

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM CONFERENCE CALL

August 24, 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.

Review of Notes

July 27 minutes and notes are posted on the web, as are facilitator notes for the August 10 meeting. Comments to the August 10 notes were provided:

- Under 'Operations Review', clarify that it was a 3° temperature *increase* at Dworshak.
- Under the Lake Pend Oreille discussion, bull trout are *listed*, not endangered, and kokanee are 60-80% of bull trout diet, not 60%. Also, the bullets identifying specific operations is Idaho Fish and Game's 'preferred operation', which is different from the decision tree discussed in the following paragraph.
 - **ACTION**: Russ Kiefer, Idaho, will provide specific language to the facilitation team to clarify this portion of the notes.

Report on 8/16 Chum Discussion

Ives Island researchers and TMT members met on 8/16 and developed a set of questions about chum research below Bonneville. Ron Boyce, Oregon, provided a draft handout of those questions which also identified who should respond. Ron asked that TMT review the questions and provide any comments/revisions to the questions to DS Consulting or Ron Boyce by Monday, 8/29. Ron and Donna Silverberg will combine the changes to the questions and send them out. The research is expected to be completed by September 28, after which there will be a follow-up discussion at TMT (in October).

Lake Pend Oreille/Chum

At the August 10 TMT meeting, Russ Kiefer, Idaho, provided information on research and a decision tree for kokanee/bull trout operations. The salmon managers are in continuing discussions about the issue relative to chum needs below Bonneville, and hope to have clearer resolution/understanding in the next 3-4 weeks. Additional information that will be helpful to the discussion (e.g. adult kokanee abundance report, criteria for chum spawning, long term weather forecast) is forthcoming. The salmon managers will report back to TMT in September.

Dworshak Operations

Dworshak is operating to reach elevation 1535' by the end of August, and releasing 45-47° water. At this point, the action agencies expect the operation to continue through mid-September, with 7.1 kcfs releases, per Nez Perce/Dworshak Board discussions. Graphs linked to today's TMT agenda showed that this year's thermocline is very similar to 2004, indicating that there should be no problem continuing with the current operation. It was noted that a cooling trend is continuing in the river, even with a slight increase in temperature releases from Dworshak.

Emergency Protocols

There was no new input offered from the salmon managers on the Emergency Protocols list. Attorneys in the lawsuit are continuing discussions and the agencies have been working to provide questions and comments to them as they arise.

MOP Issues

End of MOP on the Lower Snake – The salmon managers discussed end of MOP operations and, though concerns were expressed by some, recommended that MOP continue on the lower three projects until the Dworshak augmentation operation ends. At Lower Granite, they recommended ending MOP based on natural cooling of the system. The salmon managers have an interest in supporting Clearwater juveniles, who typically migrate later in the season.

BPA recommended that MOP operations end now or no later than August 31, based on the criteria in the Water Management Plan to end when small numbers of juvenile fish are passing – the graphs show that 97-100% of the fish have passed the projects at this point (although this may not include Clearwater migrants who pass later in the season or over-winter, according to current research). BPA also noted that spill in the Lower Snake is costing ratepayers about \$1 million/day.

The COE suggested that the salmon managers also consider that flow in the Snake could recede to 15 kcfs later in the summer, and this raises concerns for refill, overwintering juveniles, and returning adult migrants. The action agencies have an interest in developing a plan for refilling pools to support operational flexibility and economic interests, as well as returning adults.

ACTION: After a caucus, TMT was not able to reach consensus on how to proceed with end of MOP in the Lower Snake. Because Washington, Idaho and Nez Perce were not available for the caucus discussion, TMT agreed to re-visit the issue during a conference call next **Wednesday, August 31, at 10:00 AM**. Everyone agreed to weigh all factors, including juveniles, adults, and refill and flow. If consensus is not reached, any TMT member will have the option of elevating the issue to IT for discussion/resolution at the September 1st IT meeting.

Lower Granite double testing – A double test at Lower Granite is scheduled for August 29-31, which will require speed no load and spill at the project during the day. A similar test at Little Goose began this week but due to station service issues, operators had to

abandon the test. The test will need to be completed at a later date. Oregon requested that future double testing occur outside the fish migration season, if possible.

Fall Treaty Fishery: SOR 2005 C-4

Kyle Dittmer, CRITFC, presented a request for a fall treaty fishery, with the following specifications:

- 8/22-26 and 8/29-31 (during summer spill operations): 1' pool band at Bonneville, The Dalles and John Day, elevation determined by the action agencies.
- 9/1-2 and 9/6-10: 1' band at specified elevations at each pool.

The COE responded that filling the John Day pool to the top 1' on September 1-2 would require a decrease in flow in the lower river. Kyle acknowledged this and suggested the appropriate elevation should be determined by the action agencies. The COE expressed appreciation for the advance notice on the SOR and added that meeting the request this year will be particularly challenging with summer operations.

The COE agreed to the following operation:

- 1.5' hard and 1' soft constraint at Bonneville;
- 1.5' range at John Day, from 262.5-264' (elevation not as high as requested, but generally the pool stays within 1');
- The most fluctuations will likely occur at The Dalles due to operations and fixed spillway openings.

Kyle reported that fish sales begin next week at CRITFC through September, and if anyone is interested in putting in an order to contact him.

Summer Spill Operations

Graphs for summer spill operations were updated as of 8/24 and were posted to the web. Spill operations are expected to end on 8/31 at midnight. (Cindy Henriksen, COE, sent an email to the group after the meeting clarifying that the B2 corner collector will also close on 8/31.)

Status of Operations

Grand Coulee is targeting 1278' by the end of August. Libby is releasing 16.5 kcfs out and expected to reduce to ~12 kcfs on Friday, reaching 2439' by the end of August. Hungry Horse is releasing 5.2 kcfs and targeting 3540' by the end of August. Grand Coulee will begin filling over Labor Day weekend. Dworshak is releasing 7.1 kcfs out, targeting 1535' by the end of August; the project will continue at 7.1 kcfs until around 9/15, reduce to 4 kcfs to reach 1520', and then reduce to minimum outflow. This is the default operation for Dworshak. If inflows are low, there will be an alternative operation.

Next Meeting, Conference Call: August 31, 10:00AM

- End of MOP on Lower Snake

Next Face to Face Meeting, Wednesday, September 7, 9am-noon

- Lake Pend Oreille/Chum Discussion

- Dworshak Operations
- Emergency Protocols
- MOP Issues
 - End of MOP on Lower Snake
 - Lower Granite double testing
- Fall Treaty Fishery

1. Greetings and Introductions.

Today's Technical Management Team meeting was chaired by Cindy Henriksen and 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. Report on August 16 Chum Discussion.

Ron Boyce said the August 16 discussion involved TMT members, FPAC and lower river chum researchers; we wanted to discuss operational questions we wanted the researchers to look at, in terms of what flexibility might be available. We wanted to set out a series of questions for various parties to respond to, he said; I have drafted those questions, and would like to hear responses by August 29, he said. Basically, I would like FPAC, TMT and the researchers to look at these questions, and provide any comments they may have. We can then discuss the outcome of this process at a TMT meeting in early October, said Boyce. He asked that any comments be submitted to him or to Silverberg. The answers provided to these questions will then be provided by September 28, Silverberg added.

One question we want to look at is the implications of operating at a higher tailwater elevation, added Boyce; other questions have to do with the impact of nighttime flows, Bonneville tailwater elevation fluctuations, optimum timing of tailwater elevation increases, what the expected population of chum spawners may be in 2005, and the biological benefits and effects on Bonneville tailwater elevations of drafting Lake Pend Oreille to elevation 2051.

3. Lake Pend Oreille Kokanee/Chum Discussion.

Dave Wills said, that at the last TMT meeting, Russ Kiefer presented a summary of the results from IDFG's kokanee research in Lake Pend Oreille, as well as a recommended Lake Pend Oreille operation and a decision tree for making decisions about kokanee/chum operations. The salmon managers discussed this information at yesterday's FPAC meeting, he said; no resolution was reached, but discussions are ongoing, and we will report back to TMT as further information comes forward.

Kiefer noted that on August 29, IDFG will complete its 2005 kokanee abundance estimate; this is a key piece of information with respect to Lake Pend Oreille operations, as is the Climate Impact Group's long-term weather forecast, which will be available in a similar time-frame. Once we have those two pieces of information, said Kiefer, we will be able to provide an update to TMT, hopefully including recommendations as to the preferred winter operations at Lake Pend Oreille this year. The TMT can likely expect an SOR on this topic some time in mid-September, added Jeff Laufle.

4. Dworshak Operations.

Henriksen said Dworshak is drafting toward elevation 1535 by August 31; release temperatures are currently 45-47 degrees F. The plan is to continue the August 31 outflow of about 7 Kcfs from Dworshak into mid-September; the goal is to then ramp down once to minimum outflow as the project reaches elevation 1520. Jim Adams has put together some data on the estimated volumes of cold water at Dworshak (hot-linked to today's agenda on the TMT homepage), she added.

This year, the thermocline is very similar to last year's, said Adams. The graph is steepening in the 45-50-degree range, because we're drafting that water out. However, I don't see any problem continuing with the current operation, Adams said; we'll probably need to have a discussion about preferred outflow temperature once Dworshak goes to minimum outflow.

It's somewhat surprising that the volume of available cold water is tracking so similarly to last year, considering the efforts we made to reduce the volume of cold water we've been using in 2005, observed Paul Wagner. Adams explained the hydrodynamic and operational reasons for this apparent paradox. Adams added that temperatures in the Lower Granite tailwater are now under 65 degrees F.; he noted that temperatures at upstream gauges such as Orofino have dropped significantly in recent days, reflecting a basinwide cooling trend, despite the fact that Dworshak outflow has now been reduced to 7 Kcfs. Brownlee releases have also fallen recently, and temperatures have moderated, particularly at night, Kiefer added.

5. Emergency Protocols.

Wills said the salmon managers have no new input on this topic; we're still waiting for some response, based on the discussion at the last TMT meeting, he said. The Department of Justice has had the action agencies' comments for over a week, and the attorneys are talking, John Wellschlager replied. The agencies have been working diligently to provide our comments to DOJ, but as you know, once the lawyers become involved, the process slows down, he said.

6. MOP Issues – End of MOP at the Lower Snake Projects/Lower Granite Doble Testing

The salmon managers discussed this topic at yesterday's FPAC meeting, said Wills; the majority opinion was to recommend continuing MOP operations at the Lower Snake projects until the end of flow augmentation at Dworshak – essentially, until Dworshak goes to minimum outflow in mid-September. That's for the lower three Snake River projects, added Wills; at Lower Granite, we expect MOP operations to continue into October, once natural cooling occurs.

According to the WMP, the Lower Snake projects will operate at MOP until small numbers of juvenile migrants are present, typically in late August, noted Wellschlagler. At his request, the TMT spent a few minutes reviewing current FPC passage index information for the Lower Snake projects. At Lower Granite, indices have been running just over 100 per day for the past several days.

Wagner noted that this is typically a transition time, in terms of juvenile vs. adult operations at the Lower Snake projects. When we're at MOP, typically the adult ladders are not in criteria, he said. The larger the "window" at the lower end of the ladders, the easier it is for adults to find them, Wagner said – that's another factor we have to take into account. Adult steelhead are passing at a rate of about 500 per day at Ice Harbor; the farther you go upriver, the fewer fish you see, he said; at Lower Monumental, for example, about 200 fish per day are passing. We're near the tipping point, in other words, Wagner said.

We don't have clear information as to whether the additional 2 feet we'll gain at the ladder entrances if we refill the pools above MOP will significantly improve adult passage, noted Ron Boyce. We also don't have clear information that holding the pools at MOP significantly increases smolt passage this time of year, Wellschlagler replied – many of those fish may choose to overwinter.

The group looked at the DART data on the percentage of the run that has passed to date; Wellschlagler noted that the percentage of the wild Snake River subyearling chinook run that has passed Lower Granite to date is now 100%, +/- 5%. However, that calculation does not include the later-migrating Clearwater fish, Wagner observed. At Little Goose, and Lower Monumental, 97% of the wild Snake River subyearling run has passed the project to date, according to the DART estimate.

Dave Statler said the Nez Perce Tribe supports extending MOP operations at the lower three pools until flow augmentation ends from Dworshak.

According to the Water Management Plan criteria we go by, given the small numbers of juveniles now moving through the system, the indications are that MOP should end, said Wellschlagler. The action agencies would prefer to see MOP end no later than the end of August, he said. Because I also represent

ratepayers, he said, I should mention that the Lower Snake spill is costing ratepayers \$1 million per day, and the run is essentially over. The costs are staying pretty much in line with our estimates, made before the operation began, but we needed to put that on the table, Wellschlager said. There isn't anyone here who can do anything about that, said Boyce; it is court-ordered spill. I understand, said Wellschlager, but there is a larger audience monitoring TMT discussions.

Henriksen said current flows in the Lower Snake are about 20 Kcfs, and could go as low as 15 Kcfs soon. Have the salmon managers thought about when and how to refill the Snake River projects? she asked. We have heard that the juvenile outmigration is nearly complete, and adult migration is increasing; we would prefer to improve passage conditions for the adults if we can. If the salmon managers want to stay at MOP for now, what's your recommendations as to when and how refill should be accomplished. In response to a question, Henriksen said 30-35 ksf will be required, total, to refill the three lower pools above MOP. Given the fact that flows will soon be in the 15 Kcfs range, that represents a significant reduction in Lower Snake flow, Henriksen said.

After a few minutes of additional discussion, Henriksen said the action agencies' interest is to improve adult passage conditions, to refill the Lower Snake pools while Snake River flows are higher, and to increase operational flexibility, given the fact that this has been a difficult summer for ratepayers. Boyce replied that the salmon managers do not want to see Dworshak flow augmentation water used to refill the Lower Snake pools. Wellschlager replied that there is a preponderance of evidence that September 1 is the tipping point at which the majority of smolts choose to overwinter, rather than outmigrate. I agree that keeping the pools at MOP speeds travel time through the pools, but there is no evidence that many smolts are taking advantage of that opportunity, Wellschlager said. The cooler water from Dworshak will actually help those smolts that choose to overwinter. Next, we know that the number of adults moving up through the system is increasing, and the operation we propose will benefit them. Finally, if we're going to extend the period of MOP operations through the end of the Dworshak flow augmentation period, that's a policy change, and it needs to go to our policy folks, he said.

Ultimately, following a caucus break, Wills said that, while the salmon managers had a good discussion, the discussion was incomplete. We would therefore request a deferral of this decision until Tuesday or Wednesday of next week, he said. It was agreed to convene a TMT conference call next Wednesday in an effort to resolve this issue; if consensus cannot be reached, we will then have an opportunity to elevate this issue at next Thursday's IT meeting, said Henriksen.

The group also discussed the Lower Granite double testing issue; beginning August 29, through August 31, the entire river will be spilled for double

testing at Lower Granite. Henriksen said one additional day of Little Goose double testing will also be needed due to an equipment problem. Adams noted that, while Little Goose was running 5 Kcfs at speed-no-load, TDG levels below the project increased to 117-119%.

Given the fact that there is no adult passage issue at Lower Granite, as there is at Little Goose, it was agreed that Lower Granite will spill total river flow during the test period, with the entire powerhouse off-line. The minimum Snake River flow of 11.5 Kcfs will be maintained. Boyce said he would prefer, in the future, that double testing take place outside of the fish passage season, if possible, given the fact that the high gas levels generated by the testing could hamper adult passage. We understand your concerns, but it really isn't possible to do the testing earlier or later, Wellschlager replied.

7. Fall Treaty Fishery (SOR 2005 C-4).

On August 19, the action agencies received SOR 2005 C-4, covering the first two fall tribal fisheries. This SOR requests the following specific operations.

- From 6 am on August 22 through 6 pm on August 26, from 6 am August 29 through 6 pm August 31, operate Bonneville, The Dalles (Celilo) and John Day pools within a 1.0 foot band. From 6 am September 1 through 6 pm on September 2, and from 6 am September 6 through 6 pm September 10, operate Bonneville pool between elevations 76.5-75.5, The Dalles pool between 159.5-158.5, and John Day pool between 264.5-263.5.

Kyle Dittmer provided a brief overview of this SOR. Henriksen said the Corps is concerned about the request to fill John Day pool by 1.5 feet overnight; that would likely result in a reduction of about 25 Kcfs in total river flow. We'll leave it up to the action agencies to decide what it is possible to do, Dittmer replied; we have avoided specifying elevations so far this year because we recognize that, given Judge Redden's order, it has been a difficult operational year for the action agencies.. He added that CRITFC will be sponsoring net flights each Tuesday, starting August 23, to count the number of nets in each Zone 6 pool.

Henriksen said the Corps appreciates the advance notice on this operation – that has been very helpful, she said. Henriksen said the Corps will be operating Bonneville and John Day pools within a 1.5-foot operating range, with 1 foot as a soft constraint, although the actual elevations will likely not be as high as CRITFC is requesting. The Dalles pool elevation has been fluctuating a fair amount, she said; it has been difficult to maintain a 1-foot operating range given the load following requirements at that project.

Dittmer noted that CRITFC fishers will be selling salmon in the CRITFC parking lot starting next week; the price is averaging \$2 per pound. The parking lot sales do require a pre-order, he added (tel. 503/238-0667).

8. Summer Spill Operations.

The court-ordered summer spill program is ongoing at the Lower Snake projects and McNary, said Henriksen; updated water quality information is available via the TMT homepage. Spill will end next Wednesday, August 31, at midnight. Also, she said, the crew at Bonneville will be closing the B2 corner collector on Thursday, September 1.

9. Current Operations Update.

Wellschlager said Grand Coulee will reach elevation 1278 by next Wednesday; he reminded the salmon managers that it is very tricky to achieve an exact elevation target at that project. Libby continues to release 16.5 Kcfs, and will reduce outflow to 12 Kcfs some time today or tomorrow, with the goal of achieving elevation 2439 by August 31. Hungry Horse is releasing 5.6 Kcfs and will be at 3540 on August 31. Dworshak is releasing 7.1 Kcfs outflow and will be at 1535 on August 31. We plan to hold that rate of outflow until about September 15, said Henriksen, at which point outflow will be reduced to about 4 Kcfs, until elevation 1520 is achieved about two days later. Dworshak outflow will be reduced to minimum once that elevation is achieved. Grand Coulee will begin filling over Labor Day weekend.

Wellschlager said there are no significant power system problems to report.

10. Next TMT Meeting Date.

It was agreed to convene a TMT conference call on Wednesday, August 31 at 10 am. The next face-to-face Technical Management Team meeting was set for Wednesday, September 7. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.

TMT Meeting Participants August 24, 2005

Name	Affiliation
Cindy Henriksen	COE
Donna Silverberg	Facilitation Team
Robin Harkless	Facilitation Team

John Wellschlager	BPA
Paul Wagner	NMFS
Ron Boyce	OSFW
Ray Gonzales	COE
Barry Espenson	CBB
Jim Adams	COE
Margaret Filardo	FPC
Dave Benner	FPC
Kyle Dittmer	CRITFC
Russ George	WMCI
Nic Lane	BPA
Dan Spear	BPA
Laura Hamilton	COE
Kevin Nordt	Mic-Cs
Tim Heizenrater	PPM
David Wills	USFWS
Larry Beck	COE
Todd Cook	PPM
Jeff Laufle	COE
Russ Kiefer	IDFG
John Roche	COE
Don Faulkner	COE
Tom Le	PSE
Richelle Beck	D. Rohr & Associates
Bill Rudolph	NW Fish Letter