

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

October 21, 2009 Meeting

FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY NOTES ON FUTURE ACTIONS

Facilitator: Erin Halton

Notes: Christa Leonard

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 Meeting Minutes for September 30, 2009

Facilitator Erin Halton noted that Kyle Dittmer's edits Autumn Treaty Fishing section of the 9/30 facilitator notes had been posted to the web. No further changes to the facilitator notes or official meeting minutes were made during the meeting and both sets are considered final.

Lake Pend Oreille Operations

Joel Fenolio, COE, directed TMT members to a graph posted as a link to the agenda that detailed operations at Lake Pend Oreille. He noted the target elevation of 2052' to be reached by 10/31 and an elevation of 2051' is targeted for 11/8, using outflows of 17 kcfs between 11/1-11/8. Fenolio shared that operations were going well thus far and Russ Kiefer, ID concurred.

Chum Operations

Dan Feil, COE, directed TMT members to spawning data from the Fish Passage Center website, posted as a link to the agenda. According to the graph, there are no fish present as of yet. He reminded members that the BiOp states that Chum Operations begin when chum arrive or the first week of November, whichever comes first. Tony Norris, BPA, noted that Grand Coulee is at elevation 1288' and that they are ready to augment flows from reservoir at .5' per day. Dan Feil noted that in 2008, chum operations began on 11/7 and that flows of 11.7 kcfs were held for approximately 10 days. Russ Kiefer, ID, asked if there was a correlation between the presence of chum in the Bonneville ladder and the start of spawning season. It was noted that there were none had been observed so far.

Action/Next Steps: This item will be discussed at the TMT meeting scheduled for 11/4. Cindy LeFleur, WDFW, will provide Grey's River chum counts for discussion at the meeting.

Vernita Bar Update

Russell Langshaw, Grant PUD, reported that spawning surveys began on 10/15 although no redds were present. They will continue redd counts until the initiating of spawning is identified. He noted outflows at Priest are at 55 kcfs with low nighttime flows and that inflows have picked up (the opposite trend from last year.)

Action/Next Step There were no questions from the group and another update will be presented at the 11/4 meeting.

The Dalles Spillwall Construction Update

Pat Duyck, COE-NWP, brought TMT members up to speed on construction at The Dalles. He began by explaining that the current process of curing leveling slabs is critical. Segment number 14 was placed on 10/20 and there is only one more section to place, which will happen in the next 10 days. He reminded TMT members that the wall length is 830' and that 15 blocks were placed last year. Given that 14 have already been placed this year (up to 28 blocks now) this puts the project way ahead of last year's progress. The COE is tracking the contractor's progress and they are 1-2 days ahead of schedule. Water operations are going well and providing the flexibility needed for both the contractor's demands and meeting chum targets. He clarified that most of the equipment and tugs being used at the project draft between 6-6.5' so there will not likely be any shift to the operating range constraints during the in-water work period. Duyck added that anchor drilling and installation will begin in mid-November.

Action/Next Steps: Duyck will provide an update at the 11/18 TMT meeting or as requested.

Water Management Plan

Dan Feil, COE, directed TMT members to the Draft 2010 Water Management Plan, posted as a link to the agenda. He reminded members that a draft was sent out on 10/1 requesting comments be submitted by 11/13. Tony Norris reminded Salmon Managers to review the Draft Action and Emergency Plan appendices for the next spill season.

Action/Next Steps: Feil will post relevant appendices on the same page as the draft WMP. TMT members will review. Also, Feil will email and post the Draft Fall/ Winter WMP update as soon as it is ready (and by 11/1 at the latest.)

Operations Review

Reservoirs: Libby was at elevation 2440.7', with inflows of 4.5 kcfs and outflows of 4.5 kcfs. Albeni Falls was at elevation 2054.6', with inflows of 14.7 kcfs and outflows of 25.1 kcfs. Dworshak was at an elevation of 1516.2' with inflows of 1.2 kcfs and outflows of 1.6 kcfs. Lower Granite daily average flows were 21 kcfs. McNary daily average flows were 85.5 kcfs, Bonneville average flows were 92.3 kcfs. Grand Coulee was at elevation 1287.4'. Hungry Horse was at 3545.84' with inflows of 500 cfs and outflows of 2.5 kcfs.

Paul Wagner, NOAA, asked if it was necessary to spill at Box Canyon due to a unit outage. Tony Norris, BPA, confirmed yes but that TDG was unknown. He noted that the power houses are being rehabbed over a three year project and that one unit will be continuously out, keeping spill in the 8-9 kcfs range.

Fish: Paul Wager, NOAA, referred TMT to information posted to the Fish Passage Center site. He noted that juveniles are running in the 100-500 per day range at Lower Granite, Little Goose and Bonneville. He noted that Clearwater fish are picking up. Regarding Adult data, Fall Chinook are passing at Bonneville in decreasing numbers ranging from 100-500 per day, signaling the end of the season. Coho are very strong, in the 2500-5000 per day range.

Russ Kiefer, ID, noted that steelhead returns at Lower Granite are good: 2500-5000 per day and wild/unmarked fish are also running well. He also noted that there are 2.5 times the number of Jacks passing as adult Fall Chinook this year, which bode well for the 2010 Fall Chinook returns. Good numbers and quality of smolts, in-river migration conditions, and ocean conditions were cited as factors.

Power System: Nothing to report.

Water Quality: No issued to discuss.

TMT Schedule: The next meeting is scheduled for 11/4.

Agenda items may include:

- Notes Review
- Autumn Treaty Fishing Review
- Chum Operations
- Water Management Plan
- Vernita Bar update

NOTE: The TMT Year-End-Review has been scheduled for **Friday, 12/11** at the City of Portland Building in downtown Portland at 1121 SW 5th Avenue. The meeting agenda will be shared will all TMT interested parties as soon as it is available.

**Columbia River Regional Forum
Technical Management Team Meeting
October 21, 2009**

1. Introduction

Today's TMT meeting was chaired by Dan Feil (COE) and facilitated by Erin Halton (DS Consulting), with representatives of COE, USFWS, NOAA, Oregon, BPA, Idaho, BOR, Montana, Washington, 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. Review Meeting Minutes for September 30, 2009

The facilitator's notes for September 30 have been re-posted with edits to the autumn treaty fishing update. There were no comments on the revised notes or the official minutes for September 16, so both were deemed final.

3. Vernita Bar Update

Russell Langshaw (Grant PUD) gave the first report of the Priest Rapids Dam operation for the 2009 fall Chinook spawning season. Grant PUD began reverse load factoring operations on October 15. The first redd count on October 18 showed no redds present on Vernita Bar itself, but Battelle's annual aerial survey identified 5 redds throughout the reach. This signified the initiation of spawning in the areas outside Vernita Bar. Redd counts will continue until the initiation of spawning is documented both on Vernita Bar and throughout the reach. This year's dry conditions have made it difficult for Grant PUD to meet the daytime flow target of 55 kcfs at Priest Rapids Dam. Langshaw will provide another update on the Priest Rapids operation at the November 4 TMT meeting.

4. Lake Pend Oreille Operations Update

Joel Fenolio (COE Seattle) showed TMT flow projections for drafting Lake Pend Oreille, depicted in a link to today's agenda which incorporates the Priest Lake draft as well. The elevation target for Lake Pend Oreille is 2,052 feet on October 31, and 2051.1 feet on November 8. Current outflows at Albeni Falls are 25 kcfs, which will probably drop to 22.5 kcfs tomorrow in order to achieve the 2,052 to 2,053-foot end-of-month elevation target, with an average of 17 kcfs outflows between November 1 and 8 to get to 2,051.1 feet elevation by November 8. TMT will revisit this topic at its next meeting November 4.

5. Chum Spawning Operations

Chum spawning will be TMT's next major decision process, Feil said. The BiOp states that chum spawning operations will begin either when chum arrive or

during the first week of November. Grand Coulee elevation is currently 1,288 feet in preparation for flow augmentation, Tony Norris (BPA) reported. A draft of 20 kcfs is equivalent to half a foot of elevation lost per day, an important factor in the planning to initiate chum operations. Last year, the chum operation started on November 7, Feil recalled. The COE targeted an elevation of 11.5 feet below Bonneville Dam, within a range of 11.3-11.7 feet.

Russ Kiefer (Idaho) asked whether the presence of chum in the Bonneville fish ladder relates to spawning activity. Feil replied that no chum have shown up below the dam yet, so there's no apparent correlation. Spawning starts about a week after chum are present in Gray's River, Scott Bettin (BPA) said. Sometimes they show up in fish ladders as early as August, Paul Wagner (NOAA) said.

TMT will revisit this issue at its next meeting November 4. Cindy LeFleur (Washington) will provide chum counts for Gray's River.

6. The Dalles Spill Wall Construction Update

Pat Duyckj (COE), spill wall construction manager, gave a positive report on work to date this season. The contractor is 1-2 days ahead of the work schedule and has already placed 14 of 15 concrete segments of the leveling slab, with about 80-100 more feet to complete this critical element of wall construction. The total length of the completed wall will be 830 feet. Last year the contractor placed 15 blocks or about 200 feet. By contrast, in the first month and a half of this year's construction season alone, the contractor has placed another 14 blocks. Some of the increased speed is because these units are only 25 feet deep as compared to 43 feet for the units placed last year.

The anchor drilling and installation portion – another critical element of wall construction – will start in mid November. Meanwhile, the COE's deviation request has been well received. Successful coordination of that request will allow the COE to meet the contractor's water demands and still meet the bulk of chum targets below Bonneville Dam. Wagner asked whether the depth requirements can be relaxed yet. Although this year's construction is less demanding than last year's, the contractor still needs the full volume of water to keep equipment afloat in 6-6.5 feet of water, Duyck replied. The COE will revisit this question when the largest barge is demobilized from the site. Further TMT updates on this will be scheduled as needed, most likely in mid November during chum season.

7. 2010 Draft Water Management Plan

Feil reminded TMT that the deadline for comments on the 2010 draft WMP is November 13. Norris asked the Salmon Managers to review the emergency action list in the generation emergency action plan and provide comments. Also, BPA requested comments on the draft transmission emergency action plan submitted last June. The goal is to finalize the transmission plan at the same time the WMP is finalized.

The focus turned to Appendix 3 of the WMP, which hasn't been updated for 5 years, Laura Hamilton (COE) noted. Wagner commented that sections of the WMP covering operations at The Dalles and Bonneville need to reflect the difficulties this year of integrating the chum operation with construction activities at The Dalles. Norris asked whether in-season chum management information should be included in this iteration of the WMP or the fall/winter update. Wagner and Dave Wills (USFWS) agreed that both documents should reflect it as part of 2009-10 operations. The fall/winter update to the WMP will be emailed to TMT and posted to the TMT page on November 1. TMT will revisit the WMP at its next meeting November 4.

8. Operations Review

a. Reservoirs. Libby is at elevation 2,440.7 feet, with inflows of 4.5 kcfs and outflows of 4.5 kcfs, Feil reported.

Albeni Falls is at elevation 1,054.6 feet, with inflows of 14.7 kcfs and outflows of 25.1 kcfs, Feil reported. Wagner asked whether the Box Canyon project downstream of Albeni Falls has had to spill or not, due to a unit outage reported at the last TMT meeting. The project is definitely spilling, but the TDG levels being produced are unknown, Norris replied. The powerhouse has 4 units, which are being rehabilitated one unit at a time. Three of the four units are now in operation, based on project flow and spill information.

Dworshak is at elevation 1,516.2 feet, with inflows of 1.2 kcfs and outflows of 1.6 kcfs. Mean daily discharges are 21 kcfs at Lower Granite, 85.5 kcfs at McNary, and 92.3 kcfs at Bonneville.

Grand Coulee is at elevation 1,287.4 feet, John Roache (BOR) reported. Hungry Horse is at elevation 3,545.84 feet, with inflows of 500 cfs and discharges of 2.5 kcfs.

b. Fish. Juveniles – Counts at Lower Granite, Little Goose and Bonneville are in the range of 300-500 fish per day, which is typical for this time of year, Wagner reported. These are the only projects currently in sampling mode.

Adults – Fall Chinook numbers at Bonneville are steadily decreasing, with 150-500 fish per day passing the project now. Coho passage is still amazingly strong at 2,000-2,500 fish per day, while steelhead passage is trending down to 500-800 fish per day. This year's count of 620,000-630,000 steelhead set a record, beating the 2001 count of 150,000-160,000 fish. Steelhead are still passing Lower Granite at a rate of 2,500-5,000 fish per day, Kiefer reported. Two and a half times as many fall Chinook jacks as adults are passing Granite, which bodes well for next year's adult fall Chinook returns. Last year's fall Chinook jack count was 10,000 as compared to 40,000 for this year, with a 10 year average of 6,500 fish, per the FPC website. In general, outmigration conditions for salmonids in 2009 were very good.

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

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

After the meeting ended, Dave Wills showed several TMT members photographs of streambed reconstruction work being done at Hamilton Creek in the vicinity of Bonneville Dam.

7. Next Meeting

The next scheduled TMT meeting will be November 4. The agenda will be similar to today's, minus an update on The Dalles spill wall construction. The TMT 2009 year-end review will be December 11. This summary prepared by consultant and writer Pat Vivian.

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