

# COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

## TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

### Conference Call

May 19, 2010

#### FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY NOTES

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.

#### **Dworshak Operations**

Karl Kanbergs, COE, directed TMT to two graphs posted to the TMT agenda; it showed that if operations stay at full powerhouse for the three days (as requested in the SOR), flows into Lower Granite should average 112 kcfs over the 72 hour period. Kanbergs said that the inflows were slightly ahead of forecast as inflows at Lower Granite hit 95.4 kcfs this morning at 0700 hours and are expected to continue to pick up today. The COE has committed to keeping output at full load at least through tomorrow, 5/20, and it was noted that BPA has pre-sold power generated for 5/19 and 5/20. Kanbergs asked TMT members if flows at Lower Granite are expected to be over 100 kcfs on 5/21, should outflows at Dworshak be ramped down (around midnight) to around 5 kcfs. Kanbergs noted that the most recent STP suggested that Dworshak will just barely re-fill.

The group discussed the COE's modeling and the latest real-time data. The discussion of Dworshak operations over the past two TMT meetings was recalled by TMT members: the SOR called for full powerhouse operations out of Dworshak for three days (72 hours) during the week of May 17<sup>th</sup>. During the TMT call on 5/17, TMT members said they were amenable to reducing Dworshak outflows on the third day of the operation, as long as inflows at Lower Granite were expected to be no less than 100 kcfs, thus conserving Dworshak flows for summer flow augmentation and temperature control. Salmon Managers present on today's call said that they were okay with the Action Agencies operating Dworshak with the intent of maintaining a daily average of no less than 100 kcfs and acknowledged the need to assess one more day's data before any decision could be made with regard to reducing outflows on the third day of the operation. It was noted that juvenile steelhead numbers at Lower Granite are surprisingly low and the hope is that this operation will assist migration.

**Action/Next Steps:** The COE will work with BPA in adjusting Dworshak operations with the goal of achieving a daily average of at least 100 kcfs at Lower Granite for a three day period. Dworshak outflows will be run at full power house for no more than 3 days if needed to try to meet the flow objective, as was

requested in the SOR. TMT will review this item at the next TMT meeting on 5/26.

### **Libby Spring Operations:**

Karl Kanbergs, COE, directed TMT to a link posted to the agenda. He reported that 194 KAF has been stored thus far in the Libby reservoir and that current flow estimates project 260 KAF to be stored by May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Outflows will be increased for VarQ operations on May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Action/Next Steps:** An update will be presented by the COE at the next TMT meeting on 5/26.

### **Priest Rapids Flow Objectives**

Dave Wills, USFWS, reported that this issue was discussed at FPAC and their recommendation was to maintain the targeted 125-135 kcfs flows for another week. Tony Norris, BPA, brought up the question of whether it was time to transition to managing McNary flows and re-filling Grand Coulee, in order to avoid a precipitous drop in flows near the end of June. The group discussed the merits of maintaining Priest Rapids flow range of about 130 kcfs and re-filling Grand Coulee. John Roache, BOR, reminded TMT the refilling Grand Coulee is a requirement of the BiOp and the Water Management Plan. He shared STP data, released yesterday, which suggests that if Priest Rapids is kept at 125-135 kcfs, in order to fill Grand Coulee by July 1, flows will need to drop to 110 kcfs for the first week of June. An informal poll was taken of TMT members on this issue:

- NOAA: Need more discussion on the issue before making any operational decisions/changes.
- Colville Tribe: Changes to the BiOp or Water Management Plan takes a lot of analysis and assessment. Support staying with the 125-135 kcfs range for now and agree more discussion is needed.
- USFWS: Feels supporting the 125-135 kcfs range for one more week is appropriate.
- ID: Okay with 125-135 for one more week, and support further discussion amongst TMT members.
- OR: Okay with 125-135 for one more week, and support further discussion amongst TMT members. Do need to closely consider any major changes to the BiOp / Water Management Plan.
- BPA: appreciates the comments from TMT members about this water management decision and is open to further discussions surrounding Priest Rapids flows and Grand Coulee refill.

**Action/Next Steps:** TMT members support the targeted 125-135 kcfs flow range for one more week. TMT members will review updated water supply data before next weeks FPAC and TMT meetings. Smolt passage data can be found on the Fish Passage Center's web site. The mid- month forecasts, STP and probabilistic models will be available for next week's meeting. This issue will be on the agenda for the TMT meeting on 5/26.

### **Libby Dam Releases for Sturgeon and Bull Trout Augmentation Flows**

Dave Wills, USFWS, presented SOR: FWS# 2010-1, posted as a link to the agenda. The SOR will provide extra flow for this year's Sturgeon Pulse operations. It outlines the targets and initiation points (i.e. temperatures, reservoir elevation, location of the Sturgeon population etc.) of the operation. He reminded TMT that the Sturgeon Pulse began last year on June 10<sup>th</sup>. Wills noted that this year's operation may start earlier, and he noted that the operation cannot start until turbine work at Libby is complete. He projects the initiation date to be between May 28<sup>th</sup> and June 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Action/Next Steps:** TMT members will review the SOR this week and it will be discussed in more detail at the next TMT meeting on 5/26. Members of the Sturgeon Recovery Team will call in to next weeks meeting to assist with questions.

### **The next TMT meeting will be: a Face-to-Face meeting at the Spring Creek Hatchery on 5/26 at 9:00 am.**

Agenda items will include:

- Review of Meeting Minutes 5/12,17 &19
- Libby Spring Operations Update
- Priest Rapids Flow Objective Update
- Dworshak Operations Update
- Libby Dam Releases for Sturgeon and Bull Trout Augmentation Flows
- Treaty Fishing Spring Season Wrap-up Report
- Operations Review

**Note:** For those that are interested, there will be a tour of the Spring Creek Hatchery prior to the TMT meeting at 8:00am. Details and directions will be provided by Dave Wills for distribution by Erin Halton.

**Columbia River Regional Forum**  
**TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM OFFICIAL MINUTES**

**May 19, 2010**

Notes: Pat Vivian

**1. Introduction**

Today's TMT conference call was chaired by Karl Kanbergs (COE) and facilitated by Erin Halton (DS Consulting). Representatives of the USFWS, COE, BPA, BOR, Nez Perce and Colville tribes, Idaho, NOAA, Oregon and others attended. This summary is an official record of the proceedings, not a verbatim transcript. Anyone with questions or comments about this summary should provide them to the TMT chair or bring them to the next meeting.

**2. Dworshak Operations**

Yesterday the COE ran a model showing that full powerhouse flows of approximately 10.1 kcfs out of Dworshak Dam for 3 days would yield a daily average of 112 kcfs inflows for those 3 days at Lower Granite Dam, Karl Kanbergs (COE) reported. These findings are presented in attachment 2a. As of this morning, Lower Granite inflows were 95.4 kcfs and rising, with an expected daily average of more than 100 kcfs today and 110 kcfs tomorrow, May 20.

In a May 17 conference call, TMT considered SOR 2010-2 regarding Dworshak operations. The resulting recommendation for a full powerhouse operation May 19-21 also asked the Action Agencies to scale back Dworshak outflows on May 21 if it was deemed reasonably prudent to assume that inflows at Lower Granite would be more than 100 kcfs. The purpose of this caveat from the Salmon Managers was to save water for use as summer flow augmentation.

Attachment 2b shows that inflows to Lower Granite will most likely be more than 100 kcfs as a daily average for May 19-21, exceeding the inflow expectations of SOR 2010-2, Kanbergs said. Both graphs include the effect of full powerhouse flows from Dworshak on those days. Steve Hall (COE) noted that inflows vary on an hourly basis, and the 10.1 kcfs in flows coming from Dworshak include water for the Dworshak hatchery, which isn't part of powerhouse releases.

In an effort to preserve water for Dworshak refill, the COE proposed to possibly reduce the operation to one small unit, or approximately 3.4 kcfs, while targeting 100 kcfs daily average inflows to Lower Granite through May 21. The Action Agencies have a power sales commitment to keep Dworshak at full load through midnight May 20, at which time the Corps could reduce outflows.

Stakeholders expressed their views of the Dworshak operation:

- **Oregon** – Given that the proposal to curtail Dworshak output at midnight on May 20 would save only around 10 kaf, Oregon favors continuing full powerhouse discharges through May 21 as the SOR originally requested.
- **NOAA** – Will be satisfied with the Dworshak operation as long as it produces a daily average of at least 100 kcfs inflows at Lower Granite for 72 hours. Wants a daily average of 100 kcfs or more, not a 3-day average of 100 kcfs per day.
- **USFWS** – Agrees with NOAA that 100 kcfs inflows at Lower Granite for 3 days is the clear goal of the Dworshak operation. The SOR calls for a maximum of 3 days of full powerhouse operation at Dworshak, not a guarantee that it will produce 100 kcfs inflows at Lower Granite.
- **Nez Perce Tribe** – The SOR’s goal of 100 kcfs inflows at Lower Granite for 72 hours doesn’t have to mean 72 hours of 10 kcfs outflows from Dworshak. Advised proceeding carefully to maximize water reserves for summer; wants to capture any opportunity to conserve at Dworshak now.
- **Idaho** – The main objective is to maintain 100 kcfs inflows at Lower Granite for 72 hours.
- **BOR** – A daily average of 100 kcfs inflows at Lower Granite for 72 hours is acceptable.
- **BPA** – Wants a clearly defined plan for ramping the Dworshak operation up and down. A daily average of 100 kcfs inflows at Lower Granite for 72 hours is acceptable.
- **Colville Tribe** – Abstained from voting on this issue.

Instead of checking in tomorrow on Dworshak operations as initially envisioned, TMT members decided that having consensus on a goal of 100 kcfs daily inflows at Lower Granite for 72 hours means further coordination can occur via email. TMT will revisit this issue at its next meeting. *(In a May 20 email, the COE notified TMT that daily average inflows at Lower Granite on May 20 will be around 104.6 kcfs, and near 100 kcfs on May 21 but not much higher. Therefore, the COE will continue to operate Dworshak at full powerhouse through May 21.)*

### **3. Libby Spring Operations**

Karl Kanbergs (COE) reported to TMT on Libby Dam operation. Attachment 3a shows that as of May 17, an additional 194 kaf had been stored in Libby reservoir as a result of deviating from the VARQ operation as supported by TMT. The latest inflow estimate suggests that the goal of storing 260 kaf of flow augmentation for the sturgeon pulse will be attained by May 22-23. At that time,

presumably on May 23, Libby will ramp up to VARQ flows. TMT will revisit Libby operations at its May 26 meeting.

#### **4. Priest Rapids Flow Objective**

Yesterday FPAC discussed flow objectives for Priest Rapids Dam and agreed to recommend maintaining the 125-135 kcfs daily flow objective for the coming week, David Wills (USFWS) reported.

Tony Norris (BPA) asked whether it's time to manage to McNary flow objectives instead of Priest Rapids. It would be prudent to begin working toward Grand Coulee refill in order to avoid a precipitous drop in flows at the end of June. McNary outflows are finally at 200 kcfs and will probably remain so for the next week or more. FPAC members could discuss that proposal but haven't done so yet, Wills replied. NOAA would want to see inflow forecasts at Grand Coulee before switching to McNary flow objectives, Rich Dominique (NOAA) said.

According to yesterday's STP projection, maintaining a flow target of 125-135 kcfs at Priest Rapids would put Grand Coulee reservoir at elevation 1,260 feet by the end of May, John Roache (BOR) reported. In order to fill Grand Coulee by the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Priest Rapids flows would have to drop to the 110 kcfs range by the first week of June and gradually decline from there. Drafting Grand Coulee in order to continue providing a 130 kcfs flow average at Priest Rapids through next week could mean a bigger decline in Priest Rapids flows later, Kanbergs said.

Dominique suggested that in such a low flow year, TMT should consider giving higher priority to meeting spring flow objectives then achieving the refill elevation target at Grand Coulee. Other TMT members noted that wouldn't meet objectives identified in the BiOp and Fish Operations Plan, and such a departure would require TMT consensus. More information is needed on this alternative.

TMT members gave their views of the Priest Rapids flow objective:

- **Colville Tribe** – Supports continuing Priest Rapids flows at an average of 130 kcfs for another week. At this time, favors keeping Grand Coulee refill as a high priority, but would consider changing that later if necessary. Wants information on water forecasting and migration status to be presented at the May 26 TMT meeting. Suggested the Salmon Managers reconsider transportation if they foresee drafting Grand Coulee beyond its capacity for refill. The tribe would object to a water request to save Snake River fish that could have been transported.
- **NOAA** – Supports maintaining the 125-135 kcfs flow objective at Priest Rapids for the coming week. Believes it makes sense to consider not meeting the Grand Coulee refill objective in such a low water year. Modeling and thorough discussion of this alternative is warranted.

- **USFWS** – Agrees with NOAA that continuing the 125-135 kcfs objective at Priest Rapids is appropriate at this time.
- **Idaho** – Continue providing 125-135 kcfs at Priest Rapids until there's new information or further discussion.
- **Oregon** – Now's not the time to cut flows in the mid Columbia. Continue providing 125-135 kcfs at Priest to prod juveniles out of the system. TMT should reassess next week how to manage flows in June.
- **BPA** – A departure from the Grand Coulee refill objective could be considered but would require consensus. Continuing to provide Priest Rapids flows at the current level will result in lower flows this summer.
- **BOR** – It's possible now to keep meeting the Priest Rapids objective, but that will involve a tradeoff and a later decision about which is worse – a sudden drop in Priest Rapids flows or missing Grand Coulee refill.

With consensus on maintaining the 125-135 kcfs flow objective at Priest Rapids for another week, TMT will revisit this operation at its May 26 meeting. The COE is working on a deterministic model involving several ESP traces, which will be ready for TMT review by the end of next week.

### ***5. Libby Dam Releases for Sturgeon and Bull Trout Flows***

Dave Wills presented SOR-FWS 2010-1, which summarizes the 2010 proposed Sturgeon operations and documents TMT's discussions of a deviation from VARQ flows this year to provide extra volume for the sturgeon pulse. The five-page SOR, attached to today's agenda, outlines the targets, temperature criteria at Bonner's Ferry and in Libby reservoir, elevation criteria, and spawning behaviors of tagged fish that will serve as triggers for the sturgeon operation.

Last year the pulse began on June 10. Information to date indicates that it is likely to begin earlier than June 10 this year. The soonest it could start would be May 28, when the final turbine at Libby will be restored to service. TMT members will review the SOR for discussion at next week's meeting. Any changes to the SOR would need to go to the sturgeon recovery team. Team leader Jason Flory (USFWS) will probably attend the May 26 TMT meeting.

### ***6. Next Meeting***

The next TMT meeting will be May 26 at the Spring Creek Hatchery. The meeting will begin at 9 am, preceded by a tour of the hatchery at 8 am. Topics to be discussed include Dworshak operations, Libby spring operations, Priest Rapids flow objectives, the sturgeon pulse, the status of migration, and review of meeting minutes.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Dave Wills	USFWS
Doug Baus	COE
Karl Kanbergs	COE
Tony Norris	BPA
Jerry Giovando	COE Seattle
John Roache	BOR
Bill Rudolph	NW Fish Letter
Dave Statler	Nez Perce
Dave Benner	FPC
Steve Smith	Colville Tribe
Charlie Petrosky	Idaho
Barry Espenson	CBB
Laura Hamilton	COE
Steve Hall	COE Walla Walla
Rich Dominigue	NOAA
Scott Bettin	BPA
Ron Boyce	Oregon
Tom Le	Puget Sound Energy
Russ George	WMC
Greg Lawson	Point Carbon
Richelle Beck	DRA
Rob Dies	Iberdrola Renewables
Rob Allerman	Deutsch Bank