

## COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

### TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

November 7, 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.

#### **Chum Operations**

An unscheduled TMT conference call was convened to discuss short term chum operations, given the recent increase in precipitation into the system and potential for more water entering the system over the weekend. Tony Norris, BPA, led the discussion on behalf of the Action Agencies. He referred first to the Action Agencies' draft plan for operations that was shared at the last TMT meeting, November 5, and then requested input from the salmon managers on how to manage excess water in the system when all flexibility during nighttime hours has been exhausted.

The salmon managers had discussed this issue at FPAC and made a recommendation to the action agencies to target a Bonneville tailwater elevation of 12 feet, with an operating range of 11.5-12.5 feet if necessary to manage the excess water. After further discussion, TMT agreed on a revision to that proposal, which included interim steps before actually moving the tailwater elevation target up (e.g. utilizing nighttime hours, expanding the operating range, and late afternoon pulses.)

**Action:** The COE planned to draft a teletype for review by the salmon managers before finalizing and sending out to project operators. TMT agreed to coordinate this through Paul Wagner, NOAA, who would respond on behalf of the salmon managers to get the teletype finalized by the afternoon of 11/7. **Update:** Dan Feil, COE, emailed a draft teletype to TMT on 11/7 following today's call. It included details of the operation as were discussed during the conference call. The final was shared with TMT on 11/10, as an FYI.]

#### **Next Steps: Conference Call 11/12 @ 1:00 pm**

TMT will revisit chum operations during a conference call on Wednesday, November 12 at 1:00 pm.

#### **Next Meeting: 11/19 \*\*Please note that the meeting will be held from 1-4 p.m.**

Action items include:

- Albeni Falls – Historical Data / Post-spawning Operations
- Chum Operations
- WMP – Edits Review
- Operations Review

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Technical Management Team Conference Call  
November 7, 2008**

**1. Introduction**

Today's TMT call was chaired by Jim Adams (COE) and facilitated by Robin Gumpert (DS Consulting) with representatives of NOAA, BOR, BPA, COE, Washington, Idaho, CRITFC 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. Chum Flow Management**

Tony Norris (BPA) led today's discussion of how to manage flows for chum spawning at Bonneville in light of tailwater restrictions imposed by spill wall construction at John Day. Today's call focused on a short-term operating plan through the middle of next week. Before the call, BPA sent the Salmon Managers options to consider as springboards for today's discussion. The options address how BPA would manage excess water during chum spawning season.

- Daytime pulses of limited duration in the late afternoon. These effectively prevent spawning at high elevations, but are generally regarded as fish harassment.
- Pulses at lower levels that don't preclude spawning.
- Extension of the tailwater operating range. This would provide BPA with more flexibility and a more achievable operation.
- Gradual increases in the tailwater elevation below Bonneville. These would have negative consequences later in terms of water needed to support higher spawning elevations.

The Salmon Managers discussed the options this morning in preparation for this call, Paul Wagner (NOAA) reported. They wanted to clarify that any nighttime flow increases at a high level would be for a short time only. Norris said yes, outflow volumes would first be increased at night, as they have in the past. Of course, this assumes BPA has already done as much as possible to keep operations within the normal 11.3-11.7 foot tailwater range. The Salmon Managers favored increasing the tailwater elevation to 12 feet which is not much higher than the 11.5-foot norm, Wagner said. They are aware that raising the elevation would add risk later in the season when flows are needed to maintain chum redds. The Salmon Managers also proposed expanding the operating range to 11.5-12.5 feet if needed.

The added range is extremely helpful to BPA, Norris said, because increasing the range around a given elevation increases flexibility, while adhering to a particular elevation adds no flexibility and can make operation more difficult if the elevation is raised. Increasing the target elevation below Bonneville to 12 feet would require moving more water, which means less time for BPA to react. It's the range around the target elevation that provides operational flexibility.

There was agreement that BPA would only increase the range to 11.5-12.5 feet if conditions make it impossible to maintain flows within the normal range of 11.3-11.7 feet during daytime hours, and that the first step would be to change the range only, not the target elevation. The possibility of using a stepped process to handle excess flows was discussed. Increasing the elevation range below Bonneville Dam would be acceptable if all possibilities of moving the water at night have been exhausted, NOAA and the COE agreed.

When elevations below Bonneville fall below 11.2 feet during chum spawning season, breaks can occur in the water supply needed to keep chum redds inundated, Wagner warned. Dan Feil (COE) proposed an increased range of 11.3-12.3 feet. Further discussion led to a list of priorities:

1. Maintain the normal tailwater elevation range of 11.3-11.7 feet below Bonneville Dam, with excess flows to be released at night.
2. If conditions in #1 can't be maintained, increase the operating range to a 1-foot band, or 11.3-12.3 feet elevation.
3. If conditions in #2 can't be maintained, raise the elevation target to 12 feet and maintain the 1-foot band, for an operating range of 11.5-12.5 feet.
4. If conditions in #3 can't be maintained, move as much water as possible into late afternoon pulses starting after 3 pm, and if that also fails, raise the target elevation to 13 feet.

NOAA, Idaho, Washington and CRITFC agreed to these operations. The COE will draft a teletype based on them and send it out for Salmon Manager review, with the aim of instructing project operators by close of business today on how to handle excess flows over the holiday weekend. Idaho, Washington and CRITFC delegated NOAA as the lead authority on this issue, so Paul Wagner will review the teletype on the Salmon Managers' behalf.

## ***5. Next Meeting***

The above list will guide Bonneville Dam operations until TMT revisits the chum issue in a conference call next Wednesday, Nov. 12, at 1 pm. The next

regularly scheduled TMT meeting will be Nov. 19, 2008, also at 1 pm. This summary prepared by consultant and writer Pat Vivian.

<b><i>Name</i></b>	<b><i>Affiliation</i></b>
Jim Adams	COE
Paul Wagner	NOAA
Tony Norris	BPA
Robyn MacKay	BPA
Scott Bettin	BPA
John Roache	BOR
Cindy LeFleur	Washington
Russ Kiefer	Idaho
Kyle Dittmer	CRITFC
Dan Feil	COE
Ken Tiffin	XX