudent to try to reach agreement today – how about a minimum of 10.5 feet during the week, and no higher than 12 feet during daylight hours, given the fact that flows are higher than that now? Your proposal is a 10.5-foot instantaneous minimum during the day, beginning Monday, November 1? Boyce asked. Yes, Bettin replied. The group discussed the hours for this operation; Wills said the salmon managers understand that this would be a 24-hour operation only in a perfect world, and that 7 a.m.-7 p.m. are the most crucial hours for the minimum tailrace elevation to be maintained.

After a brief caucus, Hlebechuk said that, starting on November 1, the action agencies are willing to provide a minimum tailrace elevation of 10.5 feet and a maximum tailrace elevation of 12 feet between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. We thought we were talking about starting immediately, Wills said. I think we'll be there by default, anyway, Wellschlager replied; however, the additional operational flexibility over the coming weekend would be helpful. Boyce noted that the action agencies have been providing pretty flat flows during the week. Correct, but again, we'd like some additional flexibility over the weekend – what about if we agree to a minimum of 10.5 feet, but no upper cap until Monday, beginning tomorrow morning at 6 a.m.? Wellschlager asked. That would be acceptable, Boyce replied, although at the current tailwater elevation, the fish had only 1.5 feet of coverage over 80 percent of the main spawning area. The last thing we want to do is dewater chinook redds, he said. You have been maintaining pretty stable flows, he said; I would like to see that continue, to avoid dewatering chinook redds.

We don't know what's going to happen, said Wellschlager; at this point, we're willing to provide a minimum tailwater depth of 10.5 feet at Bonneville through the weekend. He noted that no chum have yet been observed on the spawning grounds; if they begin to be seen, it is at the salmon managers' discretion to convene an emergency TMT call. Still, couldn't we build in a buffer, in the form of a slightly higher minimum tailwater depth – say 11 feet? Boyce asked. You'll be doing another redd survey on Friday morning? Hlebechuk asked. Correct, Boyce replied. Could we agree to an operation that will cover that eventuality at today's meeting? Hlebechuk asked.

We hear what you're asking for, but if it rains like it's forecast to do, it may not be possible to implement it all the time – there are conditions under which it may not be possible to maintain the tight operation you're requesting, said Bettin. Could we agree to a soft constraint of 11.3-11.7 feet through the weekend, in terms of a minimum tailwater depth, then, if chum are observed on Friday, go to a hard constraint of 11.5 feet on Monday? Hlebechuk asked. That way, we wouldn't have to have an emergency meeting, Wellschlager observed. So if you're notified that chum are present on Friday, you can implement the soft constraint beginning Saturday, and go to a hard constraint on Monday? Boyce asked. Yes, Wellschlager replied.

Boyce reiterated his request for a soft constraint of a minimum tailwater depth of 11 feet to protect chinook redds, beginning immediately. We hear your concern, and if conditions allow, we will do it. So a hard constraint of 10.5 feet, but operate at 11 feet if possible? Hlebechuk asked. Correct, Wellschlager replied. Bettin noted that, given expected tidal and precipitation conditions over the weekend, it may be difficult to maintain an 11-foot tailwater depth at Bonneville. A range is reasonable, given the number of factors affecting that tailwater elevation, said Paul Wagner. Again, we understand what you're trying to do for chinook, and will do our best to accommodate it, said Bettin.

Hlebechuk then summarized the expected operation:

Effective Thursday 10/28 at 0700 hours:

24 hours/day Hard constraint minimum 10.5' Bonneville tailwater

24 hours/day Soft constraint minimum 11' Bonneville tailwater

If chum are present on Friday, 10/29, Dave Wills or Paul Wagner will notify Cathy Hlebechuk or Julie Ammann.

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If chum are NOT present on 10/29:

Effective 0700 - 1900 hours daily starting Monday, 11/1, 10.5' - 12' hard constraint

If chum are present Tuesday 11/2, Dave Wills or Paul Wagner will notify Cathy Hlebechuk or Rudd Turner

Effective 0700 - 1900 hours daily starting Wednesday, 11/3, target tailwater 11.5' and soft constraint 11.3' - 11.7'

Effective 0700 - 1900 hours daily starting Thursday, 11/4, target 11.5' and hard constraint 11.3' - 11.7'

In any event, the 11.3-11.7 foot tailwater elevation will go into effect the morning after chum are observed at Ives Island, although it may be a soft constraint until the following day, given pre-scheduling logistics. It was agreed that Hlebechuk will send out an email summarizing this operation to the TMT membership. It was further agreed that a call from the salmon managers to the action agencies, rather than a special TMT call, will be sufficient to trigger the start of this operation.

Wellschlager emphasized that, while it is possible to implement this operation in 2004, which is shaping up to be a good water year, it is not a precedent-setting operation. However, we're pleased that we're able to work with you on this this year, he said.

4. Autumn Treaty Fishery Summary.

Kyle Martin provided an overview of the 2004 autumn treaty fishing season. He noted that the tribes had submitted five SORs covering eight weeks of commercial treaty fishing this year, which was somewhat unusual. These SORs requested specific reservoir elevations at Bonneville, The Dalles and John Day pools; compliance with the requested operation at Bonneville pool was 81% in 2004; at The Dalles, 72%; at John Day, 51%. Martin noted that the majority of the nets were located in John Day pool; there were some complaints from tribal fishers during the first and second weeks of the autumn treaty fishery about access to nets. After the second week, there were no complaints, said Martin, which indicates that a range of 262-263.5 feet is not optimal. If, in future years, the action agencies could operate at the upper end of the John Day operating range, that would help tribal fishers. Martin added that the 51% compliance rate at John Day pool was 12% higher than the 2003 compliance rate.

Bettin noted that constraints on pool elevations can be very expensive to Bonneville; if there is a cheaper way to alleviate the tribal fishers' concerns – by providing additional access points, or removing debris, for example – Bonneville would be quite interested in that. Martin said he will do some additional research in an effort to

discover the specific problems encountered by tribal fishers, and will discuss this issue further with Bettin.

Martin added that Bonneville pool was in compliance with the 1.5-foot operating range the Corps agreed to provide 93% of the time, The Dalles pool, 96% of the time and John Day pool, 100% of the time. The actual pool fluctuations observed in 2004 (ranging from 0.3-1.7 feet) were similar to those observed in 2003. Hlebechuk noted that, in 1996, CRITFC Chairman Ted Strong met with Colonel Mogren; the agreement that came out of that meeting was that the Corps could accommodate the request for a 1.5-foot operating range in Bonneville pool only – more flexibility was needed in the other two pools for power production. Martin replied that, while this is true, the agreement is outdated, and needs to be revisited, given the changes in the tribal fishers' fishing patterns in recent years. Rudd Turner added that the Corps' preferred reservoir operation at John Day is in place partly to speed juvenile migration through that pool; he said that, in his view, it isn't clear that the operation in support of the tribal fishery should supercede the needs of those juveniles. Obviously there are a lot of factors that need to be considered, Martin replied.

5. Burbot SOR.

Hlebechuk said the burbot SOR has not yet been submitted. Wills said he was unaware that a burbot SOR is imminent, noting that he has not spoken to Bob Hallock recently. He did speak to Sue Ireland of the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative; there is unlikely to be a request for a burbot flow in November or December, although there is some desire to explore cooling flows from Libby. Amy Reece of the Corps said it should be possible to use selective withdrawal at Libby to release somewhat cooler water for burbot pre-spawning. Bettin added that he expects the SOR to be available by this Friday; it will be posted to the TMT homepage once it is received.

6. Libby Operations.

Libby is currently releasing 4.7 Kcfs and filling slightly; current elevation at the project is 2447 feet, said Hlebechuk. We're expecting the December 31 elevation target at Libby to come in at 2411 feet, which means that we need to increase flows to 19 Kcfs by next Tuesday, November 2. On Friday night, we'll reduce Libby outflow to three units (14-15 Kcfs) over the weekend. After that, we'll be looking to draft Libby gradually through the end of December, Hlebechuk said.

7. Albeni Falls Operations.

Albeni Falls is drafting to 2055 by November 15, said Hlebechuk, the project is releasing 24 Kcfs and is at elevation 2056.5 feet, currently. She noted that the Bonners County sheriff's office called to report a possible murder, with a burial in the lake; they requested that we draw the pool down to elevation 2051. We replied that that would not be possible, Hlebechuk said. Given the fact that the evidence isn't going to disappear, and they're not even sure that it's there, the Corps has decided not to change the current operation, she said.

8. Water Management Plan Comments.

Hlebechuk said the most recent draft of the 2005 Water Management Plan will be posted to the TMT website by next Wednesday, November 3; she asked that any comments on this draft be submitted by November 24. She added that the Corps will begin working on the fall/winter update soon.

9. Current Operations Status.

Hlebechuk said that Dworshak continues to release minimum outflow; it is filling slowly, and is currently at about elevation 1522. There was a problem with Unit 1, which the Corps has been using to provide the minimum project discharge; CO2 discharge from the unit tripped off last Wednesday due to deteriorating cables. Unit 2, the other small unit, was out of service at the time, but project personnel were able to get it back on-line within five hours. The Corps released 1 Kcfs spill through the regulating outlets during the outage; no problems were reported at the hatchery downstream. Unit 1 is now back on-line.

The Bonneville spillbay calibration took place as scheduled last week, Hlebechuk continued; the results of that survey will be available in January or February.

Tony Norris reported that Hungry Horse is currently at elevation 3541.2 feet; Grand Coulee is at 1285.9 feet. With respect to fish, there isn't much to report on fish at this point, said Wagner; we're waiting for the chum to arrive. LeFleur added that there is still a trickle of fall chinook passing Bonneville at this time; the next major migration will be spring chinook. In response to a question from Bettin, LeFleur said the expectation is that 2005 will be another good chinook fishing year.

Wellschlager said there is nothing significant to report on the power supply front. Jim Adams said TDG reached 118% below Dworshak six or seven hours after the 1 Kcfs regulating outlet spill was released from the project; had this been a more prolonged operation, the Corps estimates that TDG levels might have reached 130%. We may want to consider a lesser outflow in the event of a similar powerhouse outages at this time of year in the future, Adams said.

10. Next TMT Meeting Date.

The next TMT meeting after the November 10 TMT annual review was set for Wednesday, November 24. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.

**TMT Participant List
October 27, 2004**

Name	Affiliation
Robin Harkless	Facilitation Team
Ron Boyce	ODFW

Cindy LeFleur	WDFW
Paul Wagner	NOAA Fisheries
John Wellschlager	BPA
Tony Norris	USBR
Kyle Martin	CRITFC
Mike O'Bryant	CBB
Cathy Hlebechuk	COE
Tim Heizenrater	PPM
Scott Bettin	BPA
Nic Lane	BPA
Rudd Turner	COE
Jim Adams	COE
David Wills	USFWS
Steve Haeseker	USFWS
Mike Buchko	Powerex
Amy Reece	COE
Greg Hoffman	COE
David Benner	FPC
Chris Carlson	GCPUD
Ruth Burris	PGE
Bruce MacKay	Consultant
Tom Le	PSE