

# COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

## TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

September 7, 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.

#### **Lake Pend Oreille/Chum Discussion**

Paul Wagner, NOAA, and Russ Kiefer, IDFG, reported that information on the number of expected kokanee spawners this year is being gathered and analyzed, and that this information will be helpful to the discussions and decisions about operations this year.

The salmon managers are also engaged in on-going discussions about the IDFG 'decision tree' for kokanee/bull trout operations. There is an important link between Lake Pend Oreille operations and chum. Because of this, they are not sure how this tool will be used to make operational recommendations/decisions. The COE would like feedback for decisions for THIS year's winter operations by mid-September.

Additional chum information will be available for the 9/21TMT meeting. A chum research proposal is being reviewed through the AFEP process, and focuses mostly on the Ives Island area. It was noted that there may also be a need to monitor/gather data at Multnomah Falls for management purposes. The WQT will be looking at monitoring needs in the lower river, and will be asked to report their findings at a future TMT meeting.

The final set of agreed-upon chum questions has been sent to the action agencies and researchers, with a request for a response by 9/28. Ron Boyce, ODFW, and the facilitation team will compile the responses and send them to TMT, followed by a discussion at the 10/12 TMT meeting. (NOTE: The meeting date was re-scheduled from 10/5).

**ACTION:** Preliminary discussions and movement toward a decision about Lake Pend Oreille and chum operations will occur at the 9/21 TMT meeting.

#### **Dworshak Operations**

Dworshak is continuing to release 7.1 kcfs and is on track to reach elevation 1522' on September 15. At that time, flows will be reduced for a few days, and then further reduced around September 19 to minimum flow.

Temperatures are expected to remain at 45-48° until September 15.

**ACTION:** Dave Wills, USFWS, will share this information with the Dworshak hatchery.

#### **2006 Water Management Plan**

A draft (8/15) WMP has been posted to the TMT web page. It is very similar to last year's plan and is consistent with the 2004 BiOp. Cindy Henriksen, COE, noted two key operational differences for 2006: There will be dredging in the Lower Columbia and there will be no drum gate work at Grand Coulee. The action agencies requested comments on the plan before the end of September.

#### **Fall Treaty Fishing**

Fall tribal fishing is in its third week and conditions have been good. Kyle Dittmer, CRITFC, said the tribes will submit weekly SOR's depending on catch data and in-river fish numbers. The COE noted that The Dalles has been operating at a slightly lower elevation than requested for the fishery, and will continue to do so through September.

#### **Comments on Notes**

No comments were made to the 8/24 facilitator notes. The meeting minutes will be posted ASAP.

### **System Operations**

*Reservoirs* – Libby reached elevation 2439' on 8/31 and is currently releasing 10 kcfs. Project flows will be reduced to 8 kcfs sometime next week. Grand Coulee reached 1278' on 8/31 and is now at about 1280'. Hungry Horse reached 3540' on 8/31 and is currently releasing minimum flow. Lower Granite is releasing about 20 kcfs. McNary has been releasing 80-85 kcfs.

*Fish* – Juvenile numbers are decreasing, with daily counts under 100 at the Lower Snake projects. Adult fall chinook at Bonneville reached their highest number to date of 23,508 over Labor Day weekend. Steelhead numbers are strong as well; many are currently passing The Dalles and some have reached the Lower Snake projects.

### **Next Meeting, September 21, 9:00-noon**

Agenda items include:

- Kokanee update/presentation
- Ghost nets presentation
- Fall treaty fishing
- Comments on the 2006 WMP
- System Updates
- Comments on 8/24 and 9/7 notes

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

Today's meeting of the Technical Management Team 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. Lake Pend Oreille/Chum Discussion.***

Paul Wagner said one of the factors in the Lake Pend Oreille winter elevation decision process is the number of kokanee spawners anticipated for this year. That information is being developed right now, he said – it is done by hydroacoustic survey in the lake when the moon is absent, as it is now. The data will then be analyzed, and we are awaiting those results – we should see them some time next week, Wagner said. We'll put that on the agenda for next meeting, Silverberg said.

Have the salmon managers discussed the decision tree? Henriksen asked. We have begun those discussions, but at this point, they're still ongoing, Dave Wills replied. The general consensus is that the decision tree will be an important tool, but not the only tool, in the process, added Wagner. Henriksen reminded the group that the Corps hopes to have the salmon managers' input on this decision by mid-September; Wagner reiterated that, once the data is in on the 2005 kokanee survey in Lake Pend Oreille, the salmon managers will be in a better position to provide their input.

Ron Boyce asked what the driver is for making this decision by next week. Henriksen replied that the action agencies need to make decisions about winter

operations soon. Boyce noted that there is also ongoing data-gathering in association with chum operations this year; it's all interrelated, and personally, I see all of that coming together some time in early October, he said.

Larry Beck asked whether an updated version of the chum spawning requirements is available; for example, any new information you may have on temperature requirements around the redds would be helpful. Gravel size, water velocity, what we know, in short, said Beck. Again, we're putting all of that information together, Boyce replied.

One issue, in my mind, said Wills – last week, there was a review of the 2006 AFEP projects; in the review of the chum research proposal, it was noted that Battelle plans to focus their monitoring efforts primarily on the Ives Island area. They were asked, what about the Multnomah Creek area? Their response was that it's easier to use the existing temperature probe array, said Wills. That's a data gap, because we still need temperature, TDG and water elevation data at the Multnomah Creek spawning area, he said. Last year we asked whether the Corps had equipment they could deploy in the Multnomah Creek area; that need still exists, and I would like to give the Corps a heads-up that we would like to collect data at the Multnomah Creek site this year. It would be helpful to have some baseline data, so that we can see whether we're meeting the water quality standards, Wills said. The Multnomah site is very important, from a management perspective, he added.

That in-season monitoring capability at Multnomah Creek would be very useful, said Boyce – last year, we had ODFW crews out there with hand-held instruments, taking grab samples. It would be extremely useful to have a monitoring station there, because Multnomah Creek is the key management site during chum operations. Henriksen replied that, from a management perspective, the action agencies' options are limited at Multnomah Creek – it is tidal influences that have the major effect at that site, not Bonneville operations, she said. The Corps would prefer to use the surrogate site that we used last year to manage TDG. Wellschlager noted that, last year, the salmon managers had challenged the action agencies to show that the readings at that site were not a valid surrogate for actual conditions at the Multnomah Creek site; we discovered that Bonneville operations had far less effect than tidal influences, he said.

Ultimately, it was agreed to request a report from the Water Quality Team, which is also working on the Multnomah Creek monitoring issue, at the next TMT meeting.

With respect to chum issues, Boyce said no further feedback has been received on the chum research and operational questions discussed at the last TMT meeting; these, then, will be the questions we'll be looking for answers for by the end of September. Due to scheduling conflicts, he added, we would like to move the chum discussion (and the TMT meeting) to October 12; we realize that that is getting close to the 2005 chum management season, he said, but that was the best we could do. We should be able to make a decision on Lake Pend Oreille winter operations at that

meeting, Boyce said. Kyle Dittmer said the University of Washington's long-term climate forecast will be available by that time, which should help inform those discussions. Wellschlager said that, with all due respect, October is too early to make a meaningful prediction of water supply in the coming year. Dittmer respectfully disagreed, noting that the new forecasting tools that have come on-line in recent years have begun to develop a solid track record.

In response to the Corps' concerns, Wills said it might be possible to make a decision on the Lake Pend Oreille winter operation at the September 21 TMT meeting; the redd survey/kokanee abundance information will be available then. One option we've been discussing is a system operational request that would cover winter operations at Lake Pend Oreille for one or two years, Russ Kiefer added.

### ***3. Dworshak Operations.***

Henriksen said Dworshak continues to release 7.1 Kcfs; the current elevation is just below 1530. The project will be near elevation 1522 by September 15, at which point outflow will be ramped down to 3-4 Kcfs until elevation 1520 is achieved. Current inflows are less than 700 cfs, and we anticipate that Dworshak will be at minimum outflow by September 19, she said. In response to a question, Tina Lundell said the Dworshak release temperature has been running slightly above 47 degrees F.; the salmon managers said that temperature is fine. We do need to decide whether the single unit we'll be operating once we hit elevation 1520 is running in overshoot or undershoot mode, Henriksen said. That means a release temperature of either 40 or 52 degrees F., she added. Wills said he will contact Dworshak Hatchery personnel and inquire as to their preferences.

### ***4. First Draft of 2006 Water Management Plan.***

Silverberg noted that the first draft of the 2006 Water Management Plan is now available (via hot-link from today's agenda on the TMT homepage). We are hopeful that there will be dredging in the Lower Snake this winter, which will mean MOP, rather than MOP+1, operations, she said – that, and the fact that the drum gate repairs at Grand Coulee are now complete, are the main differences between the 2005 and 2006 WMPs. Henriksen noted that the 2006 WMP is scheduled to be finalized by the end of September; she asked that any TMT comments on the 2006 plan be submitted by September 28, sooner, if possible. No comments were provided at today's meeting.

### ***5. Fall Treaty Fishing.***

We are entering our third week of fall treaty fishing, said Dittmer; compliance so far is meeting or exceeding the statistics for this period last year. The tribes are considering another week of fishing next week, and will consult with our federal partners, he added. At this point, you can expect weekly SORs – we're working a week at a time, Dittmer said. Henriksen noted that John Day pool will be operating at a lower

elevation range than that requested by the tribe through the end of September. Dittmer added that fresh salmon is available in the CRITFC parking lot, via pre-order only.

## **6. Current System Status.**

Henriksen said Libby elevation reached 2439 on August 31. The project released 12 Kcfs through September 5. It is now releasing 10 Kcfs, an operation that will continue through next week, when outflow will be reduced to 8 Kcfs. So Montana's concerns are being addressed to some extent? Wagner asked. Yes, Henriksen replied. In response to a question from Russ Kiefer, Henriksen said Libby operations will be re-evaluated after next week.

Grand Coulee hit 1278 on August 31, and has subsequently filled about two feet, said John Roche. Hungry Horse hit 3540 on August 31, and is now releasing about 1.6 Kcfs. That operation will continue for the rest of the year. Roche added that Reclamation plans to gradually refill Grand Coulee to elevation 1283 by September 30 – that is the minimum September 30 elevation.

Lower Granite is currently passing about 20 Kcfs, said Henriksen; project outflow has been as low as 17 Kcfs, and could fall as low as 13 Kcfs once Dworshak goes to minimum outflow. McNary is currently passing 80-85 Kcfs; flows there have fallen as low as 70 Kcfs in recent days, and will likely fall further as Grand Coulee continues to refill. In response to a question, Henriksen said that, at this time of year, 80 Kcfs is the minimum flow at Bonneville, although it can fall as low as 70 Kcfs on an hourly basis. Yesterday's average flow was 86 Kcfs at Bonneville.

Wellschlager said there are no power system problems to report.

With respect to fish, Wagner said subyearling chinook indices have been running in the double digits at Lower Granite for the last 7 days; at Little Goose, there was a little bump yesterday, but in general, at all four Lower Snake projects, the indices are trailing off into the single digits.

Adults is where the main action is at the moment, said Wagner; they have finally shown up. At Bonneville, the high daily count for the season, 23,508, occurred over the weekend. The pre-season forecast was 660,000 fish to the river mouth, said Boyce, but so far, actual counts are tracking below pre-season expectations. Wagner added that steelhead counts at Bonneville have been decent, similar to the 10-year average. In other words, he said, 2005 adult steelhead counts are not a major disappointment, as were the 2005 spring chinook counts. In response to a question from Larry Beck, Boyce said the Columbia coho run is expected to be poor this year. It is odd that steelhead and summer chinook did well this year, while spring chinook and coho did poorly, said Boyce – it may have something to do with where they go in the ocean. Wagner added that adult steelhead numbers have recently increased at the Lower Snake projects, with

1,000+ per day passing Lower Granite, currently.

**7. Next TMT Meeting Date.**

The next meeting of the Technical Management Team was set for Wednesday, , September 21. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.

**TMT Participant List  
September 7, 2005**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Cindy Henriksen	COE
John Roche	USBR
Ray Gonzales	COE
David Wills	USFWS
John Wellschlager	BPA
Ron Boyce	ODFW
Larry Beck	COE
Barry Espenson	CBB
Paul Wagner	NMFS
Tine Lundell	COE
Margaret Filardo	FPC
Ruth Burris	PGE
Kevin Nordt	Mid-Cs
Tom Haymeker	PNGC
Dan Spear	BPA
Bruce MacKay	Consultant
Robin Harkless	Facilitation Team
Kyle Dittmer	CRITFC
Mike Buchko	Powerex
Richelle Beck	D. Rohr & Associates
Cathy Hlebechuk	COE

Russ Kiefer	IDFG
Russ George	WMCI