

# COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

## TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

*July 5 and July 9, 2007 Conference Calls*

### 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.

#### **Summer Transportation at McNary**

Bernard Klatte, COE, gave TMT members a quick review of the McNary transport issue: During the June 27 TMT meeting, the Corps reported that the passage conditions at McNary Dam were no longer spring-like, and transportation operations should begin per the 2004 BiOp/UPA. On behalf of the salmon managers, NOAA proposed delaying implementation of transportation at McNary until information was reviewed from the NMFS Science Center's 2002 study results comparing transported and in-river fish at McNary. At the July 5 TMT meeting, having reviewed the science, the salmon managers stated that they did not object to beginning transportation operations at McNary. However, the Corps identified a navigation safety issue concerning the fish transport barges, given installation of TSW's and associated research and testing requiring spill at the project. The Corps proposed a navigation safety test on July 6.

The COE's plan, per guidance in the Fish Operations Plan and consistent with the 2004 BiOp, was to reduce spill to 26 kcfs on July 6 and, if the fish barge captain and project biologists determined conditions were safe enough to navigate, begin collection and start transporting on Sunday, July 8. The COE asked TMT members to weigh in on the issue:

- NOAA: Begin collection while maintaining TSW and research operations, and ensure all operations are consistent with the 2004 BiOP.
- USFWS: No objection; conclusions about the benefits of transportation at McNary may be premature at this point and further study is needed.
- OR: Do not object to NOAA's recommendation, as the operation is consistent with the 2004 BiOP, and more research is needed on the impacts of transportation on fish.
- ID: No objection to the proposed operation.
- MT: No objection to the proposed operation.
- Nez Perce: No objection to the proposed operation.
- CRITFC: The research is not conclusive enough to fully support going to collection. Defer to NOAA to make a recommendation.
- BOR: No objection to the proposed operation.
- BPA: No objection to the proposed operation.

**Action/Next Steps:** The email sent out by Cindy Henriksen, COE on 7/3 summarized the action the COE would take regarding transport at McNary:

*"The fish barge captain has agreed to look at the required spill w/ bays 14/20/22 open (total 26 kcfs) this Friday morning to determine if tailrace conditions are safe for navigation. If they determine that it is safe then we will start collecting fish later that day and the first barge to transport from MCN will be on Sunday, 8 July. If the spill is not safe for navigation, we will leave the configuration in bypass mode and update TMT [via email]."*

**Update from 7/9 TMT Conference Call:** Bernard Klatte reported on Friday's July 6 test: following this test, the Corps determined that it was too dangerous to operate a fish barge with the 3 spill bays open, and decided to continue bypassing fish rather than begin transport operations. TMT members indicated they would not object to this operation given the navigation safety issue under these spill conditions. Bernard noted that the signatories to the 2007 Agreement were contacted and their representative indicated there were no objections to this change in operations. It was noted that truck transportation at McNary was slated to begin on August 16.

### **Dworshak Operations**

TMT members looked at current conditions in the Snake Basin. Air temperatures were above 100° and expected to increase over the weekend. Water temperatures into Lower Granite were around 18° C and Dworshak releases were maintaining at 43-44° C. TMT members also looked at updated CEQUAL modeling results provided by Mike Schneider, COE. A concern was raised by one TMT member that the modeling may have been too optimistic in terms of its projections, and it was also noted that travel time of the cool water from Dworshak will take approximately 5 days to reach Lower Granite given the low flows. Folks were asked to consider the option of dropping temperatures at Dworshak for a few days rather than increasing outflows, to which the USFWS reiterated that the federal hatchery would not support dropping below 43-44° at any time. Two other options were discussed: increase outflows to 14 kcfs for three days and revisit the operation with the intent to drop outflows at that time, or, increase to 12 kcfs and check in with TMT next week to determine next steps.

**Action/Next Steps:** Given there was not a full consensus to implement to 14 kcfs for three days, NOAA recommended operating Dworshak to 12 kcfs and checking in during an FPAC conference call on Monday to look at updated conditions and forecasts. The COE planned to shift Dworshak outflows to 12 kcfs ASAP, and the Salmon Managers held a conference call on Monday, 7/9 at 11 a.m.

**Update from 7/9 TMT Conference Call:** Paul Wagner, NOAA, shared the results of the FPAC call held just before the TMT call, during which the salmon managers reviewed updated modeling and conditions, and based on this information, agreed to recommend maintaining 12 kcfs through Friday, July 13 and reducing to full powerhouse (9.5 kcfs) on Saturday morning, with a check in on Wednesday during a regularly scheduled TMT meeting. This, they believed, would strike a balance between maintaining acceptable temperatures now and through the summer and reaching close to 1535' at Dworshak on

August 31. All agreed that the operation thus far had been successful and that there was a need to continue monitoring this operation closely throughout the summer. The COE planned to continue operating Dworshak at 12 kcfs outflows, and there will be further discussion at the July TMT meeting.

**Next face-to-face TMT meeting: Wednesday, July 11<sup>th</sup>**

Agenda items will include:

- Review/Finalize Facilitator's Notes and Meeting Minutes
- Priest Rapids Operations Report
- Updated Flow Forecasts
- Dworshak Operations
- Libby/Hungry Horse Operations
- Summer 2007 Treaty Fishing
- BPA Power Emergency Protocols
- Flow Augmentation in Upper Snake
- Operations Review