

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

December 20, 2006 Conference Call

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 Salmon Operations

Paul Wagner, NOAA, shared that during their FPAC call, the salmon managers reached a consensus recommendation to increase the Bonneville daytime tailwater from 12.5 ft (12.3-12.8 ft range) to a minimum 13' (12.8-13.3') to support chum spawning in areas higher than 12', those of which to this point have been watered during night time pulses. This recommendation, he noted, lines up with the salmon managers' desire not to superimpose redds, and is an acceptable level of risk of dewatering redds later.

Paul and Rick Kruger, ODFW, reported that the most recent chum surveys revealed 11 live chum, 54 redds and 28 carcasses at Ives Island; 88 live chum at Hamilton Springs; and 37 live chum at Hardy Creek. The next survey was scheduled for Friday morning, December 22.

The action agencies shared their interest in choosing a date for the end of chum spawning as soon as possible, to allow for flexibility to move water out of the system as necessary. They raised concerns that increasing the tailwater elevation now added risk to sustaining the elevation through the spring should water supply forecasts drop, and perhaps necessitate dewatering of some redds by reducing tailwater elevations. The salmon managers shared that concern, and reiterated that the recommended operation from their perspective provides the best balance given current spawning activity and current and forecasted weather conditions. The salmon managers at this point were not prepared to recommend a chum spawning end date, and suggested that TMT check in again on Friday to discuss the results of the latest chum survey.

Dave Wills, USFWS, looked at last year's chum numbers and spawning end date, showing an end in the operation on December 29, after no chum were observed. It was noted that this year all, not a portion of, chum spawning areas are being protected which adds a unique challenge both to operations and balance between near and long term objectives.

ACTION: The action agencies agreed to implement the requested operation for the short term, while chum are spawning. Operators will continue to provide up to two pulses above 13.5' at night to keep higher elevation redds wetted. Rick Kruger will gather information on Friday's surveys as well as the plan/schedule for surveying into next

week, and share that on Friday's call. Dave and Paul will gather any additional information from past operations' that would help the discussion on Friday. **A conference call was scheduled for Friday at 3:00 pm.**

Snake River Zero Night Time Flow

Jim Adams, COE, reported that since December 15 (the start date for the option to go to zero nighttime flow on the Snake River), all projects went to zero briefly on 12/18 AM and 12/20 AM.

2007 Water Management Plan

The COE has received comments on the 2007 WMP and Fall/Winter Update – these comments can be found attached to the TMT web page, under Documents/Water Management Plan. If there are additional comments, send them to Jim Adams at james.r.adams@nwd01.usace.army.mil.

Operations Review

Reservoirs: Libby was at elevation 2417.6', with 5.1 kcfs in and 22 kcfs outflows. The precipitation forecast shows the project at 122% of normal. Albeni Falls was at elevation 2052.5', 19.9 kcfs inflows and 17.2 kcfs out. Dworshak was at 1543.6', with 3.1 kcfs in and 1.4 kcfs out; the project filled about 2.9'. Lower Granite daily average inflows were 27.9 kcfs. Bonneville averaged 171.9 kcfs out, and spilled some. Hungry Horse elevation was 3540.4', with 1 kcfs in and 2 kcfs out. Grand Coulee elevation was 1284.4' and holding steady to meet chum, Vernita Bar and power needs.

Fish, Power System, Water Quality: Nothing to report at this time.

TMT Schedule

- December 22, Conference Call at 3:00 pm to discuss chum
- January 3, Conference Call at 9:00 am
- January 17 & 31, Face to Face Meetings

Technical Management Team Meeting Notes

December 20, 2006

1. Greetings and Introductions.

The December 20 Technical Management Team meeting was 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 Cathy Hlebechuk at 503-808-3942.

2. Chum Salmon Operation.

Paul Wagner said the salmon managers met yesterday; the consensus was to move the protection level up from 12.5 feet (12.3 to 12.8 ft range) to 13 feet (12.8 to 13.3 ft range), in terms of Bonneville tailwater elevation. He noted that the tailwater elevation reached 15 feet over the past weekend, despite the valiant efforts of the action agencies. The salmon managers would now like to see an operating range of 12.8 to 13.3 feet at Bonneville. There still appear to be fish in the area, he said. Rick Kruger said the recent high water prevented the field crew from seeing anything during last Friday's Ives Island spawning ground survey.

So there is nothing new in the field – the chum may be there, but we can't see them, Wagner said. A total of 88 live chum were observed at Hamilton Springs, and 37 live chum at Hardy Creek, on December 18. The next survey is scheduled for Friday, Kruger said, adding that he doesn't have yesterday's survey results yet. We're on the decline of the run, but we can't really say it's over, at this point, Kruger said. How do we determine when it is over? Scott Bettin asked. It will be based on what the survey crews report, Wagner replied – when they stop seeing live fish, we're done.

The group devoted a few minutes of discussion to the chum protection operation, with Bettin noting that the sooner it can be determined that the run is over, the better, from an operational planning perspective. Once we know the results from yesterday's survey and from Friday's, perhaps we could convene via conference call on Friday afternoon, Wagner suggested. The main thing we want to know is whether they're still seeing significant numbers of live fish, Robin MacKay observed. It was agreed that the salmon managers will review what occurred in 2005, in terms of declaring the end of chum spawning, and will report on Friday whether or not that threshold has been achieved. The Friday conference call was set for 3 pm. In the interim, the action agencies agreed to implement a tailwater range of 12.8-13.3 feet, targeting as close to 13 feet as possible. This operation will remain in force until the end of spawning is declared.

It was noted that, last year, by December 29, no new chum redds were observed, and the end of spawning was declared. The reason Bonneville is interested in this is that it makes it a lot easier for us to get the water through, but flattening out flows and moving more water through during daytime hours, MacKay explained – that is definitely our preference from our operational perspective. We understand that need, and will try to get that information as soon as possible, Wagner said.

MacKay said her only concern about the requested operation is the ability of the action agencies to sustain it into February and March – we probably need to think about redd dewatering criteria as well, she suggested. We have been discussing dewatering criteria, Wagner replied; hopefully we won't have to go there, but we are aware that every additional increment of water carries an additional increment of risk. We will be getting another water supply forecast on

January 8, and if it goes down, the Corps' concern will be with the issues associated with dropping the tailwater elevation to 12 or 12.5 feet, said Adams. We can deal with that if it arises, but based on everything I've heard, the water supply forecast is unlikely to go down in January, Wagner replied.

Kruger said that, after a further phone call, he now has yesterday's survey information; they saw 11 live chum, 54 total redds and 28 new carcasses. That's the highest carcass count to date, so spawning is continuing. Flows were down to 12.5-13 feet, so conditions for the survey were good, he added.

After a few minutes of further discussion, it was reiterated that the action agencies will implement the requested operation, holding Bonneville tailwater elevation between 12.8 and 13.3 feet and targeting as close to 13 feet as possible. MacKay emphasized that this is a short-term operation only, recognizing that this is a unique water year. The TMT will revisit this operation at a conference call on Friday afternoon, December 22.

3. Snake River Zero Nighttime Flow.

Adams said this agenda item is just an update. the operation began last Friday, December 13; since then, there have been two instances where zero nighttime flow occurred, the morning of December 18 and the morning of December 20.

4. 2007 Water Management Plan.

Comments on the 2007 Water Management Plan were due on Friday, Harkless said; has the Corps received any additional comments, and are you still accepting comments? The Corps reported that comments have been received from IDFG and from the Fish and Wildlife Service; the comments have been posted to the TMT homepage under "2007 Water Management Plan – Comments." Adams asked that any additional comments be sent directly to him.

5. Operations Review.

The Corps reported that Libby was at elevation 2417.6 feet last night, with 5 Kcfs in and 22 Kcfs out. The project's target elevation is still 2411 on December 31. The latest water supply forecast at Libby shows 122% of normal. Albeni Falls is at elevation 2052 feet with 17.2 Kcfs out; that operation will continue until December 31, at which point the project will go to a one-foot operating range. Dworshak is currently at 1543.6 feet and releasing minimum outflow; the project has filled 2.9 feet in last 7 days. 1558 is the December 31 target elevation at that project and will not be achieved, but 1526 feet is the target on January 31. Dworshak's April-July forecast is currently is 125% of average. Average discharge at Lower Granite was 27.9 Kcfs yesterday; at Bonneville, 171.9 Kcfs.

Spill averaged about 18 Kcfs at Bonneville yesterday, which produced 102% TDG at Warrendale.

John Roche said Hungry Horse was at elevation 3540.4 feet at midnight last night, with 900 cfs in and 2 Kcfs out. The project is being operated to maintain the Columbia Falls minimum flow. The current elevation is 1284.4 feet at Grand Coulee; the project is being operating to meet the chum flows, Vernita Bar and power operations. All is well with the power system, MacKay reported.

6. Next TMT Meeting Date.

The next meeting of the Technical Management Team was set for Wednesday, January 3. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.

TMT Participant List
December 20, 2006

Name	Affiliation
John Roche	USBR
Robyn MacKay	BPA
Scott Bettin	BPA
Kyle Dittmer	CRITFC
Paul Wagner	NOAAF
Robin Harkless	Facilitation Team
Rick Kruger	ODFW
Jim Adams	COE
Scott Boyd	COE
Laura Hamilton	COE
Russ George	WMCI
John Wasach	Bear Energy
Tim Heizenrater	Cascade Energy
Tom Le	PSE
David Wills	USFWS