

# **COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM**

## **TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM**

July 27, 2005

### **FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY NOTES ON FUTURE ACTIONS**

Facilitator: Donna Silverberg

Notes: 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.

#### **Libby Summer Plan**

Per TMT and IT discussions last week, a decision was made to operate Libby to 2439' by the end of August. The COE provided two scenarios for meeting this target to TMT last week, and the group reached consensus on option #1, which provided a more gradual ramp-down. Libby is currently releasing 19.2 kcfs and is expected to continue through the first week of August given continuing higher flows. The COE plans to ramp the project down to about 14 kcfs around August 13.

#### **Review Notes**

No comments on the meeting minutes or facilitator notes were offered today.

#### **Fall Chinook Run**

Cindy LeFleur, WDFW, provided a handout of Columbia River Fall Chinook Forecasts for 2005. The forecast for upriver brights is 354,600; 89,700 for Mid-Columbia brights, and 115,800 for Bonneville pool hatchery fish. All are down slightly from 2003, but still strong forecasts. The total forecast for Columbia River fall chinook is strong at 671,400; this number includes stocks that spawn above Bonneville dam. Cindy also provided information about timing and limits on recreational, commercial and treaty fall fisheries. It was noted that there is some variability in the forecasted vs. the actual numbers of fish. (For details of the presentation, see the Power Point attached to the agenda.)

#### **Treaty Fishery: SOR 2005 C-3**

Kyle Dittmer (formerly Martin), CRITFC, presented this SOR for July 25-29, requesting that Bonneville, The Dalles and John Day be operated within a 1' operating pool. 212 nets were in the river on 7/19, and today the number dropped to 163. It was noted that John Day is the preferred pool for summer net fisheries. The Fall fishery is expected to begin around the week of August 22, and CRITFC will coordinate with the action agencies on this.

A comment was made that the TMT web page link is missing dispositions for some SOR's, including the fishery requests. It was suggested that these be included on the web.

**ACTION:** The COE plans to operate Bonneville and John Day at a 1.5' hard constraint and 1' soft constraint. The COE expects that Bonneville and John Day may operate within 1', but due to limitations with fixed pendants at The Dalles, more fluctuations might occur at this project.

**ACTION:** Per request, Kyle will provide information on ghost nets at the next TMT meeting.

### **Emergency Protocols Actions**

The salmon managers provided an updated draft emergency protocol list to the action agencies following discussions last week, and a few changes were made by BPA (actions that no longer apply or are not feasible were removed), but this list has not yet been prioritized. The COE requested that the salmon managers provide any guidance they can on priorities for actions. In the absence of a consensus of the salmon managers, they recommended that the COE continue to operate with the working list as it is.

### **Summer Operations as a Result of the Recent Court Hearing**

The COE posted updated graphics of summer operations for the Lower Snake projects, McNary and Bonneville. The RSW test was completed at Lower Granite on July 22, and the project is now spilling to the gas cap. Little Goose is operating 30% spill during the day, and one unit to the gas cap at night. Lower Monumental is spilling 24 hours to the gas cap. Ice Harbor has been spilling to the gas cap since the end of the RSW test on July 22 – the RSW is not being used in the current spill regime. McNary is operating with 50 kcfs through the powerhouse plus spill to the gas cap. John Day is spilling 24 hours at 30%, and The Dalles is spilling 24 hours at 40%. Graphs are updated every other day, and the COE will continue to post them on the TMT web page on Wednesday.

### **Operations Review**

*Reservoirs* – Grand Coulee is slightly above 1287'; Hungry Horse is at 2553.4' and drafting 5 kcfs out. Libby is below 2454' and drafting to 2439' by the end of August. McNary expected flows are around 140 kcfs for the end of August, and next week expected to be in the 160's kcfs range. Lower Granite flows are dropping below 30 kcfs. Dworshak is operating 12.5 kcfs out at about 44°, and is near elevation 1577'.

*Fish* – The salmon managers will provide a packet of information about remaining migrant percentages in the Lower Snake, including cumulative passage, historical patterns, etc. TMT will invite Billy Connor to give a presentation to the group about migration timing at the August 10 TMT meeting.

*Power* – Outages are scheduled at Little Goose from 8/22-26 daytime and Lower Granite from 8/29-31, for double testing on transformers. John Wellschlager, BPA, requested that TMT consider whether they prefer increasing spill at Little Goose or removing MOP constraints to accommodate the annual outage. TMT members will respond to this question at the August 10 TMT meeting.

*Water quality* – Lower Granite temperatures remain below 68° with 12.5 kcfs outflows from Dworshak at about 44°. Jim Adams, COE, walked TMT through a number of graphs of Dworshak and Lower Granite current temperature data, and requested input on next steps for operations. Dave Wills, USFWS, recommended that, considering the extremely warm weather forecasted in the area and after talking with Howard Burge at the Dworshak hatchery, the action agencies continue with the current operation until the higher temperatures moderate (with the caveat that if temperatures at Lower Granite exceed 67.5°, flows from Dworshak increase to 14 kcfs).

**ACTION:** The COE will check on whether a different mix of warm and cool water at Dworshak could be used to produce the same temperature and conserve some of the cold water for later, and will continue to operate to meet the temperature and flow specifications as last week. The most current forecast predicts that there will be available water to implement 12 kcfs out of Dworshak until August 9.

**Next Meeting, August 10, 1:00 pm: NOTE NEW TIME AND PLACE**

TMT will hold their next face to face TMT meeting in Stanley, Idaho following a inter-agency redd count training. Details on this meeting, including specific time and call-in number, will be made available in the next two weeks. Russ Kiefer, Idaho, will work with the facilitation team to coordinate the field trip and meeting.

Agenda Items include:

- Billy Connor presentation on migration timing in Lower Snake River
- Review of summer treaty fishing
- Update on ghost net retrieval information
- Salmon manager response on MOP variance at Little Goose for double testing outage
- Lake Pend Oreille Lake level affects on kokanee
- Salmon manager response on Emergency Protocol priorities

***1. Greetings and Introductions.***

TMT Chair Cindy Henriksen welcomed everyone to today's meeting, held July 27, 2005 at the Reservoir Control Center in downtown Portland, OR. The meeting was facilitated by Donna Silverberg. 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. Libby Summer Plan.***

Henriksen said that, as most participants are aware, the TMT has been discussing Libby summer operations and the Montana SOR. At the last TMT meeting, the Corps presented two potential Libby operational scenarios that would achieve elevation 2439 at Libby on August 31. At that meeting, TMT members agreed unanimously to gradually ramp down Libby outflow through the month of August, Henriksen said.

Since that meeting, said Henriksen, Libby has been releasing 19.2 Kcfs. Inflows have remained surprisingly high, which means that the Corps expects to continue to release 19.2 Kcfs from Libby through the first two weeks in August. Our plan is to reduce Libby outflow to about 14 Kcfs around August 13, she said, followed by further ramp-downs on a weekly basis. If we change Libby outflow in the interim, we will let you know, Henriksen added.

### **3. Fall Chinook Run Forecast.**

Cindy LeFleur provided a Powerpoint presentation titled “Columbia River Fall Chinook Forecasts – 2005.” She touched on the following topics:

- Upriver bright chinook (URB) – mostly wild fish destined for the Hanford Reach and the Snake, Yakima and Deschutes Rivers, plus Priest Rapids and Lions Ferry hatchery fish. The Snake River fish are ESA-listed; fall chinook spawning peaks in November
- Upriver bright fall chinook returns – 1980-2005 (graph): estimated 2005 return of 354,600 fish among the highest on record
- Mid-Columbia River bright chinook (MCB) – originated from upriver brights; includes two components: PUB (from hatcheries above Bonneville Dam) and BUB (from Bonneville Hatchery).
- Mid-Columbia bright returns, 1980-2005 (graph) – 2005 forecast of 89,700 among the highest on record
- Bonneville Pool Hatchery (BPH) – this component, called tules, is destined primarily for Spring Creek Hatchery. Natural production occurs in Bonneville pool tributaries; spawning occurs in September and October
- Bonneville Pool Hatchery returns, 1980-2005 (graph): the 2005 forecast of 115,800 is among the highest on record
- Columbia River fall chinook, all stocks, returns 1980-2005 (graph) – the 2005 forecast of 671,400 is very strong, the sixth-highest in the last 26 years.
- 2005 fall fisheries – recreational: opens August 1 at Buoy 10, in the Columbia below Bonneville and in the Columbia above Bonneville. Fishing expected to peak in late August through mid-September.
- 2005 fall fisheries – commercial: will begin in early August in the lower river and will continue through October
- 2005 fall fisheries – treaty Indian: likely to begin at the end of August, will have weekly periods throughout September; may continue into October, targeting both fall chinook and significant numbers of steelhead.

The group devoted a few minutes of discussion to forecast methodologies; in response to a question, LeFleur said WDFW’s fall chinook forecasting tends to be significantly more accurate than its spring and summer chinook forecasting.

### **4. Treaty Fishing SOR.**

On July 22, the CRITFC tribes submitted SOR 2005 C-3 to the action agencies. This SOR requested the following specific operations:

- Implement the following operations as a hard constraint from 6 am Monday, July 25 through 6 pm Friday, July 29:
- Bonneville, The Dalles (Celilo) and John Day pools – operate these pools within a 1.0-foot band.

Kyle Dittmer (formerly Martin) provided an overview of this SOR, noting that this will be the last summer fishery SOR of 2005, as well as recent results from CRITFC's aerial net surveys. Today's survey showed 163 nets in the river, down from 212 on July 19. In response to a request, Dittmer said he will provide information on the number of "ghost" nets in the river at the next TMT meeting on August 24.

In response to SRO 2005 C-3, Henriksen said the Corps has been and plans to continue to operate Bonneville and John Day pools within a 1.5-foot operating range as a hard constraint, and will instruct project personnel to operate these pools within 1 foot as a soft constraint. Due to limitations associated with the fixed spill gate openings at The Dalles, more fluctuations may occur at this project.

### ***5. Emergency Protocols Actions.***

David Wills said the salmon managers have been discussing this topic, but have nothing new to add. Henriksen reminded the group that, on July 18, there was an emergency TMT call to discuss the prioritization of the actions on the emergency protocols list. An emergency was not declared on that occasion; however, as a planning tool, it is helpful to have consensus on a list of actions to be implemented if needed, she said. We did receive a list from Dave Wills following that call; it included a group of actions that could be taken in advance of an emergency. Many of these actions have to do with putting units back on-line, increasing flow at various headwater projects, or BPA purchasing power.

John Wellschlager noted that there are a number of actions that could be eliminated from this list – for example, the elimination of non-firm contracts. BPA hasn't carried non-firm contracts for nearly 7 years, he said. Reducing firm loads is another dinosaur, he said; I believe this action dates back to the time when BPA had interruptible DSI contracts, which we no longer have. That, too, could be removed from the list, Wellschlager said.

At our July 18 meeting, we also discussed actions that could be taken in the event of a short-term emergency, Henriksen said; some of the actions we discussed included increased Hungry Horse, Libby and Dworshak outflow; as you're aware, both Libby and Hungry Horse were already at full powerhouse capacity last week. We also talked about increasing flow at Grand Coulee and

Chief Joseph, but again, both projects were already releasing full powerhouse capacity. We also discussed increasing flow at Bonneville Dam and at the Willamette projects, as well as reductions in spill at lower Columbia and lower Snake river plants. Those were the kinds of actions we would like to get some feedback on from the salmon managers, Henriksen said; any guidance you can give us as to which of those actions would be preferable would be helpful. We have discussed all of those actions, Wills replied; there are a variety of opinions, and to date we have been unable to reach a salmon managers' consensus.

The action agencies reiterated that they would like guidance from the salmon managers regarding short-term emergency action priorities as soon as possible. In the meantime, said another participant, absent any direction from the salmon managers, are the action agencies prohibited from changing operations at the projects that are spilling by the judge's order? We don't know the answer to that; it depends how big the problem is, Wellschlager replied. We're trying to work that out right now, and can't comment until that process is complete. At the moment, we would start with projects such as Bonneville and John Day, which are outside the judge's order, added Henriksen. It was agreed that further discussions on this topic will continue outside the TMT forum.

#### ***6. Summer Operations As A Result of Recent Court Ruling.***

Henriksen said the Corps has prepared various graphs showing summer operations at the eight FCRPS projects, Lower Granite through Bonneville – total river flow vs. spill and powerhouse discharge, as well as resulting TDG levels, from July 16 through today. This information packet also provided information on hours of TDG exceedence at the Lower Snake projects (83 hours at the Lower Monumental forebay station, 42 hours at the Ice Harbor forebay station, few exceedences at Little Goose or Lower Granite since June 20). The packet also touched on percent spill at Little Goose, John Day and The Dalles, as well as the status of the Dworshak thermocline.

Henriksen reported that the Lower Granite RSW test ended on July 22; the project is now spilling to the gas cap as an upper limit. Little Goose is spilling 30% of total river flow during the day and up to the gas cap at night when flow is high enough, with one unit operating for station service. Lower Monumental is spilling up to the gas cap 24 hours a day when flow is available. The Ice Harbor RSW test also ended on July 22; the project is now spilling up to the gas cap when flow is available. McNary is passing a minimum of 50 Kcfs through the powerhouse, and spilling up to the gas cap when available. John Day is spilling 30% of total river flow 24 hours a day. The Dalles is spilling 40% of total river flow 24 hours a day.

Henriksen noted that these graphs are updated every other day, and will be posted to the TMT homepage every through August 31.

## **7. Operations Review.**

Tony Norris reported that Grand Coulee elevation is currently just over 1287 feet; Hungry Horse is at elevation 2553.4 and drafting, with 5 Kcfs outflow. Henriksen said Libby is just below elevation 2454, releasing 19.2 Kcfs and drafting toward elevation 2439 by August 31. McNary flows are forecast to be in the 160 Kcfs range next week, declining into the 140 Kcfs range by the end of August. Dworshak is releasing 12.4 Kcfs at a discharge temperature of about 44 degrees F; the current project elevation is 1577.

With respect to fish passage, it was agreed that the salmon managers will report back on the remaining Lower Snake juvenile run percentage, as compared to the historic run percentage average for this point in the season, at the August 10 TMT meeting. It was also agreed to invite Billy Connor to brief the TMT on 2005 migration timing at that meeting.

On the power front, Henriksen said double testing outages are scheduled at Little Goose and Lower Granite for August 22-26 (daytime) and August 29-31, respectively. Wellschlager asked the salmon managers to consider whether they would prefer to increase spill at Little Goose or to remove MOP constraints in order to offset this annual maintenance operation. It was agreed that the salmon managers will provide their response at the August 10 TMT meeting.

## **8. Next TMT Meeting Date.**

The next meeting of the Technical Management Team was set for Wednesday, August 10. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.

### **TMT Participant List July 27, 2005**

| <b>Name</b>      | <b>Affiliation</b> |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Donna Silverberg | Facilitation Team  |
| Kyle Dittmer     | COE                |
| Ron Boyce        | ODFW               |
| Tony Norris      | USBR               |
| Russ Kiefer      | IDFG               |
| Cindy LeFleur    | WDFW               |
| Ray Gonzales     | COE                |
| Dave Wills       | USFWS              |

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|-------------------|-------------------|
| Cindy Henriksen   | COE               |
| John Wellschlager | BPA               |
| Robin Harkless    | Facilitation Team |
| Jim Adams         | COE               |
| Larry Beck        | COE               |
| Tina Lundell      | COE               |
| Tim Heizenrater   | PPM               |
| Todd Cook         | PPM               |
| Laura Hamilton    | COE               |
| Kevin Nordt       | Mid-Cs            |
| Dan Spear         | BPA               |
| Nic Lane          | BPA               |
| Dave Statler      | NPT               |
| Ruth Burris       | PGE               |
| Mike Buchko       | Powerex           |
| Lance Elias       | PPL               |
| Glenn Traeger     | Avista            |
| Bruce MacKay      | Consultant        |
| Russ George       | WMCI              |
| Rudd Turner       | COE               |
| Rich Domingue     | NMFS              |