

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM CONFERENCE CALL

June 8, 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.

Review of Notes

Changes were made to the June 1 facilitator notes per comments, and have been posted to the web. If anyone has additional comments on these notes or the official meeting minutes, please contact Robin Harkless or Cindy Henriksen.

Priest Rapids Flow

As follow-up from last week, Cindy Henriksen, COE, reported that the action agencies began operating Priest Rapids to target a week average flow of 120 kcfs through yesterday (6/7). Today's conference call was convened to discuss operations for the remainder of this week and next week. The most recent STP run shows higher flows in June (about 125 kcfs monthly average) than shown last week, due to precipitation in the upper basin of the Columbia. It is uncertain if and how much rain will continue in the coming weeks.

The salmon managers gave a recommendation to continue operating to a week average of 120 kcfs through next Tuesday, and to revisit operations at the June 15 TMT meeting when updated forecasts are available. The salmon managers noted that fish are still coming down through the Mid-Columbia and this proposed operation would support their passage.

The action agencies agreed to the suggested operation. BPA noted that some flexibility, about a 5 kcfs band, is needed to do the operation, which the salmon managers agreed to.

ACTION: The action agencies will operate Priest Rapids to 120 kcfs weekly average flow through Tuesday, June 14. TMT will revisit this operation at the June 15 TMT meeting.

Libby Flow

Upon completion of the sturgeon pulse operation, the COE has been operating Libby to a steady flow through August; starting June 3, the project went to 14 kcfs. With scattered precipitation and increased inflows, the COE may need to increase outflows later this week. The amount will depend on inflow and precipitation forecasts that will be available later this week. The overall interest and main objective, shared by all, is to avoid fill and spill and to maintain a flat flow. Tony Norris, BOR, noted that Hungry Horse is experiencing fill and spill, but has remained below 110% TDG. Potential transmission limitations next week (TBL work is being done) in the

basin may require the action agencies to seek a balance between Dworshak and Libby operations (e.g. reduce generation at Dworshak).

ACTION: Cindy Henriksen will send an email to TMT about operation decisions at Libby and Dworshak based on forecasts available later this week. TMT will revisit Libby operations on June 15.

SOR 2005-15

The salmon managers developed SOR 2005-15 on June 2 after debris load issues arose at Lower Granite, causing an increase in mortalities and the head differential to be higher than 1.5', which is outside the criteria laid out in the Fish Passage Plan. The salmon managers requested that the action agencies revisit and adhere to the FPP guidelines, and that operators closely monitor debris levels on the screens. The salmon managers put together the SOR because they were concerned with the mortalities and that loading was not reduced.

Cindy Henriksen reported that she gathered information from project operators, who said the head differential remained below 1.5', within the criteria in the FPP. The operators did see a slight increase in mortalities and worked immediately to reduce the problem over the weekend. The project is now back to normal.

The COE requested that, if an issue like this arises in the future, the salmon managers try to work it offline if possible. The salmon managers expressed appreciation for the COE's attention on this.

ACTION: There will be a follow-up report at the June 15 TMT meeting about the cause of the debris load issues. One suggestion was that there were a number of small fish released from the Nez Perce tribal hatchery upstream due to weather events in the area. The salmon managers will look into this and report back to TMT.

Other

There will be discussion of McNary spill/transport at the next TMT meeting. The salmon managers should come prepared to provide substantive input so a decision can be made.

Next Meeting, June 15, 9am-noon

Agenda Items include:

- Review Notes
- Libby Operations
- Priest Rapids Flow
- Follow-up on Lower Granite Debris Load Issues
- McNary Spill/Transport Operations

Technical Management Team Meeting Notes

June 8, 2005

1. Greetings and Introductions.

The June 8 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 minutes should contact Henriksen at 503/808-3945.

2. Priest Rapids Flow.

Henriksen said this agenda item is a follow-up from last week's TMT meeting; we were trying to reach agreement on flow objectives for this week, and agreed to target 120 Kcfs through today, she said. We agreed to talk about what the flow objective should be for the remainder of this week and next week, she said. The Corps has completed a new STP run; it shows a relatively high flow, about 125 Kcfs, through the remainder of June. It looks like we'll have a little more flow than we thought through the rest of June, she said.,

Are you saying that, because of this rain event, the STP isn't accurate through the end of June? David Wills asked. The STP run is a guideline, Henriksen replied – the message is that this week's run is showing more flow than last week, but may be a little high. On a single-trace run, STP tends to overreact to current conditions, said John Wellschlager – if you're in a wet patch, it tends to skew high; if we're in a dry patch, it tends to skew low. Don't take it as gospel, Wellschlager said. Do you see the current precipitation pattern continuing? asked Paul Wagner. I see scattered showers over the next 10 days; after that, it looks like things are going to dry out, said Kyle Martin. At this time of year, it's difficult to predict uniform precipitation amounts.

We took this information and discussed it this morning, said Wills; our recommendation is to continue to target 120 Kcfs this week, and discuss the latest projections at next Wednesday's TMT meeting with the refill goal in mind. It would be our preference not to back off flows at this point, given fish numbers migrating through the system.

Bonneville doesn't see a problem doing that, but operationally, we see a 5 Kcfs flow band around that, said Wellschalger – it's not an aquarium. We assume that the same operation in place this week will continue through next Wednesday's TMT meeting, said Wills. That shouldn't be a problem, said Tony Norris. It sounds as though

continuing with the target of 120 Kcfs is not a problem for the action agencies, said Harkless.

3. Libby Flow.

We agreed to discuss Libby outflow following the end of the sturgeon operation, said Henriksen; we talked about finding a steady rate of outflow through the end of August that will bring us to the UPA elevation by August 31. We changed the outflow on June 3 to 14 Kcfs. Since then, precipitation events have caused inflows to increase to 40 Kcfs+. We're now exploring increasing the Libby outflow to 20 Kcfs, but are` waiting on new forecasts to see how much we'll need to increase flow. You're worried about filling and spilling? Jim Litchfield asked. Correct, Henriksen replied – the current Libby elevation is 2445 and filling, and we want to keep flows as flat as possible through the end of August. Montana shares that interest, said Litchfield.

We all share that sentiment, said Wills. What's your best guess on Libby outflow for this week? asked Boyce. We may be increasing to 20 Kcfs, or not, Henriksen said. We're bumping up against the same thing at Hungry Horse, added Norris. We're looking at potential generation limitations next week, such that we have to let Dworshak sag somewhat over the weekend, said Henriksen. There will be some TBL work next week from the 13th through the 17th, and if we can get through that, we'll be in good shape, said Wellschlager. Dworshak is now releasing 5.3 Kcfs currently, said Henriksen; we may reduce that next week so that Dworshak fills somewhat more quickly. We'll check in next week, said Wills; it was agreed that Henriksen will send an email describing the Libby, Hungry Horse and Dworshak operations for next week as soon as this operation becomes clear.

4. SOR 2005-15.

On June 2, the action agencies received SOR 2005-15. This SOR, supported by USFWS, IDFG, ODFW, WDFW, NMFS, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and CRITFC, requests the following specific operations:

- According to the Fish Passage Plan, page LWG-10, paragraph 8, “When a head differential of 1.5 feet is reached, the respective turbine unit should be operated at a reduced loading, not more than 110 MW... clean VBS as soon as possible” The salmon managers recommend that COE operate to these specifications. We also recommend that the project follow up with video monitoring of the VBS after raking trashracks to ensure that they are clear of debris.

Wills explained that this SOR was developed in response to the fact that juvenile fish facility mortality for subyearling chinook at Lower Granite was 1.1% on June 2; smolt monitoring personnel reported that the mortalities showed high levels of descaling, which is an indicator that fish are likely being injured by high levels of debris in the trash racks or vertical barrier screens.

We weren't sure if this was the best format in which to present this request, but things were happening very quickly, and we wanted to get it out in front of the TMT, said Wills. Henriksen said she had requested information from Walla Walla District, which sent data regarding the head differential (see email). They agreed to decrease Unit 5 and 6 loading, though those units were still within criteria to try to reduce mortality over the weekend. I believe that the other units also reduced load over the weekend; the screens were scrubbed, and I believe the units are now running back at full load. The units were never out of criteria, but the project voluntarily reduced load to avoid mortality. Wellschlager noted that he had heard that a hatchery upstream had been forced to release fish due to a water quality problem; numbers spiked following that release. Wills replied that he had not heard of this problem, and said that, in his view, greater coordination is needed.

Henriksen said the project had called her on Friday to let her know there was a trash problem on the VBS, even before an SOR was received. Wellschlager said he would have preferred that a coordinating telephone call occur prior to the development of an SOR. Wills said that, according to his recollection, such phone calls did occur, between the Fish Passage Center and the operators at Lower Granite. At the time of the incident, the mortality numbers were spiking, and the messages we were getting was that the project was responding by cleaning the trash racks, but did not reduce loading on the units until Friday. We wrote this SOR to remind the action agencies that the Fish Passage Plan includes specific actions that need to be taken when these situations occur. Wills said that, to the best of his knowledge, the project operators did follow the Fish Passage Plan once this situation was brought to their attention. We appreciate their willingness to work with us, he said.

Henriksen said that, in the future, she would prefer to work out such problems off-line – without an SOR. We're willing to try to correct any concerns the salmon managers have, she said, and in this case, we responded as quickly as possible to the salmon managers' concerns. Wellschlager reiterated that he

would like more information about the premature release of undersized fish, which may have exacerbated this problem; Russ Kiefer said his understanding was that it was the Nez Perce Tribal Hatchery that released fish sooner than expected. It was agreed to follow up on this issue at next week's TMT meeting.

5. Next TMT Meeting Date.

The next face-to-face meeting of the Technical Management Team was set for Wednesday, June 15. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle.

**TMT Participant List
June 8, 2005**

Name	Affiliation
Cindy Henriksen	COE
Jim Litchfield	Montana
John Wellschlager	BPA
Robin Harkless	Facilitation Team
Paul Wagner	NMFS
David Wills	USFWS
Ron Boyce	ODFW
Tony Norris	USBR
Larry Beck	COE
Ray Gonzales	COE
Laura Hamilton	COE
Nic Lane	BPA
Rudd Turner	COE
Dan Spear	BPA
Russ George	WMCI
Tim Heizenrater	PPM
Kyle Martin	CRITFC
Cindy LeFleur	WDFW
Kevin Nordt	Mid-Cs

Mike Buchko	Powerex
Lee Corum	PNUCC
Ruth Burris	PGE
Richelle Beck	D. Rohr & Assoc.
Glenn Traeger	Avista