

Technical Management Team Meeting Notes

July 6, 2005

1. Greetings and Introductions.

The July 6 Technical Management Team meeting was chaired by Cindy Henriksen and facilitated by Geoff Huntington. The following is a summary (not a verbatim transcript) of the topics discussed and decisions made at that meeting. Anyone with questions or concerns about these minutes should contact Henriksen at 503/808-3945.

2. Libby/Hungry Horse Summer Operations.

Jim Litchfield said he has submitted a revised Montana SOR, which now includes the support of the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho and the Salish/Kootenai Tribe. I also tried to respond to Cindy LeFleur's concerns about Grand Coulee refill – I changed the September refill to no higher than 1285, he said. The lower range also seemed to be a concern; it is very unlikely that the reservoir will be refilled only to 1282, and I hope that responds to Washington's concerns. I also made changes to the graph on page 8, in response to a request from Russ Kiefer, Litchfield said; Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks provided some information on the change in wetted perimeter in the Kootenai River at various rates of outflow. A second graph, on page 9, shows the results of an analysis of preferred habitat for adults and juveniles at various rates of outflow – 6 Kcfs, 13 Kcfs and 20 Kcfs.

What area are we talking about? Ron Boyce asked. Two sections of the Kootenai River where MFWP monitors below Libby – from Libby to Kootenai Falls, and from Kootenai Falls to the Idaho border, replied Greg Hoffman.

What this doesn't show is the fact that, under the BiOp operation, we would wet this perimeter up to the 20 Kcfs level, then abruptly drop flow to 6 Kcfs, desiccating much of the habitat, Litchfield said. The goal of this operation is to keep more habitat wetted and productive through the end of September, he said. Is there more adult usage of either of the two sections? Henriksen asked. The study was based on observations; we sampled adult and juvenile habitat locations equally in both sections, Hoffman replied. Primarily, the adults are found in higher density in section 1, closer to the dam, while the juveniles are found farther downstream.

The concern I have is that I have yet to see anything that would make me believe that we're more likely to see more benefit for bull trout and sturgeon than detrimental

impacts to anadromous fish, said Russ Kiefer. I agree that what you're proposing would be beneficial for resident fish, but I'm not convinced that those benefits would outweigh the detriments for anadromous fish, he said. Certainly keeping the stream perimeter wetted through the season will yield greater production, but you haven't quantified the resulting increase in bull trout production, or the impacts on anadromous fish, so I can't make an informed technical decision. I don't see the data that would convince me that the benefits of this operation for resident fish will outweigh the detriments to anadromous fish, he said.

This operation is about production for resident fish, Litchfield replied – as you know, it is very difficult to quantify such benefits in terms of numerical production. The full 20-foot BiOp draft will still come out – it will just come out over a longer period. The ISAB concluded, after two days of deliberations, that the impacts on anadromous fish are small under this operation, while the benefits to resident fish in Montana are significant. From a common-sense perspective, the change in downriver flow is very small – at McNary, 5 to 10 Kcfs from a flow of, say, 150 Kcfs.

Sue Ireland said the Kootenai Tribe strongly supports the Montana SOR. We have species on the brink here – Westslope cutthroat, burbot, kokanee – in addition to bull trout and sturgeon. We strongly oppose having flows of 20 Kcf through the summer, followed by an abrupt drop to 6 Kcfs on September 1. We have a short growing season to begin with, and we need all the help we can get.

Paul Wagner said he had run the Montana proposal past the NMFS administrator, and explained that there are two competing proposals. His read of the judge's order is that we have to stay with the base case operation as outlined in the BiOp, unless the Montana operation is agreed to by all parties in the region, Wagner said. Our read is that the 20-foot draft by August 31 would be the plaintiff's preference, he said; from a policy perspective, NMFS cannot support the Montana SOR.

We recognize the complexity of 2005 operations, given Judge Redden's intervention, said Litchfield. Montana's hope is that all parties could agree to a more sensible way to operate the Montana reservoirs, as we have proposed. That's what NMFS believes is needed, said Wagner. On the technical side of things, I said NMFS would use SIMPAS to analyze the Montana operation, said Wagner; to do that, we divided things into two seasons: July and August, and September. This analysis is available via hot-link from today's agenda on the TMT homepage. Wagner emphasized that this is a first cut; the analysis will be refined further after today's meeting.

Wagner explained that SIMPAS is used to estimate the differences between two operations – fish passage, dam operations and survival. We analyzed a base case of maximum transport with no spill; we also analyzed the Montana proposal. System survival is driven by a range of "D" values – the post-Bonneville survival of transported fish. We don't have a good feel for what the "D" value is for fall chinook, because of their differential life-history, Wagner explained; hence the use of a range of "D" values.

Wagner spent a few minutes describing the NMFS analysis, including methodology and results. Using SIMPAS, the impacts of the proposed Montana operation depend on the assumed “D” value, he said. Ron Boyce observed that the “D” value NMFS assumed in the base case – 0.22 – is somewhat more optimistic than the 0.18 assumed in the 2004 BiOp.

The bottom line is that, under the BiOp vs the Montana proposal, we saw a slight decrease in survival under the Montana operation, compared to the base case – on the order of a 2% decrease, said Wagner. I would observe that, looking at this analysis, it would appear that the court-ordered spill operation could have a greater detrimental effect than the Montana proposal, said John Wellschlager. It all depends on what your assumption is regarding the “D” value, Wagner replied.

For September, what we did was a guess – we assumed that 90% of the fish pass in July and August, said Wagner – that’s probably a little low, and it is likely that a higher percentage passes prior to September 1. During September, the Montana proposal would yield an increase in survival of 0.29% to 3%. Overall, according to our analysis, the Montana proposal would decrease survival by about 1.75%, Wagner said. On the other hand, the Montana proposal would increase the survival of late-migrating fish, he added. Litchfield observed that the Montana SOR included the ISAB’s conclusions about what the SIMPAS modeling shows for Lower Columbia, Upper Columbia and Snake River fall chinook. The bottom line is that we’re dealing with resolution well below the confidence limits these models can produce, he said – the impacts of the Montana proposal amount to background noise.

Kyle Martin observed that any water released from Libby after August 31 will be trapped in the Canadian storage projects. Henriksen replied that the Corps has talked with Canada, and the volume of water that would not be passed through is small, given the 2005 water year.

Wagner added that NMFS has also analyzed the potential impacts of the Montana proposal on water temperatures and velocities at McNary; the model shows that water temperature would likely increase by a tenth of a degree C. Results are not yet available from the water velocity model.

Did you want a decision on the Montana SOR today? David Wills asked. Yes, Litchfield replied. I’ve just seen this technical analysis, said Wills; I can’t make a decision today. Kiefer said that, from Idaho’s perspective, nothing that was presented today convinced him that the benefits from Montana’s proposed operation for resident fish would be significant, while the negative impact to anadromous fish would be negligible. I don’t hear anyone saying that we will be able to measure the increase in survival for resident fish, he said. Montana’s concerns are valid, but as a technical manager, I haven’t seen any information that will give me comfort that resident fish survival will improve enough to justify the detrimental impact on anadromous fish. This

is clearly a policy decision, he added – we can't resolve this here. At this point, Idaho cannot support the Montana SOR, Kiefer said; it should be elevated to the policy level for resolution.

Boyce said Oregon has no position on the Montana proposal, but would like an opportunity to look more closely at the available analyses. We will engage in future discussions on this issue, however, he said. Wills said the Fish and Wildlife Service is not yet convinced that a deviation from the base case is justified. Wellschlager said BPA supports the mainstem amendments, but given the court-ordered spill operation in 2005, BPA is neutral on the Montana proposal, at least for now. If you can come to agreement at TMT, BPA would not block the Montana proposal, he said. Norris said USBR cannot move forward with the implementation of the Montana SOR without approval from NMFS, but added that he is sympathetic to Montana's argument regarding the benefits of Montana's proposed operation on resident fish. We also need to look at the impacts of drafting Hungry Horse 20 feet this summer, Norris added, because those impacts are significant.

Wagner reiterated that, barring TMT consensus, NMFS cannot entertain a deviation from the base case operation at this time. Henriksen said that, from the Corps' perspective, we continue to operate to the 2004 BiOp, which offers the option for adaptive management of the system. Consensus is necessary for any change in operation. Until that consensus is achieved, we will continue to operate to the 2004 UPA and the court-ordered summer spill program, she said. Martin added that CRITFC opposes the Montana SOR.

Litchfield said Montana will elevate this issue for resolution at the July 14 IT meeting; we would like to see the Montana SOR implemented as written, he said. We would ask the IT to review the SOR and make a decision, Litchfield said. It was agreed that the other TMT participants will brief their IT members on their individual agency positions.

3. Dworshak Water Temperatures.

We have an SOR – 2005-17 – on this issue, as well as some information from Kyle Martin, said Henriksen. The SOR, supported by USFWS, IDFG, WDFW, NMFS, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and CRITFC, requests the following specific operations:

- Continue outflows of 7 Kcfs at Dworshak through July 10; however, after July 7, increase outflows at Dworshak to 10 Kcfs if temperatures at Lower Granite exceed 67 degrees F on a 24-hour rolling average. On July 11, increase Dworshak outflow to 10 Kcfs until further notice. Continue to target 46-48-degree F outflow temperature over the specified time.

By 10 Kcfs, I assume you mean full powerhouse capacity, which is actually

closer to 9.5 Kcfs? Henriksen asked. Correct, Wills replied.

Martin provided some modeling information about water temperatures in the Clearwater at Peck, and at Lower Granite; observed temperatures at Lower Granite are running about 1 degree higher than modeled, he said. The temperature at the Lower Granite tailwater is hovering around 66 degrees F, currently, Henriksen added. A cold front is expected to keep temperatures moderate on the east side over the next few days, added Martin.

Henriksen noted that it would be helpful if the action agencies could have as much lead time as possible, with respect to changes in Dworshak operations. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that any change to Dworshak operations will be based on the 24-hour rolling average temperature at the Lower Granite tailrace, not on hourly readings. We'll coordinate closely between now and the 11th, said Wills. Dave Statler requested that the action agencies notify the TMT participants of any changes in Dworshak operations by email; Henriksen agreed to do so. She said this SOR will be implemented.

4. Treaty Fishing.

On July 5, the action agencies received SOR 2005 C-1. This SOR, supported by CRITFC, requests the following specific operations:

July 5th, 2005, 6 am, Tuesday, through 6 pm, July 7th, 2005, Thursday.

Bonneville Pool: Operate the pool within a 1.0 foot band.

The Dalles (Celilo) Pool: Operate the pool within a 1.0 foot band.

John Day Pool: Operate the pool within a 1.0 foot band.

Martin noted that this SOR is constructed slightly different from previous treaty fishing SORs, in that, while it does request that the Zone 6 pools be operated within a 1-foot operating range, it does not specify an elevation, because of the special circumstances pertaining to the court-ordered spill program. He added that CRITFC will be sponsoring a series of "net flights" beginning today, to provide weekly information to the Corps regarding the number of nets in each pool.

Henriksen said the action agencies are already beginning to implement the operations requested in this SOR. Bonneville is the most problematic pool because it has the largest operating range; we have issued instructions to the project operators to impose a hard constraint of 1.5 feet on the Bonneville operating range, with a soft constraint of 1 foot. Wellschlager added the proviso that operational flexibility is extremely tight this year; while Bonneville will do its best to implement this SOR, circumstances could arise that will cause a given project to go out of compliance.

5. Feedback on Emergency Protocols.

Henriksen said the salmon managers had agreed to provide their feedback on the first draft of the 2005 emergency protocols. Wills said that, while this topic was discussed at yesterday's FPAC meeting, not all of the salmon managers were able to attend. We would like to defer submitting our comments until all of the salmon managers have had a chance to sign off on them, with the understanding that the current protocol list is in force. Boyce said he is the only salmon manager who was unable to attend yesterday's FPAC meeting, but said he has no problem with submitting FPAC's comments at today's meeting. Wills said he will email the salmon managers' comments to Henriksen. We will revisit the list at the July 13 TMT meeting, Henriksen said.

6. McNary Spill "Action Shots."

The Corps showed a series of videos, showing spill operations at McNary

7. Water Quality.

Henriksen noted that the water quality information related to the court-ordered spill program is being regularly updated on the TMT homepage; she said the spill caps at each project are being changed as needed to keep TDG levels within the state waiver limits. The spill cap at Lower Granite, for example, is now 42 Kcfs; Little Goose is now spilling 30% of total river flow during daylight hours to facilitate adult passage. As a result of that change, a large number of adults have passed upstream; about 1,600 on the first day the change was made. We'll be interested to see whether the increased passage persists, said Wagner.

8. Next TMT Meeting Date.

The next meeting of the Technical Management Team was set for Wednesday, July 13. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.

TMT Participant List

July 6, 2005

Name	Affiliation
Cindy Henriksen	COE
Ron Boyce	ODFW
Jim Litchfield	Montana
John Wellschlager	BPA
Tony Norris	USBR

Paul Wagner	NMFS
David Wills	USFWS
Ray Gonzales	COE
Larry Beck	COE
Jim Adams	COE
Laura Hamilton	COE
Tina Lundell	COE
Tom Haymaker	PNGC
Lee Corum	PNUCC
Tim Heizenrater	PPM
Dan Spear	BPA
Nic Lane	BPA
Kyle Martin	CRITFC
Russ George	WMCI
Margaret Filardo	FPC
Dave Benner	FPC
Mike Files	BPA
Dan Bedbury	EWEB
Kevin Nordt	Mic-Cs
Bruce MacKay	Consultant
Ruth Burris	PGE
Brenda Anderson	BPA
Greg Hoffman	COE
Glenn Traeger	AVISTA
Russ Kiefer	IDFG
Tom Le	PSE
Sue Ireland	Kootenai Tribe
Cathy Hlebechuk	COE

Dave Statler	NPT
Jeff Huntington	COE