

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

October 1st, 2008 Meeting

FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY NOTES ON FUTURE ACTIONS

Facilitator: Robin Gumpert

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.

Review of Minutes/Agenda

The September 10th official meeting minutes and facilitator notes had been posted to the web. No further changes were made and they were considered final.

Autumn Treaty Fishing SORs

Kyle Dittmer, CRITFC, referred TMT to three Autumn Treaty Fishing SORs posted as a link to the TMT agenda. Dittmer reviewed the data for the autumn season, noting catch is still below allowance numbers. The SORs covered the periods 9/16-9/18, 9/22-26, and 9/30-10/03, requesting a 1' band constraint at Bonneville, The Dalles and John Day.

The COE responded that as in the past they will provide a 1' hard/ 1.5' soft constraint at the Bonneville pool and a 1.5' soft constraint at The Dalles, with emphasis on daytime hours. At John Day the COE will provide an elevation range from 262.5-264'.

Dittmer thanked the COE for their work in maintaining steady pools for treaty fishing. The COE reported that they rescheduled gate work at Bonneville, to be completed later in the season, so there would be no impact to treaty fishing.

Action/Next Steps: Dittmer will prepare a summary of 2008 Autumn Treaty fishing for the 10/22 TMT meeting.

Albeni Falls Operations

The COE reported they had not yet received an SOR regarding Albeni Falls operation for this year, as proposed operations were still being coordinated with USFWS, IDFG and BPA. The COE planned to target 2054' by the end of October, per their Water Control Plan. They also anticipated targeting 2051' sometime in November, perhaps as early as November 8, as opposed to the usual November 15, to support earlier than normal Kokane spawning. This shortened time frame for drafting down to 2051' could potentially pose a TDG issue at projects downstream of Albeni Falls; the COE is investigating the rationale for the 2054' target and whether they might deviate from that target.

Action/Next Steps: An SOR is expected by Friday 10/03, and the COE requested a TMT conference call next week, 10/08 at 9am, to follow up on this issue. In the

short term, the COE will target elevation 2054' by the end of October. Albeni Falls will be on the agenda for a TMT conference call on 10/8 at 9:00 a.m.

The Dalles Spillwall Update

Lance Helwig, COE, offered an update on The Dalles spill wall construction, a two year, regionally supported project that will improve egress conditions out of the dam to address predation issues. Construction is expected to be completed by April 2010, and in order to complete the project by the goal date, construction will be ongoing from Oct. 1st-April 1st, the 'in water work season', in 2008-'09 and likely for 2009-'10. To accommodate the construction, the contractors need sufficient depth of water for equipment safety, and as such, requested that Bonneville forebay elevation be held to 75-76.5' 24-hours a day during the in water work season. This may impact regular chum operations at Bonneville in November and December, when characteristically there is a greater operating range at Bonneville to allow more flexibility in system operations and provide an increased ability to support chum spawning at or below an 11.5' tailwater elevation.

The COE acknowledged that the impacts of the spill wall project on the chum spawning season had not been considered until recently; however, they wanted to work with the region to step through operations as best as possible to meet the needs of in-season management of the chum while staying on track to complete the work by April 2010. The chum operations/construction work interface will be a factor for next year as well, and all agreed it will be critical to have on-going discussion between TMT, the contractor and the COE project manager.

Action/Next Steps: Given the lack of flexibility this year, the salmon managers acknowledged the need to manage chum operations around the 75-76.5' operating range of the Bonneville pool. They asked the COE to approach the contractor to determine what flexibility they may have with respect to water levels to facilitate optimal conditions for the chum. BPA also noted that any change in operations, as always, requires a three day notice. During the TMT conference call on 10/08, BPA will provide information on chum monitoring plans for this year. TMT will discuss whether there is a need for more monitoring to inform next year's adaptive management decisions given the constraints from the construction. The COE will also report back any new information from the contractor that will inform TMT's decisions around chum operations (e.g. any new opportunities for flexibility). Discussions at TMT with the contractor and Lance Helwig, Project Manager, will be ongoing throughout the chum spawning season.

Draft Water Management Plan

Dan Feil, COE, referenced a link on the TMT website for the 2009 draft Water Management Plan. The Action Agencies prepared the draft WMP to reflect operations contained in the 2008 BiOp and Fish Accords. Dan emphasized that this first draft needs to be carefully reviewed to ensure it is consistent with the 2008 BiOp and Fish Accords. Dan also noted that transportation and spill operations were removed from this draft but will be included in the 2009 Fish Passage Plan.

Action/Next Steps: The COE requested comments on the draft by COB Nov. 7th. A word document version was posted to the TMT web page, and parties are asked to offer comments in “track changes” and send them to Dan Feil. All comments will be posted as they are received.

Year End Review

The TMT year end review is scheduled for Friday, Nov. 21st at the Portland Services Building (1120 SW Fifth Ave, 2nd Floor Conference Room C.) A TMT planning session will take place on 10/22 and an agenda will follow.

Operations Review

Reservoirs: Grand Coulee was at elevation 1284.1', which is above the 1283' end of September minimum elevation objective. Hungry Horse was at elevation 3533.06' with outflows in the range of 2.4-2.5 kcfs. Libby was at elevation 2440.8', with outflows of 6 kcfs up until 10/1, shifting later in the day to 4.7 kcfs. Albeni Falls was at 2060.9' with outflows of 16 kcfs up until 10/1, shifting later in the day to 24 kcfs. Dworshak was at elevation 1519.9', with minimum outflows and temperatures near 47° with gates in undershot mode. Seven day average flows were 21 kcfs at Lower Granite, 82 kcfs at McNary and 76 kcfs at Bonneville.

Fish: Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported that juvenile passage was nearing the end of its season numbers, with sub yearlings in the 1,000 per day range at Lower granite, less than 100 per day at Little Goose and 170 per day at Lower Monumental. Cindy LeFleur, WA, said that adult Chinook numbers are forecasting stronger than the 10 year average, Coho and Steelhead are tracking close to the 10 year averages and Chinook numbers at Lower Granite are tracking at two times the 10 year average.

Power System: Nothing to report at this time.

Water Quality: Nothing to report at this time.

10/8 Conference Call

Agenda items will include:

- Albeni Falls Operations
- Chum monitoring
- The Dalles Spill Wall Update

10/22 Face to Face Meeting

Agenda items include:

- 2008 Autumn Treaty Fishing Review
- Albeni Falls Operations
- The Dalles Spill Wall Update
- TMT Year End Review Agenda
- Operations Review

**Columbia River Regional Forum
Technical Management Team Meeting
October 1, 2008**

1. Introduction

Today's TMT meeting was chaired by Jim Adams (COE) and facilitated by Robin Gumpert (DS Consulting) with representatives of BPA, COE, NOAA, USFWS, BOR, CRITFC, Idaho, Washington, Oregon and others participating. 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 and Finalize Notes and Minutes

All facilitator's notes and official minutes for meetings and conference calls in August 2008 were finalized today. There were no comments on either the facilitator notes or official minutes for the Sept. 10 meeting today, so those were finalized also.

Dave Wills (USFWS) suggested that future TMT agendas specify which meeting dates will be up for review in the coming meeting; Paul Wagner (NOAA) seconded that idea.

3. Autumn Treaty Fishing

Kyle Dittmer gave an update. CRITFC has submitted three SOR's to the Action Agencies for autumn treaty fishing on the following dates:

- Sept. 16-18, later changed to Sept. 19
- Sept. 22-26
- Sept. 30-Oct. 3

The current SOR requests the usual 1-foot elevation bands, with specific elevations for each project:

- Bonneville – 76.5-75.5 feet
- The Dalles – 159.5-158.5 feet
- John Day – 264.5-263.5 feet

CRITFC has upgraded its passage forecasts to 314,000 adult fall Chinook and 338,500 steelhead at Bonneville Dam. The updated tribal season catch is 150,000 fall Chinook and 24,550 steelhead.

CRITFC's net flights found 443 nets in zone 6 pools, with 159 of those at Bonneville, 99 at The Dalles, and 185 at John Day. The tribes are still beneath

their catch limit for the season and will probably continue to fish from platforms in November, which doesn't require special river operations.

This season, hourly compliance with CRITFC's elevation requests has been within half a foot to a foot; Dittmer thanked the COE for that achievement. A gate repair about to be performed at Bonneville was rescheduled for later this year in order to accommodate the fishery, Adams reported.

Dittmer announced two upcoming public meetings on weather forecasting: the Climate Impacts Group's annual fall meeting Oct. 2 in Vancouver, Washington; and the annual winter meeting of the American Meteorological Society's local chapter Oct. 24 at the OMSI auditorium in Portland. For more information, go to <http://www.ametsoc.org/chapters/oregon/index.html> and click on "Meetings."

4. Albeni Falls Operations

It appears that kokanee spawning could happen earlier this year than the traditional Nov. 20 draft date, which indicates that drafting should begin earlier, Ken Brettmann (COE Seattle) reported. The COE has provided results from preliminary model runs examining the possibility of drafting to 2051 feet by an earlier date. It was reported that the Lake Commission did not object to the 2051 elevation target at its Sept. 20 meeting, but that needs to be confirmed. {Supplemental Note: the Lakes Commission was not present at the interagency meeting of September 26th where drawdown and the decision tree was discussed, but Jeff Laufle [COE Seattle] got confirmation after the meeting that they had no objection to a draft to 2051} Meanwhile, IDFG, USFWS and the COE are working together on an SOR to be presented to TMT soon.

A new constraint has arisen, Adams said. The COE's water control manual specifies that the Albeni Falls pool elevation should be no lower than 2054 feet on Oct. 31. In order to reach elevation 2051 feet by Nov. 8 – a tentative date for completion of the draft to 2051 for kokanee spawning – the pool elevation would need to drop 3 feet within a week, which could cause TDG exceedances downstream on the Pend Oreille River. The water control manual also specifies that the Albeni Falls pool elevation should not reach 2051 feet before Nov. 15, and the kokanee operation under consideration would exceed that limit as well. The purpose of these limits in the water control manual is not known, and the COE is investigating the possibility of deviating from them, which is why the SOR is not final yet. While this is being resolved, the COE began in mid September to draft Albeni Falls toward a target end-of-September elevation of 2061 feet. The elevation is slightly below 2061 feet now, with an end-of-October target of 2054 feet.

BPA would like to use the operating range in the pool to some extent above the spawning elevation, once spawning is over, Tony Norris said. Andy Dux (Idaho) asked what the fluctuation range would be. For example, if spawning is completed at elevation 2051, BPA would fill and draft within the 2051-2055 foot

range, Norris replied. This would probably occur sometime after Jan. 1, 2009. Drawdowns are advantageous for gravel cleaning and improve kokanee spawning habitat, Dux said, so there is a benefit to keeping the pool at that elevation every few years. BPA and Idaho will continue to work together on this issue, with a goal of presenting the SOR to the COE by the end of this week.

TMT scheduled a conference call for Oct. 8 to discuss the SOR for the kokanee spawning operation. In the meantime, the COE will plan on Albeni Falls reaching an elevation target of 2054 feet by Oct. 31 and 2051 feet by sometime in November, after confirming that the Lakes Commission approves.

5. The Dalles Spill Wall Update

Lance Helwig, the COE's project manager of The Dalles spill wall construction, gave a presentation (see link to today's agenda). The COE stated that chum operations at Bonneville will likely be impacted by the spill wall construction at The Dalles. The wall is expected to yield an approximately 4% increase in yearling Chinook and steelhead survival, as well as a 3% increase in subyearling Chinook survival, which should allow The Dalles to reach its survival targets of 96% in spring and 93% in summer. The spill wall has received broad regional support as an integral part of meeting survival targets at The Dalles. The \$45 million, two-year contract for construction of the wall, to be made of concrete units weighing 170 tons apiece, was awarded in July 2008. In-water work on the spillwall began today. The contractor has mobilized two derrick barges (300 tons and 100 tons crane capacity) into the stilling basin.

The issue is shallow water on the rock shelf, and possible grounding of the contractor's barges due to varying tailwater elevation at The Dalles Dam. Work on the rock shelf is scheduled to begin in November during chum spawning season and continue through the end of March 2009. The nominal top of the rock shelf is at elevation 68 feet; however there are several locations that extend up to El. 70 feet. If the tailrace at Bonneville is at El. 72 feet for chum, the corresponding tailwater elevation at TDA is about El. 73, leaving only 3 to 5 feet of water for the enormous barges. Fluctuations for chum would make this situation even worse with a higher potential for impact/grounding. The normal operation range at Bonneville for chum is elevation 71.5-76.5 feet, , but the COE specified today that the Bonneville forebay will need to be held to 75-76.5 feet as a hard constraint during chum spawning season in November and December because of the construction activities occurring in The Dalles tailwater. Helwig emphasized that the construction schedule is tight for construction of the wall to be completed for the 2010 fish passage season. Stabilizing the water elevation and securing the additional depth at The Dalles will assist the contractor's operations and improve the likelihood that the work will be completed on schedule. Helwig emphasized that both the contractor and the COE are committed to get the wall built.

Tony Norris (BPA) asked whether the contractor would be removing the barges at night. Helwig said that's unlikely because mooring and unmooring them

would consume a couple of hours each day. The contractor plans to work at night, but maneuvering the 170-ton concrete units into place should be done in daylight. Stable tailwater elevations and increased depth assist with 2008/2009 construction, including installation of the leveling slab, to ensure the 2009/2010 wall construction can commence at the start of the in-water work period next year (1 October 2009). The in-water work season has been extended on the front end to Oct. 1 and on the back end to 1 April for the two construction seasons in order to get the wall completed by 2010. The Dalles has the shallowest stilling basin on the river, with the shallow end at a nominal 68 feet elevation. Even with the requested changes, the contractor will likely have to use smaller equipment than the barges he originally planned.

This isn't a request, it's a necessity, Norris observed and other TMT members agreed. Norris explained why a 1.5-foot constraint during chum season would limit BPA's ability to operate the river for chum effectively. The restriction reduces BPA's flexibility to store water and reverse load at the project once inflows exceed the amount of flow required to maintain an 11.5 foot tailwater below Bonneville Dam for spawning. Because Bonneville is at the tail end of the hydrosystem, it's difficult to maintain the chum operation once inflows pick up. As a result, BPA has to use all the storage in the lower river, including releases from Grand Coulee several days in advance, in order to plan for the operation at Bonneville. If inflows rise this season, the primary result under the restriction will be that the 11.5 foot tailwater will rise, and BPA won't have enough flexibility to maintain 11.5 feet for as many hours of chum spawning. The limitation could result in more daylight hours when the tailwater elevation rises above 11.5 feet, and the ultimate result could be spawning at a higher level, which would be harder to maintain in spring. Whether or not the spring operation will become a problem depends on inflows. Norris emphasized that flexibility anywhere on the system particularly at John Day Dam, as well as notification of needs 2-3 days in advance, will make a big difference in BPA's ability to maintain the chum elevation boundary.

Cathy Hlebechuk (COE) asked whether the contractor needed 75-76.6 foot elevation at Bonneville forebay 24 hours a day throughout chum season, or just during a short work period? A stable elevation will be needed 24/7, Helwig said. There may be isolated operations that require a higher elevation than 75 feet. BPA asked for 3 days' notice of that in order to be sure the needed water arrives on schedule.

Dave Wills (USFWS) asked whether this request will carry over into next year. Next year will probably be more difficult because 500 feet of wall will need to be built on the shallow rock shelf, Helwig said. He will ask the contractor about construction plans and needs for next year. If the contractor has to use smaller equipment, and more flexibility is allowed, that would be good to know as soon as possible, Wagner said.

Continued monitoring of chum redds would be valuable information if we have to make a decision that might impact the contractor, Wills said. He

suggested that BPA renew its funding for chum spawning surveys this season. Norris said he will bring a description of the chum redd monitoring program to the next regularly scheduled TMT meeting on Oct. 22.

Rick Kruger (Oregon) asked, is there any value in a retrospective examination of what might have happened operating with these constraints under last year's conditions? It wouldn't make much difference from an operations standpoint because every day is vastly different during chum season, Norris said, mainly because Bonneville is at the tail end of the system which makes it hard to control. There are many variables in operating the system for chum. BPA can meet the requirement for a 75-76.6 foot elevation at Bonneville tailwater, but it could mean that at some point it will be impossible to maintain the 11.5 foot elevation for chum spawning below Bonneville.

Helwig asked what the contractor can expect as a result of today's discussion. The limitation is not a request, it's a necessity, Norris said and other TMT members agreed. Wills asked whether a definitive response to the contractor could wait until next week; Helwig said that would be fine. It would help to hear next week whether the contractor can do anything, such as using a smaller barge, to allow more flexibility for chum operations, Wagner said. NOAA would prefer to keep chum operations normal, but if this is what it takes to get the wall built at The Dalles, NOAA supported it. If an opportunity for more flexibility develops, Helwig will notify TMT. There will be regular check-ins on this issue at TMT meetings starting in November.

6. Draft Water Management Plan

Dan Feil (COE) introduced the draft 2008 Water Management Plan, available on the water management page at the COE's website. The COE has done its best to incorporate all aspects of the 2008 BiOp into the draft document, and is still working on that. Comments on the draft are due by close of business Nov. 7. Feil asked people to comment in the Word document if possible. Norris asked people to request any additional information they would like to see presented. Specific topics such as spill and transport operations aren't covered in this plan, Feil said, because they will be in the Fish Passage Plan for 2009, as specified in section 5 on page 22 of this draft.

7. Scheduling TMT Year End Review

The TMT year-end review for 2008 was scheduled for Friday, Nov. 21, at the Portland Services Building. A regular TMT meeting is scheduled for Nov. 19, and TMT did not decide today whether to cancel that meeting because, as Wills noted, that will be in the middle of chum season.

8. Operations Review

a. Reservoirs. Grand Coulee is at elevation 1,284.1 feet, which is above its minimum elevation objective of 1,283 for the end of September. The reservoir can be expected to fill through October if water conditions allow.

Hungry Horse is at elevation 3,533.06 feet, with discharges of 2.4-2.5 kcfs. Libby is at elevation 2,440.8 feet, with outflows of 6 kcfs, beginning to ramp down to 4.7 kcfs over the next two days. Outflows of 4.7 kcfs will continue through end October.

Albeni Falls is at elevation 2060.9 feet at the Hope gage, with releases of 16-18 kcfs, increasing to 24 kcfs outflows later today. Dworshak is at elevation 1,519.9 feet with minimum outflows, still operating in undershot mode. Seven-day average flows are 21 kcfs at Lower Granite, 82.3 kcfs at McNary, and 76 kcfs at Bonneville.

b. Fish. This is the end of juvenile migration season, Wagner said. The only species showing any movement in the past two weeks is subyearling Chinook. Smolt passage at Lower Granite is up to 1,000 fish per day; at Little Goose, 100 per day. At Lower Monumental, the passage index increased from 10 to 171 fish recently. John Roache (BOR) asked whether these fish would make it all the way to the ocean or hold over for the winter. That is an active area of research worth an update at the TMT year end review, Wagner said. Passage indices at the other projects are 320 at McNary and 150 at Bonneville.

Adult Chinook counts are close to the 10-year average, Cindy LeFleur (Washington) said, while jack, coho and steelhead counts are above the 10-year average. The good news is that B-run steelhead numbers are 90,000, which is much higher than average. Adult Chinook passage at Lower Granite is about twice the 10-year average. Steelhead passage at Lower Granite is 109,000, well above the 10-year average of 76,000 fish.

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

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

9. Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled TMT meeting will be a conference call on Oct. 8, with Albeni Falls operations and chum redd monitoring on the agenda. There will be a meeting in person Oct. 22, 2008; that agenda will include a review of the 2008 treaty fishing season, Albeni Falls operations, Dworshak operations, construction of The Dalles spill wall, and planning the agenda for the year-end review. This summary prepared by consultant and writer Pat Vivian.

Name	Affiliation
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Tony Norris	BPA
Paul Wagner	NOAA
Dave Wills	USFW
Laura Hamilton	COE
John Roache	BOR
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