

# COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

## TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM CONFERENCE CALL

December 14, 2006

### FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY NOTES ON FUTURE ACTIONS

Facilitator: 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.

#### Chum Operations

During the December 14 call, Cathy again updated the group that the Willamette at Salem was forecasted to reach flows of 105 kcfs by Saturday, the Portland harbor was expected to peak at around 160 kcfs on Friday pm, and that the Bonneville pool was within 1' from full. The precipitation and resulting high flows was expected to recede and taper off sometime next week.

Rick Kruger, ODFW, reported that as of 12/12, new redds had shown up. 60 live and 136 redds were observed. The salmon managers recommended that the current operation be maintained to the extent possible for as long as possible, recognizing that the forecasted rain event would likely not allow the project to maintain its current operation—and that given the conditions, they were supportive of operators using their best professional judgment to manage the dam.

BPA offered that their expectation was that the project would reach its 7' exceedance and that additional water would be pushed out at night. BPA deferred to the COE on implementing the operation. There were uncertainties and concerns raised about exceeding 110% TDG levels if the operation was considered ‘voluntary spill’.

**ACTION:** The COE planned to operate the project to full powerhouse (using 1.5'/hour ramp rates) and up to 110% TDG until the system was able to resume to the preferred operation for chum, 12.3-12.8' tailwater during the day and up to two short peaks at night. TMT will continue to monitor conditions and revisit the issue during a conference call on Wednesday, December 20.

## Technical Management Team Meeting

December 14, 2006

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

The December 14 TMT emergency call was chaired by Cathy Hlebechuk. 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. Bonneville Storm Operations**

Hlebechuk explained the Willamette River at Salem was currently above bank full and was forecasted to increase, peaking on Friday night at Portland Harbor (due to high local flows, especially the Clackamas River ) and peaking Saturday morning at Salem. She said in the immediate future, the project would need to increase outflows as the project is almost full. After the Bonneville pool is lowered and until the Willamette flows recede, she said she expected 80,000 cfs, minimum project outflow, to produce 13' – 13.5' tailwater elevation and asked the Salmon Managers if their preference was to try to hold lower flows during the day and higher at night or try to maintain a flat flow 24 hours/day until the project could return to the 12.3' – 12.8' daytime operation.

A question came up as to the latest status of chum. Rick Kruger gave a chum survey update. On December 12, we still had new redds – 136 – showing up, as well as 60 live chum, on the Ives Island spawning grounds, he said.

Wagner said it had been difficult to coordinate the preferred operation with the other salmon managers, but his preference is to keep the current operation intact to the greatest extent possible – keep the tailwater as low as possible during daytime hours and move the remaining water out at night. In other words, he said, restrict Bonneville outflow to 80 Kcfs during daytime hours, if possible, 7 am to 7 pm. We do understand that the operation could be overrun, given the weather conditions on the way, Wagner added.

How long do you anticipate it will be before you get the system back under control? Wagner asked. The forecast shows precipitation tapering off over the weekend and cold weather entering the basin, but how long the recession will take is hard to say, Hlebechuk replied – we should be back to the 12.3' – 12.8' tailwater operation by Sunday. We're only a foot from full right now at Bonneville, she added, so storage space is currently limited.

David Wills said the Fish and Wildlife Service agrees with the NOAA Fisheries position – keep Bonneville outflows as low as possible for as long as possible during daytime hours, and blow the remaining water out at night, with

the understanding that the actual operation will be up to the action agencies. Kruger said Oregon agrees with this recommended operation. There were no objections from the other Salmon Managers.

The group devoted a few minutes of discussion to the Bonneville operation. Initially the Bonneville outflows would need to be increased to keep the project from over filling, Hlebechuk. After a hole is dug in the reservoir, with the expected 180 kcfs inflow it should be possible to maintain 80 Kcfs outflow from Bonneville for 8-9 daytime hours, followed by releases of 280 Kcfs which would include spill for the remaining hours, This will yield a day-average flow at Bonneville of 180 Kcfs, while remaining within a 10-foot tailwater exceedence, Hlebechuk said. Cindy LeFleur said her recommendation is to implement Hlebechuk's suggested operation. It may be possible to get back into control by tomorrow morning if we increase Bonneville outflow now, Hlebechuk added. There were no objections from the other Salmon Managers.

Robin MacKay said she does not want to create any false expectations – the Bonneville tailwater is already rising toward the 10-foot daily exceedence, and BPA will have to spill tonight in order to move all of the water out of the reservoir. The Bonneville operation will change within the hour, she said. We have Grand Coulee cut back as far as possible, and Bonneville is purchasing power to help moderate flows. Could you store at any other mid-river projects, such as John Day? Wagner asked. If there is a flood issue, yes, Hlebechuk replied.

In response to a question, Jim Adams said spill up to 75 Kcfs should not cause an exceedence of the 120% tailrace limit – that volume will likely result in TDG levels in the 115% range. Rudd Turner noted, however, that this may be classified as voluntary spill, which is not permitted at this time of year. He suggested that it might make more sense to go to a shorter period of lower daytime flows in order to keep outflow volumes lower during the remaining hours of the day. Adams said his reading of the State of Washington waiver is that it would permit this operation. The Oregon standard is 110% at this time of year, however, Adams said – we are outside the waiver period. We would need to assure Oregon that the operation we are selecting is minimizing TDG in the river in some manner.

After a few minutes of further discussion, Hlebechuk clarified that the proposed operation is to increase Bonneville outflow, beginning now, to full powerhouse capacity, plus spill up to 110%, and to ramp back down to 80 Kcfs as soon as possible in the morning, possibly tomorrow. The action agencies will hold 80 Kcfs outflow for as long as possible during daylight hours, then increase outflow to get the remaining water out at night, up to 110% TDG. The maximum daily tailrace fluctuation allowed in a 24-hour period is normally 7 feet in the winter but she would get a tailwater exceedence of up to 10 feet from the Bonneville project manager. Adams noted that TDG is monitored at the

Warrendale gauge this time of year; he said it should be possible to spill up to 65 or 70 Kcfs at night and remain within 110% tailrace TDG. Turner said that, in his opinion, if it is necessary to spill more at night, and exceed the 110% standard, it should be possible for the Corps to write a letter to Oregon justifying that operation on ESA grounds, because the chum are a listed species.

No TMT objections were raised to this operation. It was agreed to revisit the Bonneville operation at the TMT's regularly-scheduled meeting on December 20.

The Corps reported that Dworshak's Unit 3 tested out OK and is now back in service.

TMT Meeting Participants  
December 14, 2006]

Name	Affiliation
Cathy Hlebechuk	COE
Jim Adams	COE
Paul Wagner	NOAAF
Rick Kruger	ODFW
Robyn MacKay	BPA
Scot Bettin	BPA
Cindy LeFleur	WDFW
David Wills	USFWS
Robin Harkless	Facilitation Team
Russ Kiefer	IDFG
John Roche	USBR
Kyle Dittmer	CRITFC