

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

January 6, 2010 Conference Call

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 December 23, 30 2009

Regarding the Power System section under Operations Review of both the facilitator's notes and the official meeting minutes of 12/30/09; Dave Wills, USFWS, noted that there needs to be further clarification of the 1 MAF storage statements by BPA. BPA offered the following language to add: "BPA reported that they were currently in the process of storing 1 MAF in Canada for summer flow augmentation water." There were no other comments or changes and both the facilitator's notes and the official meeting minutes for 12/23/09 and 12/30/09 will be considered final after the aforementioned edit is made to the 12/30 sets of notes.

Early Bird 2010 Water Supply Forecasts

Steve Barton, COE, directed TMT members to several links posted to the agenda. He began by reviewing the current state of the snow pack detailed on a map of the basin. Barton reported snow levels for each region as follows: Cascades- below normal, Washington- below normal with exception near the Canadian border, Canada- normal, Western Montana- below normal, Central Idaho- below normal to much below normal at Snake River headwaters.

Barton reported on the 2010 early-bird forecasts for reservoirs as follows: Columbia River headwater 83-89% of normal, Snake River 86%, Libby 88% (5.5 MAF), Hungry Horse 89% (1.78 MAF April-July), Grand Coulee 89% (48.1 MAF April-July), Dworshak 84% (22.2 MAF April-July). Steve Hall, COE, noted that regarding the Dworshak forecasts, the COE expects that by the time the official forecast is determined later in the month, it may be significantly lower, in the range of 60% of normal, with the regression forecast likely to be closer to 78% of normal. The early-bird forecast for Lower Granite was 76% of normal (16.3 MAF April-July) and The Dalles- 83% of normal (77 MAF April-July). Karl Kanbergs, COE, noted that this data comes from the River Forecast Center's January early bird forecast and that official COE data will be released later this week or next.

Kyle Dittmer, CRITFC, shared that per the most recent NOAA data, El Niño seems to be weakening (as is normal for this time of year) and thus the below normal snow conditions may result in a less than robust water year. Paul Wagner, NOAA, noted that the weather pattern appears to be tracking similarly to 2002-2003.

Action/Next Steps: There will be more in-depth 2010 Water Supply Forecast updates at the 1/20/10 TMT meeting including a presentation by Steve King from the River Forecast Center. Kyle Dittmer, CRITFC, will also supply an updated weather forecast.

Comments on Water Management Plan – Fall/Winter Update

Steve Barton, COE, reminded TMT members that both documents were finalized on 12/31/09 and have been posted to the TMT site. The COE reported that they received several comments from regional representatives that the review/comment process could be improved with better notification of deadlines and more notice given that documents have been posted and are available for review.

Action Next Steps: Barton shared with team members that comments are important to the COE and that changes and improvements to this process will be implemented this next year.

Update on Draft 2010 Fish Passage Plan

Steve Barton, COE, noted that some comments on the draft Fish Passage Plan have already been received and will be posted to the TMT webpage. Additional comments can be directed to FPOM where they will be discussed and finalized at their 1/13 meeting.

Action/Next Steps: The COE will email TMT members the link to the draft document. Comments are due to the COE by 1/14; if TMT members need to deviate from that deadline, they should contact the COE directly. This item will be on the agenda for the 1/20 TMT meeting.

Operations Review

Reservoirs: Libby was at elevation 2410.69', with inflows of 4 kcfs and outflows of 4 kcfs. Albeni Falls was at elevation 2051.49', with outflows of 15.2 kcfs. Dworshak was at elevation of 1513.02' with inflows of 2.1 kcfs and outflows of 1.6 kcfs. Lower Granite average flows were 20 kcfs, McNary average flows were 115-120 kcfs, and Bonneville average flows were 130 kcfs. Grand Coulee was at elevation 1284.9' and Hungry Horse was at 3535.54' with inflows in the range of .9-1 kcfs outflows of 2.7 kcfs.

Fish: Paul Wagner, NOAA, noted that current operations are limited to chum. He reminded TMT members of the 12/22/09 FPC spawning survey at Ives Island where 7 live, 5 dead fish and no new redds were observed. An additional survey was conducted on 12/28 when three live chum were observed. He also shared an additional report sent to him on 1/5/10: one chum and no new redds were observed, signaling the end of spawning. Wagner said the tailwater elevation has been in the 12-12.5' range and that establishment of higher redds was unlikely.

Power System: Robyn MacKay, BPA, reported that they are currently in the process of storing 1 MAF in Canada for summer flow augmentation water.

Water Quality: Scott English, COE, was introduced as the new water quality reporter to TMT. It was noted that the 2009 gas and water temperature monitoring report mailing

list is being updated in preparation for report dispersal (hard copy). The report will also be posted to the TMT site under RCC Water Quality Program- Annual TDG and Temperature Report.

Other: Richelle Beck asked if a decision has been made in regards to Lake Pend Oreille. Steve Barton, replied that comments are still being reviewed and that a decision is expected next week, at the earliest.

The 2010 TMT meeting calendar will be tentatively set for every other Wednesday and will be held in the Columbia Room at the COE unless otherwise noted on the agenda. If there are any room reservation issues, the COE will contact Paul Wagner to see if the NOAA 10th Floor conference room could be used as an alternative meeting space.

TMT Schedule: The TMT meeting will be: **face-to-face on 1/20/2010 at 9:00am**

Agenda items will include:

- Notes Review
- January Final Water Supply Forecasts / Steve King Presentation
- Draft 2010 Fish Passage Plan - Update
- The Dalles Spillwall Construction - Update
- Summary of Zero Nighttime Flow on the Lower Snake River
- Operations Review

**Columbia River Regional Forum
Technical Management Team Meeting
January 6, 2010**

1. Introduction

Today's TMT meeting was chaired by Steve Barton (COE) and facilitated by Erin Halton (DS Consulting), with representatives of COE, USFWS, NOAA, CRITFC, BPA, BOR, Washington, Montana, Idaho 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 December 23 and 30, 2009

Dave Wills (USFWS) commented that both the facilitator's notes and meeting minutes for December 30 refer to storage of 1 maf, which needs more explanation for the casual reader. That's 1 maf of flow augmentation BPA stores in Canada every year, Robyn MacKay said. BPA will add that explanation to the notes and the official minutes.

3. Update on Water Supply Forecasts

Steve Barton (COE) showed TMT a graphic attached to today's agenda that depicts the current state of snowpack throughout the Columbia and Snake basin. Many areas of the basin are way below normal in terms of snowpack. Northern Washington near the Canadian border is near normal, and points in Canada are hovering around normal. Snowpack along the Montana continental divide is normal to slightly below normal. But the trend is below normal in the Bitterroot Mountains in northern and central Idaho.

Basin-wide, the snowpack in the Columbia mainstem is 83-89% of normal, but only 76-84% of normal in the Snake River basin.

Jim Litchfield (Montana) asked about Noisy Basin Snotel station east of the Idaho panhandle. There are problems at that station which has been giving false data, John Roache (BOR) replied.

Barton then reviewed the early bird RFC forecasts project by project, also attached to today's agenda. These are not the official COE forecasts – those will be released next Monday, January 11, Karl Kanbergs (COE) pointed out.

The El Nino trend is weakening, but that may be a moot point because the damage to the water supply early in the year is already done, Kyle Dittmer (CRITFC) noted. The year 2010 is probably not going to be a robust water year.

The RFC early bird water supply forecasts generally show below average water supply, with project-specific forecasts as follows:

- Libby – 88% of normal, or 5.5 maf. Inflows for April-August are projected to be about 700 kaf at this early point.
- Hungry Horse – 89% of normal, or 1.78 maf for April-July. The BOR will release an official forecast for Horse soon, probably by January 8. Snowpack for the Flathead Basin is currently around 94% of normal.
- Grand Coulee – 89% of normal, or 48.1 maf.
- Dworshak – 84% of normal for April-July, or 2,220 kaf. The COE official forecast will most likely be low, as there's only 67% of normal snowpack in the basin now. The regression forecast is a little more optimistic, showing Dworshak basin at 76% of normal.
- Lower Granite – 76% of normal for January-July, or 22.7 maf (16.3 maf for April-July).
- The Dalles – 83% of normal, or 89.3 maf for January-July (77.5 maf for April-August).

When TMT meets next on January 20, there will be much more detailed information available regarding inflow forecasts, as well as the El Nino dry weather trend. The updated COE and National Weather Service forecasts and other products will be available for presentation and discussion.

The winter of 2009-10 is beginning to resemble the winter of 2002-03 in terms of water supply, Wagner and Dittmer agreed. Ocean conditions in the tropical Pacific may be overly warm, but conditions on the Northwest coast are cooler and more hospitable to salmon, Dittmer noted.

4. Comment on Water Management Plan and the WMP Fall/Winter Update

Both of these documents were finalized on December 31, Steve Barton (COE) reported. Based on complaints about the comment process, the COE plans to tighten it so all comments can be incorporated more quickly.

5. Update on Draft Fish Passage Plan

Comments the COE has received to date are being processed, Barton reported. The schedule as established in FPOM meetings is to complete the FPP comment process at the next FPOM meeting on January 14. Russ Kiefer noted that he might submit comments later than January 14 because of problems accessing the draft passage plan over the winter break, when he'd set aside time to review it in detail. Kiefer's comments need to be policy-reviewed by IDFG before he can submit them to the COE, which can be a slow process.

There was general agreement that, in future, the COE will email TMT participants the link to draft documents when they are made available for review. TMT will revisit the Fish Passage Plan at its next meeting January 20.

6. Operations Review

a. Reservoirs. Libby is at elevation 2,410.69 feet, with inflows just below 4 kcfs and outflows at the 4 kcfs minimum. Albeni Falls is at elevation 2,051.49 feet, passing inflows of 15.2 kcfs. Dworshak is at elevation 1,513.07 feet, with inflows of 2.1 kcfs and discharges of 1.6 kcfs.

Grand Coulee is at elevation 1,284.9 feet. Hungry Horse is at elevation 3,535.54 feet, with discharges of 2.7 kcfs and inflows of 900-1,000 cfs.

Daily inflow averages are around 20 kcfs at Lower Granite, 115 kcfs at McNary, and 130 kcfs at Bonneville.

b. Fish. The only potential activity in the basin this time of year would be chum spawning, Wagner said. The last live counts were taken on December 22 (7 live chum and 5 dead ones in the Ives Island area) and December 28 (one live chum and no new redds). This information supports TMT's earlier conclusion that the chum spawning operation could switch to a daytime minimum tailwater elevation with no maximum. The daytime operation has since remained within the 12-12.5-foot range, and any further spawning at this point is highly unlikely.

c. Power System. As reported previously, BPA is in the process of storing 1 maf of water in Canada for flow augmentation later this year.

d. Water Quality. Laura Hamilton (COE) introduced the new RCC water quality team leader Scott English, who gave an update. The COE has just completed a 2009 temperature and gas monitoring report, which will be available in hard copy form as well as electronically via the TMT web site.

9. Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled TMT meeting will be January 20. TMT members discussed holding meetings biweekly through February, then possibly weekly in March. Jim Litchfield (Montana) suggested scheduling the March in-person meetings biweekly, with conference calls in between. This summary prepared by consultant and writer Pat Vivian.

Name	Affiliation
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Dave Wills	USFWS
Paul Wagner	NOAA
Doug Baus	COE
Jim Litchfield	Montana
Kyle Dittmer	CRITFC
Scott English	COE
Laura Hamilton	COE
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