

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

October 22nd, 2008 Meeting

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 October 1st and 8th Facilitator Notes and Official Meeting Minutes had been posted, and with no further comments, were considered final. Jim Adams, COE, shared that a supplemental note had been added to the September 10th official meeting minutes and facilitator notes, to reflect the correct number for seasonal average flows at Lower Granite, which had been reported incorrectly at the meeting.

Action: The COE was reminded to include on the agenda item the specific notes that will be reviewed during that day's TMT meeting.

Autumn Treaty Fishing

SOR 2008-C12: Kyle Dittmer, CRITFC, referred TMT to the SOR posted as a link to the TMT agenda, for operations at Bonneville, The Dalles and John Day to support treaty fishing during the period 10/20-10/23. The COE responded that, as with past requests, the pools will be operated to the following: 1.5' hard/ 1.0' soft constraint at Bonneville; 1.5' soft constraint at The Dalles, with emphasis on nighttime hours; and elevation range 262.5-265 feet at John Day. This was the final treaty fishing SOR of the season.

2008 Autumn Treaty Fishing Summary: Dittmer provided a recap of operations for treaty fishing to date, and thanked the COE for their work in maintaining steady pools throughout the season. His data showed that the requests for steady pools had been met at all three projects at a greater percentage than in 2007, and noted that during the week of September 2 - 6, while the most number of nets were out, Bonneville was held within a half foot stability. Kyle also offered that the period August 19-22 saw the biggest fluctuations and that one net was lost at that time – likely due to debris. He added that most fishing occurred in Bonneville and John Day this season, and that catch counts to date were as follows: Fall chinook, 106,000; Steelhead, 24,900; and Coho, 15,000.

Albeni Falls Operations Update

Lynne Melder, COE, reported that a drawdown plan had been developed in response to SOR USFWS/IDFG 2008-1, for Albeni Falls operations to provide favorable kokanee spawning conditions in Lake Pend Oreille. The current elevation was 2054.9 feet, with 16 kcfs in and about 28 kcfs out. The COE was targeting a drawdown to 2052 feet on 10/31 and 2051 feet on 11/8, with a plan to draw down more aggressively up front and flatten

out later to provide flexibility later in case of a rain event. Once there, the COE planned to hold the pool at 2051-2051.5 feet through the end of spawning. The COE inquired as to when the spawning season would be declared 'over', and by whom.

Action: Russ Kiefer, Idaho, agreed to check with the North Idaho research team in charge of conducting daily redd counts, to find out what criteria was used in the past. He will also share with the research team the action agencies' interest in moving to more operational flexibility as soon as possible. He will share feedback at the November 5 TMT meeting.

The Dalles Spillwall Update

Jim Adams, COE, reported, as had been shared at previous TMT meetings, that the Bonneville forebay pool will need to be held at 75-76.5 feet to allow contractors to move barges in and do construction work on The Dalles spillwall. No further update had been reported from the contractor at this time.

In an effort to recognize the importance of both the construction of The Dalles spillway and chum operations this year, a Joint Technical Staff Memo was submitted from the salmon managers (CRITFC, Oregon, Idaho, Washington, NOAA and USFWS) to the action agencies requesting them to provide a plan for operations to meet both needs. The salmon managers suggested that looking at operational options ahead of time will ensure the best decisions are made to support the fish while meeting all other needs of the system and staying within the range of flexibility that will be available this year. They also noted the importance of communication between everyone involved in the various efforts.

The action agencies responded that they will put into writing operational options for managing flows, and will send it out to TMT prior to the November 5 TMT meeting, for discussion at the meeting. The COE noted that additional information needs to be gathered from the contractors to inform the plan, and as information is made available, it will be shared with TMT. The COE is in daily contact with the project manager for The Dalles spillwall construction.

Action/Next Steps: TMT will discuss the action agencies' operations plan at the November 5 TMT meeting.

2009 Draft Water Management Plan

Dan Feil, COE, referenced a link on the TMT website for the 2009 draft Water Management Plan and reminded TMT that comments are due by November 7. Several TMT members said they planned to review and submit comments in writing. One suggestion made during today's meeting was to include a Table of Contents and perhaps revise the formatting to make the document more user-friendly – as it is written, several pages of background are provided before getting into the substance of the plan.

Action/Next Steps: The action agencies will take this comment into consideration and look for additional comments in writing. TMT will check in on the status of comments and the draft plan at the November 5 TMT meeting.

Operations Review

Reservoirs: Grand Coulee was at elevation 1288.1 feet, about 2 feet from full. Hungry Horse was at elevation 3530.51 feet with outflows around 2.2 kcfs. Libby was at elevation 2441.1 feet, with outflows at 4.7 kcfs and slightly filling. A draft SOR for Libby operations in November and December to support burbot was expected from the USFWS in the near future. Albeni Falls was at 2054.9 feet with outflows of 28 kcfs and inflows ranging from 11-19 kcfs. Seven day average inflows were 18.2 kcfs at Lower Granite, 94 kcfs at McNary and 107 kcfs at Bonneville. An outage at Lower Monumental was scheduled for 10/25-11/11 that will take the project to a speed/no load and spill operation. TDG is expected to increase but not to a level beyond 120%. FPOM is vetting the issue and the COE will keep the TMT informed on the issue as necessary.

Fish: Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported that juvenile passage was nearing the end of its season numbers, with sub yearlings in the 100-200 per day range at Lower Granite and Little Goose. Monitoring at all projects will end on 10/31. Cindy LeFleur, Washington, reported that adult numbers are decreasing, and that some chum had been observed at Grays Island (which is not directly correlated to the start of chum spawning season).

Power System: Nothing to report at this time.

Water Quality: Nothing to report at this time.

Next Meeting: November 5 Face to Face

Agenda items include:

- Albeni Falls Operations Update
- Burbot SOR
- The Dalles Spill Wall Update and Chum Operations Options Discussion
- WMP Check In
- Operations Review

**Columbia River Regional Forum
Technical Management Team Meeting
Oct. 22, 2008**

1. Introduction

Today's TMT meeting was chaired by Jim Adams (COE) and facilitated by Robin Gumpert (DS Consulting) with representatives of the COE, BPA, USFWS, NOAA, BOR, CRITFC, Montana, Idaho, Washington, 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 of Meeting Minutes

Paul Wagner (NOAA) requested that future TMT agendas list the dates of meeting notes to be reviewed at that meeting. The facilitator's notes and official minutes for Oct. 1 and Oct 8 were up for review today. There were no comments on these, so they were deemed final.

Jim Adams pointed out a supplemental note in italics that was added to the facilitator's notes for the Sept. 10 TMT meeting to correct the report on summer flows for the lower Snake. The original report was 37.5 kcfs as a seasonal average, later amended to 57 kcfs as the actual seasonal flow average.

3. Autumn Treaty Fishing (SOR 2008-C12 and Summary of Pool Operations)

Kyle Dittmer (CRITFC) reported on SOR 2008-C12 for the tribes' final fishery this season, from Oct. 20-23. CRITFC's most recent net flight reported 63 nets in the lower pools, with 37 of those (59%) at Bonneville, 7 (11%) at The Dalles, and 19 (30%) at John Day. This is consistent with the prevailing pattern. As usual, in this SOR the tribes request steady pool elevations within 1-foot bands for the fishery. The COE will operate the pools as it has in the past, with a soft constraint of 1.5 feet (with emphasis on nighttime hours) and a normal operating range of 3 feet at The Dalles; and from elevation 262.5-265 feet at John Day Dam. The elevation of Bonneville pool is being held to 75.0-76.5 feet as a hard constraint and 75.5-76.5 feet as a soft constraint to accommodate construction at The Dalles.

Dittmer presented a summary of pool elevations for this year's fishery (see chart linked to today's agenda). CRITFC submitted 7 SORs for 9 weeks of autumn treaty fishing, requesting specific elevation bands within 1 foot for the three lower Columbia pools. The COE has responded with a 1-foot soft constraint and a 1.5-foot hard constraint. Hourly compliance with these criteria was very high – 98% of the time at Bonneville (a 1% increase over last year); 86% of the

time at The Dalles (3% more than last year); and 94% at John Day (27% more than last year). There were some fluctuations in pool elevations during the first week of fishing on Aug. 19-22, but the rest of the season went quite well. During the week of Sept. 2-6, elevations remained steady within half a foot – an important time for tribal fishers who had a record-setting 663 nets in the pools. Fishers really benefit from such stability. Dittmer thanked the Action Agencies for providing good conditions, which helped to make this year one of the best fisheries the tribes have ever had.

As of last week, tribal fish counts for the season were 106,000 fall Chinook, 24,900 steelhead and 50,000 coho salmon. Final counts will be available after this last week of fishing.

4. Albeni Falls Operations Update

Lynne Melder (COE) presented a fall drawdown plan for Albeni Falls (see graph linked to today's agenda). The plan was prepared in response to a system operational request for the COE to draft Lake Pend Oreille to elevation 2,051 feet on or before Nov. 15 and to complete as much of the drawdown as possible by Nov. 8 for kokanee spawning. The COE is limiting discharges to 28 kcfs in order to avoid exceeding TDG limits downstream. The current elevation of Albeni Falls is 2,054.9 feet at the Hope gage, with inflows of 15 kcfs.

Under the drawdown plan, elevation targets are 2,052 feet on Oct. 31 and 2,051 feet on Nov. 8. The graph shows inflows as being relatively flat in the near future, with drawdown over the next week averaging 0.3 foot per day. If inflows go up, the COE will be able to increase discharges in late October and early November relative to the current plan. Once elevation 2051 is reached, the lake will be held at elevation 2051-2051.5 feet through the end of kokanee spawning.

Idaho research staff will be doing intensive redd counts at this time of year, Russ Kiefer (Idaho) said. He will consult with them and present at the next TMT meeting Idaho's proposal for determining that spawning has ended.

5. The Dalles Spillwall Update

The elevation of Bonneville pool is being held to 75-76.5 feet as a hard constraint in order to keep contractor equipment afloat upstream for construction of the spill wall at The Dalles, Jim Adams reported. These constraints will affect chum spawning operations and will be in effect at least through March 31, 2009, until the contractor is fully demobilized from the site. The COE will keep TMT notified of any changes in operations that are required by the construction.

Paul Wagner presented a Joint Technical Staff Memo submitted to the COE by the Salmon Managers yesterday afternoon (see link on today's agenda). The JTSM asks the COE to provide details of how it plans to meet the needs of

both operations, the spill wall construction at The Dalles and chum spawning below Bonneville. Both operations are essential. What potential steps are the Action Agencies taking to provide assurance that the chum operation goes as smoothly as possible? Is there any additional flexibility in reservoir operations to provide greater assurance that chum operational needs will be met? The Salmon Managers want to take a proactive approach to any potential problems with the operation this year. These should be discussed well in advance to avoid last-minute decision making.

Tony Norris (BPA) wondered whether it's possible that considerations for a different specification than the usual 11.5-foot tailwater elevation might arise. The COE received the JTSM yesterday afternoon and was not yet in a position to comment on it today, Adams said. TMT will revisit this issue at its next meeting. Meanwhile, the Action Agencies will put together a plan for hydrosystem operations to provide for chum spawning conditions below Bonneville Dam for discussion at the November 5th TMT meeting.

6. Draft Water Management Plan

Comments on the draft 2009 WMP, linked to today's agenda, are due by Nov. 7. The COE is looking for comments on whether the water management plan has been fully updated in accordance with the 2008 BiOp and the Columbia fish accords, Dan Feil said. CRITFC, USFWS, Washington and NOAA indicated they will be submitting comments. There was discussion of the document's purpose. It needs a table of contents and more concise focus on operations, Wagner said. Feil and Norris characterized the WMP as a quick reference to operations contained in the new BiOp. The WMP needs to be organized and accessible while containing enough detail to describe operations comprehensively. This year the WMP is organized by project instead of by subject, but more organization remains to be done. TMT will revisit the WMP review at its next meeting.

7. Operations Review

a. Reservoirs. Grand Coulee is at elevation 1,288 feet, 2 feet from full. Hungry Horse is at elevation 3,530.51 feet, discharging 2.2 kcfs for the Columbia Falls minimum.

Libby is at elevation 2,441.1 feet, with fluctuating inflows and outflows of 4.7 kcfs. This operation will continue at least through end October. The COE anticipates a system operational request that outflow temperatures be kept as low as possible through November and December for burbot.

Albeni Falls is at elevation 2,054.9 at the Hope gage, drafting slowly, with inflows of around 11-19 kcfs. Dworshak is at elevation 1,519.2, maintaining outflows of 1.6 kcfs. Inflows are ranging from 1.0-1.8 kcfs.

Seven-day average inflows at Lower Granite are 18.2 kcfs; at McNary, 94 kcfs; at Bonneville, 107 kcfs.

An outage at Lower Monumental is scheduled for Oct. 25-Nov. 11, Adams reported. The operation, which has already been vetted by FPOM, will require speed-no-load using unit 5 and spilling the remainder of the flow. It will probably produce elevated TDG levels downstream, but not expected to be greater than 115%.

b. Fish. This will probably be the last report for the year on juvenile migration, Wagner said. Collection and monitoring stops on Oct. 31 at Bonneville, Lower Granite and Little Goose. Fall Chinook are the only fish migrating now, averaging a couple hundred a day at Lower Granite and Bonneville, and around 100 a day at Little Goose. Adult migration is the same as reported at the last TMT meeting, Cindy LeFleur (Washington) reported. There was discussion of when the chum operation will start at Bonneville. A total of 7 chum have passed Bonneville this week, and surveying below Ives Island for chum redds has already begun, LeFleur said. Chum have also been observed in the Grays River, which indicates that spawning operations will probably begin the first or second week of November.

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 Nov. 5, 2008. Options for meeting the operational needs of both chum spawning and spill wall construction, an Albeni Falls update, the WMP, and the standard operations review will be on the agenda. This summary prepared by consultant and writer Pat Vivian.

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Paul Wagner	NOAA
Dennis Schwartz	COE RCC
John Roache	BOR
Kyle Dittmer	CRITFC
Kevin Grode	COE RCC
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