

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM
TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM
October 20, 2010 Meeting
FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY NOTES

Facilitator: Erin Halton

Notes: 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.

Meeting Minutes

The Official Minutes and Facilitator’s Summary Notes from TMT meetings 9/29, 10/6 and 10/15 were up for review.

- 9/29 Facilitator Notes: Russ Kiefer, Idaho, made the following edits under the Albeni Falls Operations discussion: *IDFG and USFWS developed the SOR and Paul Wagner, NOAA, planned to coordinate with Andy Ducks at IDFG” regarding development of the SOR.*
- 9/29 Facilitator Notes: Russ added a correction the fish status update indicating that *steelhead numbers were slightly above the 10-year average.*
- 10/15 Facilitator Notes: Russ submitted edits to this set of notes on the Albeni Falls discussion: *Once both populations are recovered, Russ indicated that modifications to the decision tree would be easier to accept.*

Action: The changes will be made to the notes and redistributed. With these edits, the notes under review were considered final.

Treaty Fishing SORs

Steve Barton, COE, reported that the operation per the request in SOR C-11 had been completed, and that SOR C-12, a request for treaty fishing operations for the period 10/19-10/22 were being implemented as written. Tom Lorz, CRITFC, clarified for the group that ‘above normal rank’ language in the request refers to above average fish counts.

Albeni Falls Operations

Steve Barton, COE, reported that per discussions at the last TMT meeting, the COE was operating Albeni Falls to target a 2055’ Lake Pend Oreille elevation by 11/5 (with a ½ foot operating range, the project would target 2055.5’). The COE will run its next STP model using this operation scenario.

Chum Operations

Paul Wagner, NOAA, shared that chum surveys conducted on 9/24, 10/1, 10/14 and 10/19 reported no observed chum; however commercial gill net activites have caught observed some chum in the lower river areas, indicating they are in the lower river and getting ready to spawn. Four fish had been observed passing the fish ladder at Bonneville Dam. Paul wondered whether the fish are waiting for additional water in the area to begin

spawning. He also suggested that some precipitation is expected in the area over the weekend, and that these natural flows might be beneficial to the chum. He suggested a check in after the weekend to determine if and when to request a specific operation for chum.

The COE noted that work at Powerhouse 1 the first week of November may impact chum operations, in that flows in excess of PH 2 capacity would need to be spilled. Paul Wagner, on behalf of the salmon managers, suggested that TDG levels up to 120% would be acceptable, and again suggested the need for a check in next week on this issue.

Action: TMT will hold a conference call next Tuesday, 10/26 at 3:00 pm to discuss chum operations.

2011 Draft Water Management Plan

Steve Barton, COE, reminded TMT that comments on the first draft WMP are due by next Friday, 10/29. The COE will reissue a draft in mid-November with all comments received by that date. The WMP will be finalized by 12/31.

He also reported that draft Seasonal Updates of the WMP will be issued by 11/1. They will come in a new 'living document' format that allows for updates as the season progresses.

Operations Review

Reservoirs – John Roache, Reclamation, reported that Hungry Horse was at elevation 3538.88' and operating at 1 kcfs outflows. Gauge work downstream of the project requiring this outflow was impacting Columbia Falls, which was currently operating at 3.0 kcfs (just below its minimum 3.3 kcfs). John said this work should be completed this week and that Columbia Falls would be up to its minimum after the weekend. Grand Coulee was at elevation 1287.75'.

Steve Barton, COE, reported that Libby was at elevation 2441.3', with 4.9 kcfs in and 4.5 kcfs out. Albeni Falls was at elevation 2057.0' with 15.7 kcfs in and 18.0 kcfs out. Dworshak was at elevation 1517.8' with .9 kcfs in and 1.6 kcfs out. Lower Granite flows were 15.5 kcfs; the previous week's average was 19.0 kcfs. Priest Rapids flows were 75.6 kcfs with a weekly average of 84.2 kcfs. McNary flows were 103.4 kcfs with a weekly average 105.7 kcfs). Bonneville flows were 108.2 kcfs with a weekly average of 115.3 kcfs.

Fish – Paul Wagner, NOAA, shared adult count totals at Bonneville: 464,000 Fall Chinook; 413,000 total steelhead and of those, 154,000 wild steelhead. He noted that the percentage of wild steelhead was the highest it has ever been. Wild steelhead counts were strong at Lower Granite too, and Fall Chinook counts were 40,000 at Lower Granite, again an unprecedented number. Factors for these strong numbers, he suggested, could include increased hatchery production and the summer spill program. *[NOTE: following the meeting, Paul noted that he should have included a discussion of the good ocean conditions which existed in 2008 as likely being a contributing factor. The Northwest*

Fisheries Science Center had reported that 2008 was the most productive year they have documented thus far.] Paul said the Upper Columbia numbers were not as high as those seen in the Lower Columbia and Snake. Regarding juveniles, Paul said some Fall Chinook passage remained at Lower Granite and Little Goose. Juvenile monitoring was scheduled to be completed for the season at the end of October.

Power System and Water Quality – Nothing to report.

Upcoming TMT Meetings

- 10/26 Conference Call at 3:00 pm: Chum Operations, WMP Comments Status
- 11/3 and 11/10 Face to Face Meetings: Agendas TBD
- 11/17 Conference Call as needed

Columbia River Regional Forum
TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM OFFICIAL MINUTES

October 20, 2010

Notes: Pat Vivian

1. Introduction

Today's TMT meeting was chaired by Steve Barton (COE) and facilitated by Erin Halton (DS Consulting). Representatives of NOAA, BOR, Montana, the COE, Washington, USFWS, Idaho, the Colville Tribe, BPA, CRITFC 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 give them to the TMT chair or bring them to the next meeting.

2. Meeting Minutes for September 29 and October 6, 8 and 15, 2010

September 29 facilitator's notes – Russ Kiefer (Idaho) submitted an edit to the section on Albeni Falls operations. Replace “NOAA will participate in the drafting of the SOR with IDFG,” with, “Paul Wagner noted he will coordinate with Andy Dux, IDFG, regarding the SOR, and the SOR will be developed by IDFG and USFWS.”

October 15 facilitator's notes – Kiefer submitted edits to the 4th paragraph which says, “...Once both are met, Russ suggested the decision tree would no longer be used in bull trout BiOp recommendations.” He sent the following revision to clarify his intended meaning: “Once both populations are recovered, Russ indicated that modifications to the decision tree would be easier to accept.” Halton will distribute the revised notes with this change.

There were no other comments on meeting minutes or facilitator's notes.

3. Treaty Fishing – SOR C-11 and C-12

Steve Barton (COE) explained that SOR C-11 covered the fishery that occurred October 11-13, and SOR C-12 covers the period from 8 am October 19 to 6 pm October 22. Both SORs, attached to today's agenda, made the usual request for 1.5-foot operating bands at Bonneville, The Dalles and John Day dams. The COE has instructed project personnel to implement the SORs as written.

Paul Wagner (NOAA) asked what the phrase “above normal rank” means in the Justification portion of the SOR, which quotes escapement of 465,000 fish this season at Bonneville Dam. It means the count this year was above average, Tom Lorz (CRITFC) explained.

4. Albeni Falls Operations

Last Friday, October 15, TMT reviewed SOR USFWS/IDFG 2010-1, which recommends a winter minimum elevation of 2,055 feet at Lake Pend Oreille. Hearing no objections, the COE is implementing the SOR as written.

The current operation is expected to take the lake to elevation 2,055.5 feet by November 5. The lake will then be held at that elevation with a half-foot operating range until either kokanee spawning is done or the end of December, whichever comes first. For the remainder of fall and winter, the COE will provide updates on Albeni Falls operations as part of the operations review unless there's an unexpected development.

5. Chum Operations

Chum salmon are expected to arrive in the Ives Island area below Bonneville Dam during the first week of November. Ongoing weekly chum surveys in the area since September 24 have identified Chinook salmon but no chum yet, Paul Wagner (NOAA) reported. Chum will need flows to reach the spawning grounds, unless they have another means of getting there.

Chum have recently been found in gill nets in the lower river at Gray's Harbor and Deep River fisheries, and 4 chum have been observed passing the ladder at Bonneville Dam. These are all indications that chum will be arriving soon in the Ives Island area. Wagner noted that the weather forecast is for significantly increased precipitation throughout the basin. Tony Norris noted that BPA needs more than 2 days' notice to start the chum operation.

The COE will be doing maintenance work on the 1st powerhouse outfall during the first week of November, Barton said. This will only be an issue if the 1st powerhouse is impaired to the point that it can't provide the discharges needed to meet the chum spawning elevation range. At that point it would become necessary to spill, and TMT would need to discuss the resulting TDG levels. Chum eggs are tolerant of TDG levels up to 120% resulting from spill, but during the sac fry stage TDG levels should be limited to 105% because sac fry are highly sensitive to TDG, Wagner explained.

TMT scheduled a conference call for 3 pm Tuesday, October 26, to begin planning the chum operation after the next survey results are released.

6. Water Management Plan

Comments on the initial WMP draft are due Friday, October 29. To date the COE has not received any comments. If none are submitted by the deadline, no new draft will be issued, and the COE will set a new deadline for comments on the final version. If the COE does receive comments by October 29, a second

draft of the WMP will be issued around November 19 for the next round of reviews. The COE will issue a draft update by November 1, and future updates will be made throughout the season to the living document rather than in spring/summer and fall/winter iterations as in past years.

TMT will revisit the WMP during its October 26 conference call.

7. Operations Review

a. Reservoirs. Hungry Horse is at elevation 3,538.88 feet, discharging 1 kcfs. The BOR is working on the downstream gauge so the maximum discharge requirement is 1 kcfs. That will last at the most through this coming weekend, probably ending earlier. As a result, flows are 3 kcfs which falls below the Columbia Falls minimum requirement of 3.3 kcfs. When the work is done, flows will be ramped up to meet the Columbia Falls minimum. Grand Coulee is at elevation 1,287.75 feet.

Libby is at elevation 2,441.3 feet, discharging 4.5 kcfs. Albeni Falls is at elevation 2,057.0 feet with discharges of 18 kcfs and inflows of 15.7 kcfs.

Dworshak is at elevation 1,517.8 feet with inflows of 0.9 feet and outflows of 1.6 feet. Lower Granite is discharging 15.5 kcfs; last week's average was 19 kcfs. Priest Rapids is discharging 75.6 kcfs; last week's average was 84.2 kcfs. McNary is discharging 103.4 kcfs; last week's average was 105.7 kcfs. Bonneville is discharging 108.2 kcfs; last week's average was 115.3 kcfs.

b. Fish. Adults: Fall Chinook passage at Bonneville is trailing off, Wagner said. The season total of 464,000 adults means a good year. The steelhead count of 413,000 is average, but the wild component (155,000) is greater than 30% – the highest percentage seen. Lower Granite also saw good steelhead runs. The wild component of 55,000 steelhead is just under 30% of the total run count of 185,000 for the season. Fall Chinook adults passed Lower Granite in the highest numbers (40,000) seen since the dams were built. Norris asked whether the reason for such increases is known. It's probably due to changes in hatchery production, the provision of summer spill for migrants as opposed to transportation only, and other factors that will be ferreted out via an ongoing study of adult survival. It usually takes at least a year to figure out the actual percentage of wild fish in a given year's run.

Juveniles: Smolt passage is nearly done, with fall Chinook the only species still passing Lower Granite, Little Goose and Bonneville dams. This year's passage counts are in line with previous years. Current daily passage rates are 200 fish per day at Lower Granite, less than 100 per day at Little Goose, and a few hundred per day at Bonneville.

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

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

3. Next Meetings

TMT will discuss chum operations and touch base on the WMP in a 3 pm conference call Tuesday, October 26. The next regular TMT meetings in person will be November 3 and November 10, followed by a conference call November 17 if needed. The annual TMT year-end review will be December 8.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
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Steve Hall	COE Walla Walla
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