

# COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

## TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

May 14, 2008 Conference Call

### FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY NOTES ON FUTURE ACTIONS

Facilitator: Robin Gumpert

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.

#### **Review of Minutes/Agenda**

The May 7 Official Minutes were not yet posted, so TMT will review over the next week and finalize them at the May 21 face to face meeting. A clarification on the May 7 facilitator notes was made re: Lake Pend Oreille – the COE said they did not have concerns for refill at Lake Pend Oreille this year.

#### **Bonneville Outages Update**

Dan Feil, COE, reported that replacement of a back-up gallery pump at Bonneville requiring a multi-bay outage had been completed. Also, the corner collector went out of service on Monday, May 12 to work on the hydrophone array GPS system. Work had not been completed, but the COE planned to pursue means other than another corner collector outage to complete the work.

#### **Spill Priority List**

Paul Wagner shared an updated spill priority list on behalf of the salmon managers – the document was linked to today's agenda. Paul walked the group through the list and explained the rationale behind the priorities. A question was asked about why Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee, traditionally at the bottom of the list, had been moved up the list. Paul suggested that the installation of spill deflectors at Chief Joseph would better address TDG management concerns, and there might be an advantage to spilling at Grand Coulee before some of the lower priority projects, which was noted as a complicated decision.

**Action:** Paul and the COE will work off line to clarify priorities (including those projects that are repeated on the list) and the COE will add the information to a matrix that will include associated spill levels and TDG. This matrix will be folded into the WMP and Spring/Summer Update and sent around to TMT prior to the May 21 TMT meeting. A teletype with clear instructions for BPA schedulers will also be sent out.

#### **Dworshak Operations**

Steve Hall, COE, reported on the latest operational scenarios for Dworshak, posted to the TMT home page. He noted that there was a change to the previous ESP forecast that had indicated a considerable drop in volume, and shared four flow scenarios. Based on the ESP models, the COE recommended maintaining 5 kcfs through next week and checking

in on the Dworshak operation at the May 21 TMT meeting. While FPAC did not discuss the latest ESP forecasts, the salmon managers present on the TMT call (Idaho, USFWS, NOAA, CRITFC – noting a concern for refill) and BPA did not object to the operation.

### **Water Management Plan Spring Summer Update**

The Spring/Summer update had been posted to the TMT home page, and would be linked to today's agenda later today. TMT will review this final draft and finalize it at their May 21 meeting. It was noted that the Dworshak/Grand Coulee flood control swap needs to be filled in by the COE for folks to review.

### **Operations Review**

**Reservoirs:** Libby was operating to VARQ flows (13.8 kcfs) with inflows running around 14.6 kcfs. The official ICF date was 5.16 and as a result, Brownlee had started to refill. Albeni Falls continued to pass inflows, around 45.5 kcfs; the project was near its hydraulic limit and would be filling slowly to around 2057-2060 feet by the end of May. Dworshak was at elevation 1484.4 feet and filling – 10.8 kcfs inflows and 5 kcfs outflows. McNary 7-day average flows were about 250 kcfs and the 7-day average at Lower Granite was around 90 kcfs. Grand Coulee was at elevation 1228.5 feet and passing inflow. Hungry Horse was at elevation 3504.4 feet and filling, with 8.5 kcfs in and 4.8 kcfs out. Inflows were expected to come up soon.

**Fish:** Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported that adult passage numbers were still lower (by about 100,000) than projected, with 86,600 total passage at Bonneville to date. Juveniles had reached peak passage, with numbers at Lower Granite peaking around May 8. Transportation had been implemented at all Lower Snake projects, with the latest start on May 12 at Lower Monumental.

**Power System:** Nothing to report.

**Water Quality:** Nothing to report.

### **Other**

Kyle Dittmer, CRITFC, reported that there was an overturned boat accident on the Columbia River near Stevenson, with three fishermen including one CRITFC staff. The families of the lost men decided not to request that the pools at Bonneville be lowered to look for the men.

### **May 21 TMT Meeting**

Agenda Items include:

- Finalize notes/minutes
- Priest Rapids Operations
- Dworshak Operations
- TMT Guidelines – final draft
- Water Management Plan Spring/Summer Update - final draft
- Operations Review

**Columbia River Regional Forum  
Technical Management Team Conference Call  
May 14, 2008**

**1. Introduction**

Today's TMT call was chaired by Cathy Hlebechuk (COE) and facilitated by Robin Gumpert (DS Consulting) with representatives of NOAA, USFWS, BOR, BPA, CRITFC, FPC, Idaho, and others on the line. The following is a summary (not a verbatim transcript) of the topics discussed and decisions made at the meeting. Anyone with questions or comments about these notes should provide them to the TMT chair or bring them to the next meeting.

**2. Review Meeting Minutes**

The April 30 and May 2 facilitator notes and official minutes were finalized. The May 7 notes and official minutes will be reviewed at the May 21 TMT meeting. The May 7 facilitator's notes mentioned a question regarding whether the COE is concerned about Lake Pend Oreille refill this year. There are no concerns, Hlebechuk said.

**3. Bonneville Outage Update – Spill Bays and Corner Collector**

**Spill Bays.** Bays 9, 12, and 14 went out of service on Friday, May 9, allowing project staff to replace the dewatering pump in the spill gallery. The work was completed with no problems and normal operations have resumed, Dan Feil (COE) reported.

**Corner Collector.** This was taken out of service Monday, May 12, allowing Battelle researchers to perform maintenance on hydrophones in the forebay. The work was not completed, but the COE is not going to request another corner collector outage and will pursue other ways to complete it. As it is, the hydrophones upstream of the BGS are not operating, which means there will be no two-dimensional information on fish behavior in the vicinity of the BGS this year. All the components needed to monitor fish passage are operating, so fish passage information for this season will be available.

**4. Spill Priority List**

Paul Wagner (NOAA) presented the spill priority list, which represents the Salmon Managers' priorities in terms of how the Columbia and Snake projects should be used to handle overgeneration spill.

1. Ice Harbor Dam. A fair amount of water can be spilled here without producing excessive gas, so this project is where spill should happen first.

2. Lower Monumental. Studies indicate this project provides the least transportation benefit for spring Chinook, so this is the Salmon Managers' second choice.
3. Little Goose. This project is third for similar reasons as Lower Monumental.
4. Lower Granite. Of the four Snake dams, this project provides the best benefit of transportation. With just four units operating now, Lower Granite has produced TDG levels of 120% with a flow of only 100 kcfs. For both of these reasons, Lower Granite should be the last resort for Snake River spill.
5. Bonneville. Spill here should be limited to amounts that produce TDG levels of 125% in daytime and 120% at night. This is due to concerns about adults migrating past the project.
6. The Dalles. The maximum that can be spilled through bays 1-6 at this project is equivalent to about 126 kcfs spill.
7. John Day. There's a 30% to 40% spill block study occurring at this project which is important to preserve.
8. Chief Joseph. This project can spill through deflector-equipped bays only. It is no longer last on the list, as it has been in previous years, now that it has spill deflectors. Spilling here used to mean loading up the river with gas, then struggling to control it further downstream.
9. Grand Coulee. The Salmon Managers have no desire to see spill here. However, Grand Coulee has often been at the bottom of the list and was moved up this year because the Salmon Managers believe there is something to be gained from spilling and reducing the megawatts produced. This ultimately means more water to run through turbines at the lower projects and potentially less spill downstream.
10. The Dalles. Spill is expected through all bays at this project – if it must be used. Flows moving this far downriver would have to be in the 350 kcfs range by the time this project is called into service.
11. McNary. Spill at this project is a two-step process. First, increase turbine loading to 14 kcfs per unit in order to keep TDG levels from exceeding 125%. The second step is to spill, assuming that TDG levels are 125% or higher.

John Day. This project is listed again, as second to last, because at very high flows, it could spill beyond the maximum for the first 6 bays. Bonneville is

last on the list, also listed twice. Further spill actions could be taken at both of these projects during extremely high flows (such as 375 kcfs) because predation is greatly diminished by flows of that intensity.

The next step in the process of developing the spill list is to assign expected volumes that would achieve specific TDG levels, Wagner said. There was discussion about developing a matrix that correlates the projects and their associated spill volumes; COE and NOAA agreed to work together on this.

The spill priority list is included in the WMP spring/summer update and will be updated there, possibly before the next TMT meeting on May 21. The final version will be communicated to BPA power schedulers via teletype.

### ***5. Dworshak Operations***

ESP volumes last week were very low, and these scenarios were posed late as a result, Steve Hall (COE) said. They are attached to today's agenda.

Scenario 1. Presents maximum, average and minimum volumes based on ESP runs.

Scenario 2. Shows 5 kcfs outflows for another week until May 21, then effects of that operation on maximum, average and minimum refill scenarios.

Scenario 3. Shows 5 kcfs outflows through the end of May and effects of that operation on maximum, average and minimum refill flows.

Scenario 4. Shows the effect of dropping to minimum flows for a week, then how refill is affected. Average refill flows would be about 5 kcfs for the rest of the refill period under this scenario.

The COE recommended staying at 5 kcfs outflows for another week (scenario 2) to be revisited at the next TMT meeting May 21. NOAA, Idaho, USFWS, BPA, and CRITFC did not object to this operation. CRITFC expressed concern that Dworshak reservoir be refilled before the July 4 weekend, and the COE echoed the same concern.

The operation until next week will be to maintain 5 kcfs outflows from Dworshak and revisit this at the May 21 TMT meeting.

### ***6. WMP Spring Summer Update***

The latest draft is posted on the TMT web page. It will be emailed soon to TMT members in Word and as linked to today's agenda. Scott Boyd asked for TMT's comments by Tuesday, May 20. The plan is to finalize the WMP spring/summer update at the next TMT meeting.

## **7. Operations Review**

**a. Reservoirs.** Libby is filling slightly and went to VARQ outflows of 13.8 kcfs on May 10. Inflows are 14.6 kcfs. The initial controlled flow date was May 16, so Libby was supposed to start filling on May 6. However, the ICF information wasn't available until last week, so the reservoir didn't start refilling until May 10.

Albeni Falls is still passing inflows. Outflows were 45.5 kcfs yesterday. Albeni Falls is operating near its hydraulic limit, and the goal is to refill slowly. The end of May target elevation is 2,057-2,060 feet.

Dworshak is at elevation 1,484.4 feet and refilling, with 10.8 kcfs inflows and 5 kcfs outflows.

The 7-day average for inflows at Lower Granite is 90 kcfs. Since the ICF date was May 16, Brownlee is starting to refill. Outflows were 20 kcfs but have dropped quite a bit.

Grand Coulee is at elevation 1,228.5 feet, still passing inflows until refill is allowed to begin.

Hungry Horse is at elevation 3,504 feet, discharging 4.8 kcfs. With inflows of 8.5 kcfs, it is slowly filling. Inflows are expected to pick up by this weekend.

**b. Fish.** Adult passage at Bonneville is 86,640 to date, about 100,000 more than initial projections, Wagner reported. Counts were averaging 2,500 fish per day until May 13, when they increased to 4,600 per day. This represents the last hope for a significant increase in passage numbers resulting from the freshet. Passage counts this year have been well below levels forecasted.

The juvenile passage index at Lower Granite continues to stay high, with a peak of 271,000 fish on May 8. Yesterday's passage index was 150,000 yearling Chinook at Granite. Passage at Little Goose has been in the 100,000 range as well; at Lower Monumental, in the 30,000 range. Transportation has been occurring at all these sites. Transportation at Lower Monumental was the last to start, on May 12. McNary is passing significant numbers – an average of 100,000 fish per day for the past week. Subyearling Chinook passage is in the 30,000 range at John Day, and from 30,000-40,000 per day at Bonneville. This is peak passage time. It's a bit late this year but within the range of expectations.

**c. Power System.** There was nothing to report today.

**d. Water Quality.** There was nothing to report today.

**e. Other.** Last week, a tribal fishing boat overturned near Stevenson, Washington. Three tribal fishers are assumed drowned, Kyle Dittmer reported. CRITFC was going to request that the Bonneville pool be lowered to aid in the search, but the families did not want the pool lowered at this time.

### **8. Next Meeting**

The next TMT meeting will be in person on May 21, with a Priest Rapids update, Dworshak operations, finalizing the WMP spring/summer update, the TMT guidelines, and the usual operations review on the agenda. This summary prepared by consultant and writer Pat Vivian.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
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