

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

July 12, 2006 Meeting

FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY NOTES ON FUTURE ACTIONS

Facilitator: Robin Harkless

Notes: Erin Halton

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/Hungry Horse Operations

During the July 6 IT meeting, the Montana SOR for Libby/Hungry Horse operations was discussed. While regional consensus was not reached to implement the request, the IT representatives requested that TMT continue discussing alternative or modified operation proposals that would, from a technical perspective, meet or get close to the various regional interests. During today's meeting, NOAA brought forth a proposed operation based on current forecasts and a desire to try to meet the interests of the full region: 15 kcfs out of Libby through August, putting Libby at a ~10' draft at the end of August, and shape September outflows to reach an elevation of 2439' at the end of September. Similarly, operate Hungry Horse to a 10' draft by the end of August. Paul Wagner, NOAA, noted that this proposed operation would be within TMT's purview to recommend, as a slight modification to the BiOp AND the Montana proposal. Additionally, he noted that storage water in Canada is available this year. BPA will release 600 kaf of the Canadian storage water in August, which is equal to about 15' at Libby. While the storage water is not a trade off specifically for the Montana proposal, it does provide a unique opportunity this year. If technical consensus was reached on the operation, the action agencies and NOAA would need to check with their legal representatives and put something in writing to the judge for approval.

The COE offered that the best loading operation at Libby (which is undergoing oil changes) would be 13.8 kcfs (3 units) now, and as the head goes down, discharge would increase. The project could also partially load 4 units. Libby was currently operating at 17 kcfs out, which NOAA recommended the COE maintain until agreement was reached for a new operation (15 kcfs or otherwise).

TMT members responded:

- Montana: Not the most optimal operation but could support it this year. Will provide a benefit to resident fish. Would like to plan a ramp-down operation for September, soon. Suggest around 9-10 kcfs.
- Idaho: The proposed operation would create a balance for resident and other fish. Given current conditions, this is a reasonable adaptive management approach, and the recommendation is acceptable. Suggest developing more defined September

operations soon. Suggest, per Montana's technical guidance, a gradual ramp-down on a weekly basis.

- Oregon: From a technical perspective, this proposed operation is not flow neutral. Whether to interpret storage water from Canada as providing 'flow neutral' conditions is a policy call.
- USFWS: Shares Oregon's flow neutral concerns AND has concerns for Kootenai fish. Agrees with flat flows as an objective, and with the increase in the current water supply, the proposal is acceptable (though the optimum would be BiOp operations).
- BOR: The ultimate decision rests with the Judge. Needs approval in order to implement. Would provide technical information to the legal process to support the decision. Relative to Libby/Hungry Horse operations, would oppose a restrictive operation at Grand Coulee in September.
- BPA: Supports the proposed operation.
- CRITFC: Given the information presented today, the proposed operation is not volume-neutral. CRITFC does not support. (The operation would be volume-neutral only if the Canadian storage water is 'credited', but not enough information was available today to make that determination.)
- COE: If consensus is reached would need to run it through the legal process.

Next Steps:

- Oregon, CRITFC and others requested additional information about the Canadian storage water and the proposed operation's likely impacts on McNary flows. A subgroup of Jim Litchfield, Rick Kruger, Bob Heinith, Scott Bettin, Cathy Hlebechuk and Paul Wagner were scheduled to meet on **Friday, July 14 at 2:00 pm** to look at the information and develop a written proposal that includes NOAA's suggested operation and likely impacts on flow at McNary.
- The action agencies and NOAA will check with their legal representatives on whether the proposed operation would be feasible to implement this year, from a legal perspective. The proposal from the TMT subgroup will be presented during an IT call on **Tuesday, July 18 at 1:00 pm**, at which IT members will be asked to make a policy call on the following question: Is the proposed operation 'flow neutral' considering the Canadian storage water and current water supply forecast, and should it be pursued through the legal process to be implemented this year?
- TMT will have a conference call on **Wednesday, July 19 at 9:00 am** to discuss the IT discussion and future operations for Libby and Hungry Horse.
- The COE will continue operating Libby at 17 kcfs until a determination is made to implement an alternative operation. The COE expressed interest in maintaining stable flows out of Libby, from an operational perspective.

Dworshak Operations

Dworshak was currently operating at full load and 1.7 kcfs through the RO's, with 11.2 kcfs total outflow. Water temperatures were at 43 degrees. The changes made on July 7th showed influence at Lower Granite, with current temperatures at 67 degrees. Anatone temperatures were near 71 degrees, a moderation from what was seen the week prior. Orofino temperature is around 72 degrees, with 2kcfs out. Clearwater temperatures were still slightly warmer than in previous years.

Weather is expected to be cooler this week. Volume graph shows with the 50% forecast, about 124 kcfs flow augmentation available above 10 kcfs through the end of August. This assumes the project is drafted to 1535' the end of August, equal to about 31 ksf days at 2k.

NOAA recommended that the COE maintain the current operation and all continue to monitor conditions. TMT supported this recommendation. It was noted that work will be done on unit one at Dworshak this Friday so there would be some potential restrictions in adjusting for temperatures, but the COE did not expect this to be an issue.

SOR's for Treaty Fishing

Kyle Dittmer, CRITFC, updated TMT on the recent SOR's submitted for treaty fishing, on July 3-6, 10-13, 17-20, and 24-27, requesting pool operations at 1' for traditional fishing season. The COE agreed to operate Bonneville at 1.5' as a hard constant and 1' as a soft constraint. August fishing will likely occur in the 3rd or 4th week. Hlebechuk noted the SOR submitted June 23 requested a fishing period of July 5 – 7. On Friday, June 30 at 1600 hours, the Corps was faxed a compact notice the fishing period had changed to July 3 – 6. She said because of the late notice the high pool for the July 3 -4 period was set up as a “preferred” operation rather than a “hard” constraint. CRITFC was informed of this. In actuality, the Bonneville forebay was able to be maintained in the top 1.5' feet as

Chum Population Estimates

Rick Kruger, ODFW, provided graphs for '98 -'05 chum timing and peak estimates of spawning with confidence intervals, using the best available data. The information was shared per request from BPA, who noted that this can be a difficult operation to implement. A suggestion was made to cross reference actual flows with the information on the graphs.

Marine Mammal Permitting Process Update

Rick Kruger reported that the states are pursuing Section 120 in the Marine Mammal Protection Act to address sea lions and are asking for feedback from NOAA. If there are concerns, NOAA will convene a task force to discuss and report back to NOAA. Overall, the process would be lengthy, costly and uncertain.

Water Management Plan - Emergency Protocols

Russ Kiefer, IDFG, shared that the salmon managers reviewed the emergency protocols and recommend using the current list and notify all ASAP if/when an emergency does occur with details on: the problem, the duration, the constraint to implementing the BiOp, and the options on how to address (in the event there are other options.) The salmon managers did not plan to provide a protocol list for summer operations this year.

Operations Review

Reservoirs: Line repairs at Dworshak have been completed. Spring averages at McNary were 325 kcfs, Lower Granite averaged 125 kcfs, and Priest Rapids averaged 191 kcfs.

Fish: The adult summer migration has increased.

Power: John Day T-1 transformer might be back up by the end of this month. Doble testing is underway and on the horizon. LGS: units 5-6 out currently, LoMo and Lower Granite are up next. Don Faulkner, COE, will post the schedule on the TMT web page.

Water quality: TDG exceedances at Lower Granite are invalid – no exceedances occurred in July.

TMT Conference Call: Wednesday, July 19, 9am-noon

Agenda Items include:

- Dworshak Operations
- Libby/Hungry Horse Operations

Technical Management Team Meeting Notes

July 12, 2006

1. Greetings and Introductions.

Today's Technical Management Team meeting was chaired by Cathy Hlebechuk 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 notes should contact Hlebechuk at 503-808-3942.

2. Libby and Hungry Horse Operations.

This is a continuation from other recent TMT and IT discussions, Harkless said; one of the outcomes of the IT meeting was a request that the TMT discuss various operational alternatives that might better meet the needs of the parties of concern. Paul Wagner said he had put forward a potential operation for consideration; essentially it called for a flat 15 Kcfs flow out of Libby through the end of August. I have made a number of trips to the Libby area and heard from numerous people that they were unhappy with our current operation, Wagner said; I told them I would propose this operation at TMT, and have done so. At the time, 15 Kcfs seemed to be a reduction of about 2 Kcfs below what was planned. It now looks as though 20 Kcfs will be required to achieve elevation 2439 by August 31, Wagner said. Another consideration was the spill that occurred at Libby in 2006; in the interest of trying to aid the recovery of the fish that were affected by spill operations, this more modest rate of outflow seemed like one way to mitigate for those biological effects.

The net effect would be a 10-foot draft of Libby by August 31, to 2449 by August 31, Wagner said. It is within TMT's purview to recommend such a

reduced draft, if consensus can be reached. At Hungry Horse, the operation would be similar – a 10-foot draft by August 31. the Montana proposal is a 10-foot draft by September 30. In other words, this is a compromise between what Montana is requesting and what is allowed under the BiOp.

The group devoted a few minutes of discussion to Wagner's suggested operation; Hlebechuk noted that 15 Kcfs is not a good loading for Libby – three full units release about 13.8 Kcfs, so we would either need to release somewhat more or somewhat less than what is being requested, she said. I would probably recommend that project discharge be held at the current rate of outflow, 17 Kcfs, if we're able to reach consensus at this table, Wagner said. In response to a question from Jim Litchfield, Hlebechuk said 18 Kcfs would be better, but 17 Kcfs would be an acceptable loading.

Greg Hoffman said staff at the dam would prefer to have three units running, rather than four, to allow planned oil change maintenance work to proceed. The work is scheduled to continue through the end of August. Scott Bettin suggested that it might be possible to run 15 Kcfs through three units once the head drops at the project. Bettin noted that a volume of non-treaty water equivalent of 15 feet in Libby will be released in August – about 600 kaf, so at least some extra water will be released in August this year.

That water will provide a significant biological benefit for migrating Snake River fall chinook, Litchfield observed. Ho added that, from Montana's perspective, Wagner's suggested compromise operation, while sub-optimal, would be acceptable, because it would meet at least some of the biological goals outlined in the SOR. It was noted, however, that if the TMT recommends this change, it will need to be vetted through the court. In response to another question, Bettin said that, based on negotiations to date, he cannot promise that any water released from Libby during September will not be held by the Canadians in Kootenay Lake.

The group devoted a few minutes a few minutes of discussion to this information. It was observed that 2006 presents a unique opportunity to conduct this change in operations, due to the water supply situation and the availability of a substantial volume of Canadian storage. Russ Kiefer said Idaho would likely be comfortable with NOAA's proposed compromise operation, but would like more specificity as to the September operation of the Montana projects. Typically, we would prefer to see a gradual rampdown through September, starting at 15 Kcfs and ramping down in equal weekly steps to end September at 9 Kcfs or 10 Kcfs, Litchfield replied. That sounds reasonable to us, Kiefer said.

Hlebechuk said the Corps would like to see TMT reach consensus on this issue, then have Corps legal staff vet it. Rick Kruger said Oregon is not comfortable with NOAA's proposed operation because it is not flow-neutral, because the Canadian water would have been delivered anyway. David Wills

said USFWS agrees somewhat with Oregon's perspective, but also has concerns about conditions in the Kootenai below Libby. The bottom line is that, given the recent increase in the water supply forecast, and the need to optimize conditions for resident fish in Montana, if the Corps chooses to implement the compromise operation, I don't think the Fish and Wildlife Service would object, he said.

Tony Norris said Reclamation believes this decision rests with Judge Redden. We certainly couldn't adopt and implement this proposal without getting Judge Redden's approval first, he said. Moving forward with a strong consensus would definitely be a plus, he said. Bettin said Bonneville strongly supports the proposed compromise operation, and looks forward to its expeditious passage through IT and the court process.

Bob Heinith said that, from CRITFC's perspective, they were looking for something that would be volume-neutral. The Canadian storage helps, but still falls far short of a volume-neutral operation. Therefore, CRITFC cannot support the proposed compromise operation. Wagner noted that a 20-foot draft of Libby and Hungry Horse is equivalent to 1.3 MAF, so the 500 kaf of Canadian storage would fall far short of volume neutrality. But with the increase in runoff volume, we're a lot closer, said Wagner – with the Canadian storage, while I can't say there would be no significant difference in August flows at McNary, the difference wouldn't be great.

Ultimately, Bettin suggested that, in light of the concerns expressed today, it may make sense to take this issue back to IT, providing them with a complete package outlining the details of the proposed operation and seeking the IT's policy blessing. Norris added one caveat: that Reclamation will be reluctant to commit to any operation that significantly restricts the operation of Grand Coulee during September – in particular – any operation that would preclude Reclamation from using at least a portion of the Canadian non-treaty water to refill Grand Coulee toward its September kokanee elevation. It was agreed to delegate a small TMT subgroup to further flesh out this proposal, and its expected impacts to flows at McNary, before it is brought to IT for policy resolution next week. In the interim, it was agreed to hold Libby outflow at 17 Kcfs.

Ultimately, the TMT agreed to revisit this issue at its next meeting.

3. Dworshak Operations.

The TMT has had a number of conference calls to discuss Dworshak operations in the last few weeks, Harkless said. Dworshak is currently releasing full load and spilling about 1.7 Kcfs through the regulating outlets, for a total outflow of 11.2 Kcfs, with a release temperature of 43 degrees F., Jim Adams said. The current water temperature in the Lower Granite tailrace is about 67 degrees, he added. In other words, the effects of the Dworshak operational

change we made last Friday have finally reached Lower Granite, Adams said. Temperatures coming out of Anatone are pushing 71 degrees, currently, definitely lower than what we saw last week. Orofino water temperatures are about 72 degrees, currently, Adams added, but there is only 4-5 Kcfs running past that station, currently. Temperatures in the Clearwater, at Lewiston, Spaulding and Peck are all down here.

The group devoted a few minutes of discussion to the current Dworshak operation. Kyle Dittmer noted that more hot weather is expected next week in the Lewiston area by Sunday and Monday, with air temperatures of 100 degrees+ range. Hlebechuk noted that, using the 50 percent forecast, the Corp estimates that there is enough flow augmentation volume available at Dworshak to provide approximately 31 days of 2 Kcfs spill at Dworshak above full powerhouse operation. In response to a question, it was noted that the current average flow at Lower Granite is about 44 Kcfs.

Ultimately, the TMT recommended no changes to the current Dworshak operation; it was agreed that the project will continue to release full powerhouse capacity, plus 1.7 Kcfs spill through the regulating outlets. It was further agreed to revisit the Dworshak operation at next week's TMT conference call.

4. Treaty Fishing SORs.

Dittmer said CRITFC has submitted two SORs, running through the end of July, covering four fishing periods. As usual, the tribes are asking for full, stable pools at the Zone 6 projects during the treaty fishing periods. As always, the Corps will impose a hard constraint of 1.5 feet at Bonneville, and the other two projects will be used for load shaping, Hlebechuk replied. More than likely, treaty fishing will resume either the second or third week in August, Dittmer added.

5. Chum Spawning Population Estimates.

Kruger provided a series of graphs showing the 2005 chum spawning population estimates, noting that it is intended to display only the relevant scale of the magnitude of recent chum runs. The take-home message is that the current chum population is low; 2002 was an extreme anomaly, said Kruger. Run timing has also been highly variable, so the numbers for 2005 weren't very tight. In response to a question, Kruger said he has already reported on the age structure of the 2005 spawning year.

6. Marine Mammal Permitting Process Update.

Kruger said the Washington and Oregon commissions have directed their staffs to pursue a Section 120 Exception, said Kruger; they have received a briefing from NMFS as to what will be involved. Filling out the applications will take a lot of effort, but if it is decided to pursue the exception, a task force will be

assembled to prepare that application. The entire process could take 2-4 years; NOAA would have to prepare an EIS, another lengthy process, and lethal take is, in all likelihood, not the answer, given the number of animals involved, so why bother? We understand that this is a lengthy, sensitive and uncertain process, said Harkless; please keep us informed as appropriate.

7. Salmon Managers' Updates to Emergency Action List.

Kiefer said FPAC discussed this topic at yesterday's meeting; our recommendation to the action agencies, if an emergency occurs, is that they begin by operating off the current list, but contact us as soon as possible to explain the problem, its likely duration, the BiOp operations it would impact, and any potential alternative actions. Because we're currently under the remand, we decided that trying to re-do the summer emergency list at this time wouldn't be the best use of everyone's time, at this point.

8. Operations Review.

Hlebechuk said the line repairs at Dworshak are now complete. Spring flows averaged 325 Kcfs at McNary, 125 Kcfs at Lower Granite and 191 Kcfs at Priest Rapids. On the fish front, Wagner said the adult summer chinook run continues to be strong. Adams noted that there were no water quality exceedences to report during the month of July.

The Corps reported that the John Day T1 outage repairs are going well, and could be complete by the end of July. Another participant noted that Doble testing is planned at various FCRPS projects is planned for the coming weeks; the Corps said they will provide further updates once the testing dates are available.

9. Next TMT Meeting Date.

The next meeting of the Technical Management Team was set for Wednesday, July 26. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.

TMT Meeting Participants July 12, 2006

Name	Affiliation
Greg Haller	NPT
Kyle Dittmer	CRITFC
Tony Norris	USBR

Robin Harkless	Facilitation Team
Jim Litchfield	Montana
Cathy Hlebechuk	COE
Russ Kiefer	IDFG
Paul Wagner	NOAAF
Scott Bettin	BPA
Jim Adams	COE
David Wills	USFWS
Rick Kruger	ODFW
Russ George	WMCI
Randy Wortmann	COE
Rudd Turner	COE
Bern Klatte	COE
Barry Espensen	CBB
Bob Heinith	CRITFC
Kevin Nordt	Mid-Cs
Mark Burge	USFWS
Vern Cook	COE
Mark Bagdovitz	USFWS
Greg Hoffman	COE
Bruce MacKay	Consultant
Richelle Beck	D. Rohr & Associates
Tom Le	PSE
Ruth Burris	PGE
Mike Buchko	Powerex
Dan Spear	BPA