

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM CONFERENCE CALL

May 11, 2005

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.

Conference Call May 11, 2005

Volumes at Dworshak

Last week, the action agencies implemented full powerhouse and spill up to 110% at Dworshak; outflows at Lower Granite averaged 62 kcfs from 5/1-5/8. Flows yesterday (5/10) increased to 91 kcfs. The COE presented the projected total flow augmentation volumes through June at Dworshak, which at 50% confidence showed 245 available kaf. Flows at Lower Granite were currently high and the area was expecting a rain event. Brownlee was full; inflows were increasing, and flows were higher out of Hells Canyon.

SOR 2005-11

Based on the water supply forecast and the increase in fish numbers, the salmon managers requested that the operation continue for an additional week – full powerhouse and spill up to 110%; do not drop below 12 kcfs outflow, and ensure Dworshak refill by June 30. The salmon managers did not suggest a specific target flow at Lower Granite relative to this SOR, although it was noted that as defined in the 2004 BiOp, 85-100 kcfs are the target flows. It was also noted that the April-July water supply forecast showed 11.8 MAF, which would result in less than 85 kcfs average flow observed at Lower Granite this year.

BPA responded that flows at Lower Granite would be high without spill from Dworshak with the recent increase in water supply, and the cost of spill to ratepayers would be high; will there be added value to the fish with spill from Dworshak? The salmon managers acknowledged the need to balance between spring and summer migrants, and suggested that with over 900,000 chinook and steelhead passing and the recent increase in inflows, there should not be a cap placed on outflows at this point. The COE asked the salmon managers to consider that if the water supply begins to recede, there may be little to no water available in late-May/June for summer migrants. Also, consider the radio-tag test that is being conducted at Lower Monumental this week, and the impacts from Dworshak operations on the test.

An alternative option was put on the table, to operate to 85 kcfs minimum at Lower Granite (which would support the Lower Monumental test).

The salmon managers expressed confidence that moving forward with the requested operation – 12 kcfs minimum and 110% TDG maximum – would not prohibit Dworshak from refilling by June 30. They acknowledged that, given the water supply forecast, much of the available water for augmentation might be used during this week of operations. They urged the action agencies to put water on the fish now while such large numbers are passing.

The COE proposed the following operation: Pass inflow at 15 kcfs out, while monitoring inflows and managing the project across the week. As needed (as inflow recedes, in order to not draft the reservoir below 1592.1 by next Wednesday, 5/18), reduce outflows to 12 kcfs over the weekend (starting no sooner than 5/13). New information will be provided on Friday AM (5/13), including water supply forecast and projected inflows. The salmon managers raised concern with the 15 kcfs cap, offering that managing to 110% TDG could put the outflows up by ~ 2 kcfs. The COE responded that they have to manage the project on a weekly, not daily basis, and said the 15 kcfs equaled ‘passing inflow’ across the week as requested in the SOR. The COE also projected that the inflows would likely be peaking today and inflows would begin to recede. The salmon managers were not fully satisfied that their objectives in the SOR would be met with this proposed operation, and again expressed concern with the 15 kcfs cap on outflows.

ACTION: The project will continue to operate at 15 kcfs out until Friday morning, 5/13. A TMT conference call has been scheduled to discuss Dworshak operations over the weekend, considering water supply forecast and projected inflows (**SEE May 13 meeting notes**).

Priest Rapids

The action agencies reported that Priest Rapids was operating to a weekly average of 135 kcfs last week, and planned to continue with this operation while staying as close to 1255’ at Grand Coulee as possible. The salmon managers supported this operation. There will be an update and discussion on Priest Rapids operations at the May 18 face-to-face TMT meeting.

1. Greetings and Introductions.

The May 11 Technical Management Team conference call was chaired by Cindy Henriksen and facilitated by Robin Harkless. The following is a summary (not a verbatim transcript) of the topics discussed and decisions made at this meeting. Anyone with questions or comments about these notes should contact Henriksen at 503/808-3945.

2. Dworshak Augmentation.

The main purpose of today's call is to follow up on last week's Dworshak SOR, said Henriksen; as per the SOR, Dworshak has been releasing full powerhouse capacity plus spill (about 14-15 Kcfs). The average flow at Lower Granite last week was 62 Kcfs; it was 91 Kcfs yesterday. The goal today is to decide on the Dworshak operation for next week, she said. The remaining flow augmentation volume in Dworshak is 258 kaf, based on a 50% most probable forecast, she added.

Prior to today's conference call, the action agencies received another SOR from the salmon managers, said Henriksen; we did have a few questions about it. What do you expect to see, in terms of Lower Granite flows, over the next few days? Ron Boyce asked. Flows are high right now, with rain forecast for today, Henriksen replied. Brownlee is full and passing inflow, and inflows to that project are increasing. Boyce noted that Lower Granite flows are now 96 Kcfs and rising.

Our request was that the action agencies continue to pass inflow at Dworshak, up to the 110% TDG cap, said David Wills; we also ask that the Corps not drop Dworshak outflow below 12 Kcfs, while still assuring Dworshak refill by June 30. We wanted to keep flows up during a strong outmigration period. That was the intent, he said, but when we crafted the SOR, we weren't aware that flows in the Lower Snake were going to be this high. What kind of target flows were you hoping to achieve over the next week at Lower Granite? John Wellschlager asked. We didn't have a particular target flow in mind, Wills replied; we were simply trying to provide the best possible migration conditions during the peak outmigration period. Wellschlager noted that spill is costly for ratepayers; we see the next 10 days as being pretty flow-rich in the Lower Snake. If we could do without that 2-3 Kcfs of spill right now, that would be Bonneville's preference, Wellschlager said. The key question is how much flow augmentation volume is available, and how best to use that available volume to help fish, said Wills – I'm not quite sure how to answer your question directly.

Ron Boyce said the flow targets are pretty well defined; he noted that inflows to Dworshak are running 18 Kcfs right now, so even with spill to the gas cap, the project is filling. We're seeing record numbers of migrants arriving at Lower Granite, he said; if we're ever going to augment flows in the springtime, now is the time.

When you say the flow objectives are well defined, what does that mean? Henriksen asked. They were defined in the 2004 BiOp as 85-100 Kcfs for the spring period at Lower Granite, Boyce replied. That means 85 Kcfs is the lower end, and 100 Kcfs is the higher end. Again, given peak numbers of fish moving down through the system, we need to keep flows going. Henriksen noted that the action agencies have made it clear that the spring seasonal average flow at Lower Granite is likely to be closer to 70 Kcfs, not 85 Kcfs, in 2005. If you use all the water now, the flow at Lower Granite in June will be about 35-40 Kcfs, she

said. If all of the flow augmentation is used now, Dworshak will be at minimum flow from May 20-June 30. I want you to consider that when you think about flow objectives at Lower Granite for the next week, she said.

The thing we're asking you to consider is that the additional spill is very costly; we are going to see rich flows over the next week, said Wellschlager. It's our job to manage flows, and give you our best judgement about how the reservoirs are doing. Our concern is that if we use everything we have now, then things dry up in June, and the weather turns hot, we're not going to be able to front-load the temperature control drafts from Dworshak to cool things down at Lower Granite. It's not your job to manage the reservoirs – that's our job. Still, the fact is that Dworshak is 7 feet from full, and continues to fill even as we release 15 Kcfs, said Boyce. From the perspective of managing water for fish, 85 to 100 Kcfs at Lower Granite is what would be most beneficial at this time.

We still support the SOR, said Boyce; our main concern was that we not draft Dworshak, and were certainly not doing that. If we can decrease Dworshak outflow slightly while still maintaining good flow conditions for fish, that would be a win-win situation. Rich Domingue noted that, assuming that the water supply forecast is reasonably accurate, the request the salmon managers have made would reduce the total available flow augmentation volume from Dworshak by about half – by 140-160 kaf. I just wanted people to be aware of that; of course it all depends on how accurate the forecast is, he said. I can't think of a better time to spend that water, given the fact that we're seeing peak numbers of both hatchery and wild migrants at Lower Granite right now, said Boyce.

Still, it is a gamble, said Domingue. What if we set 12 Kcfs as a maximum outflow from Dworshak? I would have to hear the biological rationale behind that suggestion, said Boyce. Also, if we're going to base this decision on money, we're going to need to talk about the fact that the action agencies are not providing the full 40% spill at The Dalles. That is beyond the scope of our discussion today, Wellschlager replied.

My understanding is that there is only about 140 kaf of storage space available at Dworshak, said Wills. That's true, said Henriksen, but what we're trying to do is balance the needs of fish and reservoir refill. We would prefer to utilize the Dworshak flow augmentation as best we can across the season. There are also concerns about the effects of increased flow on the current test at Lower Monumental, she said – we would prefer to have about 85 Kcfs at Lower Monumental to conduct that test. We would prefer to operate the Lower Snake to about 85 Kcfs through this period, said Wellschlager.

After a caucus break, Wills said the salmon managers had agreed unanimously that they are still on board with their original request and recommendation. The likelihood is that this recommendation will accommodate

fish needs now, while still retaining some water for use later in the spring, he said – we see no reason not to continue with this.

I still don't understand what "this" is, said Henriksen. We were trying to set up a minimum and a maximum, said Wills – obviously you can't exceed the gas cap unless the spill is involuntary. We can't exceed the gas cap except for flood control, Henriksen said – based on the current snow-covered area, the current Dworshak flood control elevation would be about 1593.5 feet. So the maximum, as far as we're concerned, would be to pass inflow up to the gas cap, but don't go below 12 Kcfs discharge over the next week, said Wills. So there is a desire to have flow for fish now, said Henriksen; we expect to have flows in excess of 85 Kcfs at Lower Granite. You want us to pass inflow? Right now, inflow to Dworshak is 18 Kcfs, so you can't pass inflow without exceeding the gas cap, Wills replied. If inflows were to fall to, say 10 Kcfs, we're saying don't go below 12 Kcfs discharge. And you want us to do that even if it causes Dworshak to draft? Henriksen asked. Yes – we feel this is the time to put the water on the fish, Wills replied.

I'm at a loss to understand why 85 Kcfs as a week-average at Lower Granite without spill at Dworshak is insufficient, said Wellschlager – I can't agree to spilling at Dworshak, given the flows in the Lower Snake, currently, and the cost – about half a million dollars a week. Domingue said that, in his view, BPA is assuming that Dworshak will not fill and spill later this month – there is no guarantee of that, given the volume of storage available in Dworshak. There is no guarantee, agreed, but it is highly likely that we would be able to save what we're spilling now, and generate with that water later, rather than having to spill it, Wellschlager replied.

Moving on to the current water supply forecast, Henriksen said that, for the April-July period at Lower Granite, 11.8 MAF is the forecast. That is why we expect that it will not be possible to meet an 85 Kcfs seasonal objective at Lower Granite in 2005, she said. We understand, said Wills, but we're looking at it from the other side of the fence and saying that, while the seasonal forecast is at the low end of the scale, we have a wave of water coming down through the system right now, at the same time we are seeing record numbers of outmigrants at Lower Granite. We would still be interested in knowing why the salmon managers don't feel that a flow of 85 Kcfs at Lower Granite through next week isn't acceptable, said Henriksen. We're trying to maintain the best conditions for fish – that's the only way I can explain it, said Wills. We're not as pessimistic as the action agencies about the impacts of the next week's operation on our ability to augment flows later in the spring, he said.

After a few minutes of additional discussion, Henriksen said her understanding of the SOR is that there is a desire to have flow for fish this week, while there are large numbers of juveniles present in the lower river; the request is to pass inflow up to the 110% TDG cap, with a minimum Dworshak outflow of

12 Kcfs. You understand that, if the weather dries up, that could cause us to draft Dworshak? she asked. Yes, but that is unlikely to occur, based on the weather forecasts I'm seeing, said Kyle Martin. Wellschlager said BPA cannot support the requested operation.

After another caucus break, Henriksen said the action agencies had looked at the inflow situation at Dworshak, and what they plan to do is continue to release 15 Kcfs while monitoring inflow as it begins to recede. We will maintain 12 Kcfs outflow as a minimum for the next week, she said. We are interested in retaining some augmentation water in Dworshak for use in June, she added. And how will you make a decision about when to reduce outflow to 12 Kcfs? Domingue asked. We don't want to draft Dworshak, said Henriksen – if inflows fall below 15 Kcfs, we'll look at reducing Dworshak outflow to 12 Kcfs. We will maintain that minimum 12 Kcfs flow, however, she said.

So are you going to implement the SOR? Cindy LeFleur asked. Well, it's somewhat confusing, because there are three conflicting operations in the SOR, Henriksen replied. Our intention is to pass inflow through next Wednesday by maintaining the 15 Kcfs outflow currently, but may reduce to 12 Kcfs over the weekend if inflows recede. The target elevation for Dworshak reservoir will be slightly above elevation 1592 feet. Will you consider increasing the Dworshak outflow above 15 Kcfs, given the fact that we're not at the 110% TDG standard below Dworshak now? Margaret Filardo asked. That is a new suggestion, Henriksen replied. Actually, the SOR clearly says pass inflow up to the 110% standard, Boyce replied – I don't understand where the confusion lies.

So the action agencies' goal will be to end this operation at or near the current elevation at Dworshak, about 1592 feet? Domingue asked. Correct, Henriksen replied. In response to a question, Filardo said the current discharge volume of 15 Kcfs is producing gas of about 107% below Dworshak – there is room for an increase, she said.

Are there any salmon manager objections to the action agencies' suggested operation? Harkless asked. Let me make sure I understand, said Wills – it sounds as though you're countering with a maximum of 15 Kcfs, and a minimum of 12 Kcfs, as long as Dworshak doesn't drop below its current elevation. Correct, Henriksen replied – I expect the project to pass inflow over the next week. The reservoir may fill slightly over the next few days, but by next week, it is likely that inflows will recede, and we will begin to draft Dworshak slightly if we maintain 12 Kcfs outflow.

Ultimately, Wills, Boyce and Martin said they do not support the action agencies' suggested compromise – the salmon managers would prefer to see the SOR implemented as requested. The SOR says pass inflow, and that's what we've offered, said Henriksen – are you now saying you want to draft Dworshak? The request still stands, as specified, said Boyce – that puts the ball in your

court. But we're going to meet your SOR, Henriksen said. No, Boyce replied – you're not meeting the request to increase Dworshak discharge to the 110% TDG cap.

Henriksen said the action agencies' plan is to pass inflow, releasing 15 Kcfs through the rest of this week, likely dropping outflow to 12 Kcfs over the weekend, and maintaining a minimum outflow of 12 Kcfs through next week, with the goal of finishing the week at Dworshak's current elevation, 1592.1 feet. Norris said that, in his view, what the action agencies are proposing does implement the operation requested in the SOR. We have proposed a fair and reasonable operation that lives up to the intent of the SOR, said Wellschlager; if you don't feel that is fair and reasonable, then elevate the issue.

The group briefly reviewed the current inflow data for Dworshak; Norris noted that inflows increased from 13.6 Kcfs to 18.3 Kcfs between May 9 and May 10, a one-day period. Inflows are likely to fall off just as sharply, Wellschlager observed. Henriksen said that, in her opinion, Dworshak inflows have now peaked, and will begin receding across the day. Wellschlager said BPA's forecasts, too, show Dworshak inflows peaking today, then starting to recede.

After a few minutes of further discussion, it was agreed that the action agencies will implement the operation as Henriksen outlined it, maintaining the current 15 Kcfs outflow from Dworshak for the next few days, and possibly reducing outflow to 12 Kcfs if inflows to the project begin to recede. In response to a question, Henriksen said the Corps will not make the transition from 15 Kcfs to 12 Kcfs before Friday afternoon. It was agreed to schedule a TMT check-in call for 9 am Friday morning to discuss the action agencies' planned operation over the weekend.

3. Flow Objectives at Priest Rapids.

Henriksen said Priest Rapids will release a week-average of 135 Kcfs this week. We're assuming that the salmon managers would like us to maintain that rate of discharge, said Wellschlager. Our expectation is that it shouldn't be a problem to maintain that rate of discharge, Wellschlager added. It was so agreed.

4. Next TMT Meeting Date.

The next meeting of the Technical Management Team was set for Wednesday, May 18. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle.

TMT Meeting Participants May 11, 2005

Name	Affiliation
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Ray Gonzales	COE
Cindy Henriksen	COE
John Wellschlager	BPA
Tony Norris	USBR
Kevin Nordt	Mid-Cs
Robin Harkless	Facilitation Team
Russ George	WMCI
Dan Spear	BPA
Rudd Turner	COE
Tim Heizenrater	PPM
David Wills	USFWS
Kyle Martin	CRITFC
Cindy LeFleur	WDFW
Rich Domigue	NMFS
Ron Boyce	ODFW
Ruth Burris	PGE
Margaret Filardo	FPC
Glenn Traeger	Avista
Jennifer Miller	
Lee Corum	PNUCC
Bruce MacKay	Consultant
Tom Le	PSE
Terry Weeks	PNGC