

# COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

## TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

November 8, 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.

#### **2006 Fall/Winter Operations at Vernita Bar**

Russell Langshaw, Grant County PUD, reported that the chum study plan would be posted on the TMT website by or on 11/9. A 10/29 survey counted 4 redds in the 36 – 50 kcfs range, and an 11/5 survey counted 108 redds between 36 – 70 kcfs, indicating spawning began on 11/1; 3 redds were found above 65kcfs. As of 11/8, 55 fish had been tagged. The study operations included some spill, and graphs for 10/31 – 11/6 showed four-hour flow peaks occurring twice a day, typically between 0600-1100 hrs and 1600-2200 hrs.

**Action/Next Steps:** Langshaw said that the next survey would be conducted on 11/12, and a follow-up will be on the next TMT agenda on 11/22.

#### **Chum Salmon Operations**

Cathy Hlebechuk, COE, posted a memo on the agenda for the 11/8 TMT meeting regarding an emergency call held with the Salmon Managers on 11/7, during which a minimum of 13' tailwater elevation, with pulses when possible, was agreed to for chum. Dave Wills, USFWS, relayed a recommendation from OR following the 11/7 call: flat flows, at least during the day, to support the implementation of the SOR and minimize spawning disturbance. A question was raised by OR as to whether John Day storage could be used to mitigate the high flows, to which the COE replied the storage is to be reserved for flood control. Recommendations from the other Salmon Managers stood as discussed at FPAC, and they agreed to have further conversation as the week continued.

**Action/Next Steps:** Chum monitoring will continue, and there will be a TMT conference call on 11/15, to continue discussions.

#### **Lake Pend Oreille Research**

Russ Kiefer, ID, said that there was no new information from research, but that it appeared as though the requested Albeni Falls winter elevation of 2051' would be reached by 11/20. Kiefer also noted that as of 11/8, there was no indication of the operation positively affecting lake trout spawning; monitoring for eggs and birds preying on eggs along the shoreline will continue for another couple of weeks. Kiefer said that it was not clear when and where spawning was happening, and hoped that tagging and acoustic

spawning could be used to help identify this in the future. TMT members thanked the survey crews for their efforts at Lake Pend Oreille.

**Next Steps:** A research wrap-up will be on the agenda for the TMT meeting on 11/22.

**\*Note – Update\***

*At approximately 2:20 pm on 11/8, Cathy Hlebechuk sent out the following email:*  
“Due to increased flows in the Pend Oreille River (Columbia Falls went from 3500 cfs to 34000 cfs in 3 days) Albeni Falls will start spilling about 5 kcfs this afternoon. Total outflow will be about 33 kcfs. Goal is to reach 2051’ – 2051.5’ range by 20 November.”

**2007 Water Management Plan**

Russ Kiefer, ID, said that draft comments from ID were under internal review and will be sent to the COE the week of 11/13.

**Action:** TMT members will be reminded at the next meeting to review the draft and submit edits, additions, etc. based on expected 2007 operations, and submit them to Bernard Klatter, COE, no later than 12/15.

**Operations Review**

*Reservoirs:* Grand Coulee was at 1287.8', Hungry Horse was filling a bit and was at 3535.9', Libby was filling and was at 2435.5', with inflows at 19k and outflows of 8.8kcfs; Albeni Falls was at 2052.4', with a potential need for spill in order to reach the 2051' elevation by 11/20, and Dworshak was at 1523.2' with inflows of 27 kcfs and outflows at 1.5kcfs. Lower Granite inflows were at 60kcfs, and outflows at Orofino were at 1.8kcfs. Columbia Falls was at 35kcfs, Sandy was at 40kcfs, and Bonneville was at 220kcfs and climbing.

*Fish:* Juvenile sampling ended 10/31; at Lower Granite, 176 was the high and 110 was the low, and Little Goose numbers had a high of approximately 50. Adult migration was nearly done; Fall Chinook counts at McNary were 89,000, Ice Harbor counts were 10,000, and Priest Rapids counts were 18,000.

*Power:* Nothing to report at this time.

*Water quality:* Dworshak was currently operating one unit at 1.5kcfs in undershot mode, with temperatures approximately 48° and one unit at 1.5k. An outage is scheduled for 11/13, from 0500 – 2000 hrs., which will likely drop temperatures to 40°. The COE and USFWS will coordinate on 11/13 to discuss what to do during or after the special operations at the project.

**Action/Next Steps:** A Dworshak update will be sent as an email or teletype, be part of the 11/15 conference call, and/or be on the agenda for the 11/22 TMT meeting.

**An FYI Announcement:** Dave Wills, USFWS, said that the AFEP 2006 Research Review will be held at the Portland World Trade Center on 11/13-16. RSVP information can be found on the COE Walla Walla district website.

**Upcoming Snake River Outages**

Bernard Klatter and Don Faulkner, COE, reported on the outages planned at Lower Monumental, Lower Granite, and Little Goose. Klatter and Faulkner noted the numerous revisions to the dates/schedule for the outages.

**Action:** Faulkner will send a summary with date/schedule revisions to TMT members and will also post to the TMT website as a link under “Documents/Operations.”

**11/15 Conference Call**

Agenda items include:

- Chum Operations update
- Dworshak under/overshot mode update

**Next TMT Face-to-Face Meeting, November 22nd, 9:00-noon**

Agenda Items include:

- Fall/Winter Operations at Vernita Bar
- Chum Operations
- Lake Pend Oreille Research wrap-up
- 2007 WMP – reminder to submit comments by 12/15
- Operations Review

Technical Management Team Meeting Notes

November 8, 2006

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

The October 8 TMT 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. Fall/Winter 2006 Vernita Bar Operations.***

Russ Langshaw said the 2006 study plan will be posted by tomorrow. He reported that 55 fish have been tagged so far; another 20 will be tagged in the next week. There have been two spawning surveys since the last meeting: October 29 (4 redds counted in the 36-50 Kcfs range, numerous redds below 36 Kcfs, compared to 62 redds counted on

October 30 last year), and November 5 (108 redds counted). That triggered the initiation of spawning, officially on November 1. So far, the experimental operation seems to be working well – we’ve only seen 3 redds above 65 Kcfs, he said. You’ll do another survey this Sunday? Scott Bettin asked. Yes – flows will be 45 Kcfs, Langshaw replied. In response to a request from Hlebechuk, Langshaw said he will email the study plan directly to the TMT membership.

Moving on to last week’s operation, Langshaw said a graph detailing the operation is attached to today’s agenda on the TMT homepage via hot-link. We’re creating two peaks daily, one in early morning, one in late afternoon, he said; as you can see, the duration of the second peak depends on how much water we have. In response to a question, Greg Lang said turbine capacity at Priest Rapids is about 165 Kcfs, so anything above that volume is being spilled.

### ***3. Chum Salmon Operation.***

Hlebechuk said she had attached a memo to today’s agenda on the TMT homepage via hot-link, describing the current chum operation. The agreed-upon operation between the AA and the Salmon Managers during the current high flows was to maintain a minimum tailwater elevation of 13 feet. In the winter PH2 is the priority powerhouse; however, because of debris problems at PH2 it was changed to PH1 as discussed with the Salmon Managers, she said. Please refer to Hlebechuk’s memo for full details of the current operation. The current tailwater elevation is 19-20 feet, with outflows in the 220 Kcfs range, she said. The group reviewed yesterday’s Bonneville tailwater elevations; Bettin noted that there will be one big pulse later today. Turbine capacity at Bonneville is 180 Kcfs, and river flows are still in the 220 Kcfs range, he added. The project started spilling this morning at 2 am, Hlebechuk said. Fortunately we have plenty of tailwater depth compensation, Bettin observed. In response to a question, Hlebechuk said Grand Coulee is pretty much full now.

What’s the prognosis for flows? David Wills asked. Flows will continue to rise over the next couple of days, Bettin replied. It’s like a python trying to swallow an elephant at the moment, said Robin MacKay. The high flows are expected to preclude implementation of the tailwater elevations specified in the SOR for some weeks, Bettin added. I have been asked to deliver a message from Oregon, said Wills – upon further reflection, Oregon does not support the fluctuating flow program we tentatively came to agreement on at yesterday’s FPAC meeting, he said – they support implementation of the SOR, with flat flows, rather than fluctuating flows, to avoid disturbing the spawning area. They ask that, if possible, storage space at John Day be used to provide lower flows. The John Day storage is reserved for flood control and cannot be used for this fish operation, Hlebechuk replied. In response to a question, Wills said ODFW is the only salmon management agency that supports implementation of the SOR operation at this point.

The group reviewed the National Weather Service 10-day weather outlook. Basically, what this shows is that, Wednesday and Thursday, we’re expected to get up to another inch of rain, said Hlebechuk, with even larger amounts of precipitation through

the weekend. We really don't see a break until next Tuesday, said Adams – in other words, flows are going to continue to be high for the foreseeable future.

What are the salmon managers recommending as a group? Hlebechuk asked. Yesterday the group was comfortable with the fluctuating flow approach, Wills replied – it was later in the day that Oregon changed its position. The rest of the salmon managers have not changed their positions. We will have further discussion of this issue later this week, he said, and if we have an alternative recommendation, we'll let you know. At this point, however, it's kind of a moot point. We'll stay the course, then, Hlebechuk said, and operate according to yesterday's FPAC recommendation as soon as flows begin to recede somewhat.

In response to a question, Cindy LeFleur reported that the most recent chum spawning survey on Monday found one dead chum, although wind and turbid water made an accurate survey difficult. Basically, until the Bonneville tailwater is back in shape, survey conditions will continue to be difficult, Bettin observed.

#### ***4. Lake Pend Oreille Lake Trout Research Update.***

Russ Kiefer said he has no new information to report on the lake trout research program at today's meeting. It looks as though we are on track to reach the requested Albeni Falls elevation of 2051 feet by November 20. Hopefully that will produce good spawning conditions for kokanee, he said; our field personnel will continue to look for birds feeding on lake trout eggs for the next week or so. Please thank the crews for all their efforts, said Bettin – I know they have spent a tremendous amount of time in the field. I'll pass that on, said Kiefer.

#### ***5. 2007 Water Management Plan.***

Bern Klatt said he is still waiting for comments on the 2007 WMP; we haven't received many so far, he said. Kiefer said he had sent draft comments in for internal IDFG review and has now gotten them back, with a few edits – I should be able to get those to the Corps by next week, he said. And when do you need to put out the final version of the WMP? Wills asked. The BiOp says we're supposed to have it done by September, Hlebechuk said. Good – that gives us 10 months, said Wills. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that December 15 will be the deadline for comments on the 2007 WMP.

#### ***6. Upcoming Major Outages on Snake River/End of 1% Operation.***

Klatt said Bonneville's Transmission Business Line needs to take Lower Granite powerhouse offline some time in the next couple of months, as well as Lower Monumental and Little Goose powerhouse. The TBL needs to do some work on the lines, he explained. When the powerhouses are off, the projects will run at speed-no-load. I talked to Bill Hevlin, and he recommended that we put off the outages until as late in

December as possible, Klatte said. The dates chosen were from 7 am December 4 through 5 pm December 8 at Lower Granite.

Don Faulkner clarified that the Little Goose Doble testing, diving to install trash rack transducers and relay testing will actually begin November 27, with 36 hours of zero powerhouse operation followed by a two-unit operation during nighttime hours through December 3. At Lower Granite, the outage will be a full powerhouse outage around the clock from December 4-8. The project will release 5 Kcfs through speed-no-load. At Lower Monumental, an outage for breaker replacement will take place, but the dates have not yet been finalized. Units 1-4 will have to be out for several consecutive weeks; during the outage, two units will be operation. Once the work is complete on Units 1-4, Units 5-6 will be out of service. At Little Goose, an additional outage has been scheduled for fire suppression upgrade work for four weeks beginning January 10 through February 10; we'll do Units 1-4 first, followed by Units 5-6, he explained. At Wills' request, Faulkner said he will summarize the planned outages in writing and will post this memo to the TMT homepage under "Operations".

Moving on, Faulkner said the official end of 1% operation was November 1. There is no reporting requirement associated with the end of that operation, he said – it's in the Fish Passage Plan. We just wanted to make sure everyone was aware that this has occurred, he said – we'll try to keep the system within 1% whenever possible, but we now have the flexibility to operate outside 1% when necessary.

## ***7. Operations Review.***

Reclamation reported that Grand Coulee is currently at 1287.8 feet. Hungry Horse is currently at 3535.9 feet and filling slightly. The project is releasing 900 cfs, with flows of 35 Kcfs at Columbia Falls. The Corps said Libby is filling; the current elevation is 2434.5 feet. Inflows have increased from 4 Kcfs to 19 Kcfs. Albeni Falls is now at elevation 2052.5 feet, releasing 26 Kcfs. Lower Granite outflow has increased from 16 Kcfs a few days ago to 60 Kcfs, currently. Bonneville was at 150 Kcfs inflow yesterday; inflows to the project are currently 220 Kcfs. Salem was at 10 Kcfs in early November; it was at 60 Kcfs yesterday and climbing. Portland Harbor was at 6 feet a couple of days ago and is at 11 feet, currently. Flows in the Sandy and Hood Rivers are at 40 Kcfs, Bettin added; to put that into perspective, last week, flows in the Sandy were 600 cfs.

Moving on to fish, Paul Wagner said subyearling passage has decreased to the double to low triple digits at Lower Granite and Little Goose – that's it for the season, which stops on October 31, he said. LeFleur said there is little to say about adults – the migration is pretty much done at this point. About 89,000 fall chinook have passed McNary to date; the adult fall chinook count past Ice Harbor is 10,000. There were no power system issues reported at today's meeting.

Adams said Dworshak is releasing project minimum – 1.5 Kcfs – and operating in undershot mode, with a release temperature of about 48 degrees. At Peck, the river temperature is currently about 50 degrees F. The planned project outage at Dworshak is

still scheduled for this Monday, he added; I will discuss which mode the project should operate in – overshot or undershot – once normal operations resume with the salmon managers early next week.

**8. Next TMT Meeting Date.**

The next Technical Management Team meeting was set for Wednesday, November 22. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.

TMT Meeting Participants  
November 8, 2006

Name	Affiliation
Cathy Hlebechuk	COE
Cindy LeFleur	WDFW
Robin MacKay	BPA
Russ Kiefer	IDFG
Paul Wagner	NOAAF
Tony Norris	USBR
Margaret Filardo	FPC
Ken Tiffan	USGS
Russ Langshaw	Grant PUD
Greg Lange	COE
Russ George	WMCI
Scott Bettin	BPA
Tim Heizenrater	Cascade Energy
David Wills	USFWS
Jim Adams	COE