

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

April 1, 2011
Conference Call

FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY NOTES

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.

SOR 2011-01 (Spill Priority List)

The salmon managers, led by Paul Wagner, NOAA, presented a recommended spill priority list as a follow up from the discussions had at TMT on 3/30 and in light of the higher flows in the system requiring over generation spill. The salmon managers coordinated with state water quality agencies on the proposal to ensure the list would comply with water quality waiver constraints if implemented. All TMT members, including Montana who deferred to the FPAC participants on this issue, supported the proposal.

Steve Barton, COE, shared a ‘COE Proposed Spill Priority List’ that he said reflected the request. He asked for a few clarifications on the request for the period April 1-2 (prior to beginning of the court-ordered spill program). The salmon managers clarified the intent was to operate to the TDG percentages rather than specific spill amounts that were coupled with the percentages in the SOR; that Little Goose should spill first daytime to 30% of total river flow, then nighttime to 30% total river flow, then nighttime to 120% TDG; and that the intent with the projects from Chief Joseph to Dworshak was to spill to specific percentages at these projects after all other projects had reached 120%; then after all projects on the entire list reached 120%, spill to 125%, 130%, etc starting at the top of the list and moving down in the order listed in the SOR.

With regards to post-April 3 operations, the SOR recommended the COE’s process of moving through each project at 115%, then 120%, etc. using the project order listed in the SOR. TMT engaged in more discussion around this issue, and all agreed that it will need to be revisited as the season progresses.

Planned Operation: For April 1 and 2, Steve Barton, COE, proposed to use the spill priority list as described in the COE document linked to today’s agenda, with the caveat that Little Goose priorities would be reflected as they are described above.

Consensus: TMT members supported and/or did not object to the COE’s proposal. Members present on the call included representatives from Oregon, Idaho, Washington, Montana, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), USFWS,

NOAA, BPA and the COE. With consensus, the COE agreed to provide the spill priority guidance to the projects.

With regards to April 3 and beyond, TMT discussed the need to provide the most biologically sound spill priority while the fish are moving through the system and to stay in line with the court ordered spill program. As such, the COE planned to use the spill priority list and process as described in the 3/30 version of the list that was discussed at TMT that day. TMT members were polled on this plan, and many expressed a caveat that the list needs to be revisited throughout the spill season to understand how it is being used and whether changes should be made to it given changing conditions:

- Oregon – No objection
- Washington – No objection
- Idaho – No objection
- Montana – No objection
- NOAA – No objection
- USFWS – No objection
- CTUIR – No objection
- BPA – No objection – sufficient guidance for the short term

SOR 2011-01 (MOP+2 Operations at Lower Granite for Navigation Purposes)

Steve Barton, COE, reported that, since the 3/30 TMT meeting, the COE had done an internal investigation and had additional information to share with TMT that supported the COE's proposed operation in response to SOR 2011-01 requesting MOP+2 operations at Lower Granite for safe navigation in the Lewiston area. (Steve had emailed the proposed operation to TMT on 3/31 and asked for input from all TMT members.)

Today he showed a photo of the areas identified as providing less than 14 feet of depth, a depth that had been deemed through Congressional authorization to be safe for navigation through the federal channel and port areas. Steve confirmed that the area in question was part of the federal navigation channel; that some areas were much shallower than 14 feet; and that flow was a factor in determining depth provided at Lewiston. Given all this, the COE proposed a tiered approach to addressing the navigation issues, while minimizing the extent to which the project would need to operate outside MOP. The following operating ranges for Lower Granite for April- August were proposed by the COE:

Inflows \geq 120 kcfs: Operate for flood control consistent with the Water Control Manual
80 \leq Inflows < 120 kcfs: Operate Lower Granite pool at 734.0-735.0 ft (MOP+1)
50 \leq Inflows < 80 kcfs: Operate Lower Granite pool at 734.5-735.5 ft (MOP+1.5)
Inflows < 50 kcfs: Operate Lower Granite pool at 735.0-736.0 ft (MOP+2)

TMT members discussed the proposal. They acknowledged and supported the COE's responsibility to provide safe navigation conditions and agreed that this is unusual in that it is a season-long change to planned operations and has implications for fish operations (that might be negatively impacted). Suggestions were made that:

- The COE needs to show its commitment to finding a long term solution before the next spill season.
- At the 4/6 meeting, TMT should consider adjustments to other planned operations to determine reasonable actions that could be implemented for this year.
- The navigation issues should be reassessed at some point this season (June? July?) so that adaptive management changes can be made as appropriate.
- Is there a need to revise the FOP to include this operation and resubmit a revised FOP to the court?

Given the information and bulleted comments above, TMT members were then polled regarding their support for the COE's proposed plan to address the concerns raised in SOR 2011-01:

- Idaho – No objection as a necessary action for safety (and desire to consider alternatives fish migration operations)
- Washington – No objection
- Oregon – No objection (pending alternative fish migration operations)
- Montana – No objection
- USFWS – No objection, and feel mitigation measures should be addressed
- NOAA – No objection, consistent with the BiOp – a balanced alternative; will discuss alternatives
- CTUIR – No objection; without an emergency being declared, there is a concern that movement on the longer term solution will get delayed. Also want to consider alternative fish operations.
- BPA – Defer to the COE on navigation safety matters.
- *Steve Barton reported that the Nez Perce Tribe did not object to the proposed operation per off-line coordination prior to this TMT call.

Action/Planned Operation: The COE planned to move forward with implementation of the proposed operation as a short term measure to address the navigation safety concerns raised in the SOR. While they cited some challenges that would not allow them to implement any changes this year, the COE will continue actively pursuing options for addressing the issue for the long term, including reviewing the criteria for declaring an 'emergency' that might allow for dredging to begin prior to the finalization of the Sediment Management Plan. TMT will revisit this issue at the next, 4/6, TMT meeting, and throughout the spring and summer season as deemed appropriate.

Columbia River Regional Forum
TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM OFFICIAL MINUTES

April 1, 2011

Notes: Pat Vivian

1. Introduction

Today's TMT conference call was chaired by Steve Barton and Doug Baus, COE, and facilitated by Robin Gumpert, DS Consulting. Representatives of BPA, COE, NOAA, CRITFC/Umatilla, USFWS, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, FPC, Montana and others attended. This summary is an official record of the proceedings, not a verbatim transcript. Any questions or comments should be directed to the TMT chair.

2. SOR 2011-01, Spill Priority List

The COE will rename one of the SORs submitted today, as both have the same number (see agenda item 3 below). Barton asked the Salmon Managers for feedback on whether the COE spill priority list accurately reflects their priorities for April 1 and 2. TMT also began discussion today of spill operations April 3 and beyond.

Spill until April 3: Paul Wagner, NOAA, provided a follow-up to the March 30 TMT conversation regarding the use of over-generation spill for early migrants, including waiver constraints if spill begins early. Dave Wills, USFWS, added that there's no specific timeline in the Washington exemption as to when fish passage aid could be given, which appears to be an endorsement for spilling early.

Barton asked clarifying questions about the order and amounts of spill in the SOR, including pauses during nighttime hours. Wagner explained the intent is to go to 120% TDG nighttime spill at the projects before moving to the next project on the list. Barton asked the intent of listing Chief Joseph and Dworshak in the order given. When one project goes to 120% TDG, that's when the next project on the list should start spilling, moving incrementally through the projects as listed at 125%, 130% and 135% TDG, Wagner replied.

Barton asked whether the SOR proposes to follow the spill priority list presented on March 30 at 125% TDG. For this interim period, Wagner replied, the proposal keeps the same order that starts April 3, or whenever spring spill starts according to the FOP. Wills added that not all projects have BiOp spill levels at the complete gas cap.

Barton showed TMT the COE's proposed spill priority list (agenda item 2b), noting that the Little Goose day and night listings will be adjusted to reflect SOR 2011-01 specifications. The COE list mirrors that list, with the exception that

Dworshak is omitted from spill at levels above 110% TDG. Barton said the COE will reach out to other sovereigns not present on today's call to vet this list with them. Barton confirmed the intention is to spill in this order: Lower Granite, Little Goose 30% daytime, Little Goose 30% nighttime, Little Goose nighttime gas cap, Lower Monumental, then Ice Harbor. In response to today's conversation the COE will adjust accordingly..

TMT members present on today's call gave their views of the COE proposal to cover spill operations until April 3 when the FOP goes into effect:

- **Montana** – No objections.
- **NOAA** – Supports it.
- **CRITFC/Umatilla** – Supports it.
- **USFWS** – Supports it.
- **Washington** – Supports it.
- **Idaho** – Supports it.
- **BPA** – Defers to the COE regarding changes to the spill priority list.
- **Oregon** – No objection

Hearing no objection and pending confirmation with other sovereigns, the COE will implement the spill priority list as discussed today, including the Little Goose correction.

April 3 and beyond: Page 2 of the proposed spill list shows the COE counterproposal to the Salmon Managers proposal for voluntary spill April 3 and beyond. Wagner confirmed their preference for spill at Lower Granite, Little Goose and Lower Monumental in that order, according to the current spill priority list, rather than raising the Lower Columbia and Snake River projects to 120% TDG first. It doesn't make sense to the COE not to spill to 110% and 115% TDG at Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee before deviating from court-ordered spill at the lower Columbia and lower Snake projects, Barton said.

Margaret Filardo, FPC, asked whether the COE would spill to 110% and 115% in the lower river, even though the FOP doesn't require spill at the lower river projects, before spilling to 120% in the Snake. Voluntary spill puts us at between 110-120% TDG, and it doesn't make sense not to use the spill capability at Chief Joseph before intentionally deviating from the court ordered spill, Barton replied. It might be wise to consider spilling at downstream projects that are below 120% TDG before spilling at Grand Coulee and Chief Joseph, Tom Lorz, CRITFC/Umatilla, said.

TMT members gave their views of the COE's plan for managing voluntary spill for April 3 and beyond:

- **Idaho** – No objection to implementing the program as originally planned.
- **Montana** – No objection.

- **Washington** – No objection.
- **CRITFC/Umatilla** – This is probably acceptable. Will call the COE Monday morning, April 4, if there's a problem.

The COE will follow the court order starting April 3 to provide spill for fish passage and over-generation at projects not spilling first, in order to not interfere and intentionally deviate from court-ordered spill on the lower Snake, Barton said. It's important to manage over-generation conditions at projects first that won't interfere with spill operations as specified in the court order.

In an over-generation condition, with involuntary spill on the Snake and McNary spilling past fully loaded turbines on April 3, the COE would keep moving down the list until the over-generation problem is alleviated. The goal is to increase spill while maintaining a maximum level of consistency with the court order. Implementing the court order means it's not right to spill first without using other over-generation management tools.

TMT members then expressed their views of the COE plan, as described in the March 30 TMT meeting, for managing involuntary spill from April 3 until TMT meets again April 6, including compliance with court-ordered spill:

- **NOAA** – No objection.
- **USFWS** – No objection.
- **Oregon** – Supports this.
- **Washington** – No objection.
- **Montana** – No objection.
- **CRITFC/Umatilla** – No objection until Monday, with TMT call if needed.

TMT will discuss the spill program further at its next meeting April 6. In the meantime, hearing no objections, the COE will operate according to the SOR-corrected list. Beginning April 3 the COE will spill in accordance with the spill operation identified in the FOP.

3. SOR 2011-01, Lower Granite Pool at MOP+2 April through August

The COE will rename this SOR so it doesn't have the same number as the spill-priority SOR discussed above. The first link to this item on today's agenda is a 2009 satellite image of a GIS overlay that identifies areas in the federal navigation channel with less the 14 feet clearance, the minimum for safe navigation, Barton said. On the east side there's a shallow area in front of Lewiston, and another in front of Clarkston where shoaling encroaches on the federal navigation channel. Areas in red are less than 14 feet deep when the surface elevation is 733 feet. Channel survey data indicates that, in order to provide 14 feet of depth, the minimum elevation at Lewiston would be 735 feet, or MOP+2 range, Barton said. Similar conditions exist in the area in front of Clarkston. Thus the SOR is consistent with data in COE internal surveys that

indicate a 735-foot (MOP+2) minimum elevation at Lewiston is adequate to provide 14 feet of minimum navigation depth throughout the federal channel.

The next step was to determine how Lower Granite needs to operate to meet the constraint at Lewiston, Barton explained. Certain flows produce a backwater effect at 120 kcfs or greater. The maximum flood control elevation at Lower Granite is 734 feet to protect against the backwater effect flooding Lewiston.

The proposal the COE submitted yesterday morning is a more staggered approach than the blanket MOP+2. It attempts to factor in the backwater effect that is naturally present in the Snake River between Lower Granite and Lewiston with what's actually required at Lower Granite in order to provide a minimum safe depth in Lewiston. Barton broke it down as follows:

- For flows equal to or greater than 120 kcfs, Lower Granite will be operated to flood control guidance as specified in the Water Control Manual (MOP 733.0 - 734.0 feet).
- For flows between 80-120 kcfs, MOP +1 (734.0 - 735.0 feet) appears to be an adequate minimum navigational depth at Lewiston.
- Flows between 80-50 kcfs require MOP +1.5 (734.5 – 735.5 feet).
- For inflows of less than 50 kcfs, operate at MOP+2 (735.0 – 736.0 feet).

This minimizes the extent and duration outside prescribed MOP operations, Barton said – it's a balanced approach between obligations to the federal channel while also trying to implement as best as possible the MOP operations in Lower Granite pool. Wagner pointed out that the requirement calls for Lower Granite to be no higher than 734 feet elevation when flows are above 120 kcfs, and if flows are about 136 kcfs, the plan is to be in the 734-foot elevation range. The objective is to maintain the federal channel to provide navigation service, as authorized in the BiOp. The SOR is consistent with the minimum depth needed to provide safe navigation as specified in RPA-5.

USFWS is concerned about fish protection measures at MOP+2, Wills said. The BiOp didn't anticipate a season-long, required deviation from MOP operations. Dredging needs to be done quickly to address this problem sometime before 2014, when the sediment management plan would have been completed if it were funded as planned. Barton said the COE is actively pursuing options to address this need. Steve Hall, COE, explained that it wouldn't be possible to arrange for dredging this year even if funds were available. TMT members expressed their views of the SOR:

- **Idaho** – For safety and navigation interests, no objections to the proposed operation. Recommends that TMT consider adjustments to the planned operation to see whether regional actions could result in similar fish protection levels in a flow year like this. Asked that TMT consider at its

next meeting whether a reasonable adjustment to the planned operation would provide similar fish protection measures without going outside of MOP.

- **USFWS** – Supports Idaho’s observations. No objections under the circumstances, but the dredging issue needs to be addressed before fish passage season next year. The FOP should be revised and resubmitted to the court because it doesn’t reflect actual operations this season.
- **Washington** – Agreed with USFWS and asked what the process is to submit an amendment to the FOP. No objection to the proposed operation; supports the COE’s staggered approach.
- **NOAA** – This plan is consistent with the BiOp. Thanked the COE for coming up with a staggered approach not just MOP+2. Let’s verify whether there’s still a problem in July, as higher flows can produce either more sediment or movement of sediment. The real impact of this SOR will occur in the July/August period.
- **Oregon** – No objections today, but wants to discuss a better operation next week at TMT.
- **Montana** – No objections to the proposed operation. Not sure a formal change in the court filing is needed.
- **CRITFC/Umatilla** – This is an interesting dilemma because if we do nothing, it will result in a state of emergency, which could authorize emergency dredging. No objection because the operation is needed to avert an emergency. However, MOP+2 will have a significant impact, and we need to talk about how to mitigate those changes from what was envisioned in the BiOp.
- **BPA** – Defers to the COE regarding navigation safety matters.

Hearing no objections to the proposed operation, the COE will proceed with the proposed MOP+2 operation while addressing the need for a long-term solution, Doug Baus, COE, said. TMT will follow up on this on April 6, including any interim steps and planning needed for adaptive management.

4. Next Meeting

The next regular TMT meeting will be April 6, with the Spring Creek Hatchery release, Bonneville turbine operations, Dworshak operations, spill priorities, and the disposition of SOR 2011-01, MOP+2 operations, on the agenda.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
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Tom Lorz	CRITFC/Umatilla

Rick Kruger	Oregon
Charles Morrill	Washington
Jim Litchfield	Montana
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