

COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

June 22, 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.

TMT members in attendance for all or part of the meeting: Doug Baus, COE; Scott Bettin, BPA; Tom Lorz, CRITFC/CTUIR; Russ Kiefer, Idaho; Rick Kruger, Oregon; Stu Levit, Salish-Kootenai Tribes; Jim Litchfield, Montana; Tony Norris, BPA; John Roache, Reclamation; Dave Statler, Nez Perce Tribe; Dave Wills, USFWS.

*NOAA Fisheries and Washington were not present for the discussion.

Spill Priority List

The COE convened today's conference call to discuss a proposed temporary change to the Spill Priority List, per coordination with BPA. Doug Baus, COE, said the change would move Chief Joseph to the top of the list in the Level 1 tier, to support lack of load conditions anticipated to occur over the next 2-3 weeks. This would improve water quality management and put operations in line with voluntary spill targets defined in the Summer Fish Operations Plan. The intent, he said, was to begin implementing this change today if there were no objections from TMT. The COE would use this list only during the lack of load period, and then revert back to the previous list.

The salmon managers asked for clarification about how this change would help manage TDG issues given that Mid-Columbia TDG levels were already running high. The COE responded that spill at Chief Joseph would serve to degas the water further downstream. BPA added that all options had been explored for addressing lack of load, and this was the only option available. With all other project powerhouses being ‘maxed out’ (including Grand Coulee), Chief Joseph was the last remaining tool for addressing lack of load conditions. The COE noted that with high flows, the tailwater gauge at Chief Joseph was not as sensitive to changes, so the Wells forebay monitor would be used to look at TDG changes. The spill caps were set at 120% (160 kcfs) at Chief Joseph. Tony Norris, BPA, said data from a June 5 spill test showed that spill at Chief Joseph did serve to degas the river below. He added that an additional benefit to this proposed change would be to minimize wind energy redispatch – as more spill could be implemented at the project.

Concerns were raised around debris issues occurring in the lower river, and more fish being put through the bypass system. The CTUIR and Oregon representatives acknowledged that TDG is an important consideration, and that their preference to manage the debris and fish passage concerns outweighed those TDG concerns at present.

Many TMT members said they would need to see more concrete data around this issue to provide an informed response to the proposed change, and Rick Kruger, Oregon, forewarned that it will be a challenge for him to coordinate up all the necessary internal chains within the short turnaround being requested.

Action/Next Steps: TMT will reconvene to discuss this issue further. The following next steps will be taken –

- COE and BPA will gather specific data to share with TMT around:
 - Chief Joseph spill volume and TDG level changes that would occur with this change;
 - Impacts to spill and TDG that would occur at other projects (in the context of total river flow);
 - Data from a 6/5 spill test at Chief Joseph that showed an impact to TDG at Wells; and
 - Environmental re-dispatch effects that would result from this operation change.
- The goal will be to email and post data to the TMT web page by noon on Thursday, 6/23.
- The salmon managers will hold an FPAC meeting to discuss the data – proposed for 3:00 pm on Thursday, 6/23.
- All TMT members will work within their own agencies/offices to review the data and help inform the next full TMT discussion on this issue.
- TMT will reconvene at 11:00 am on Friday, 6/24, to discuss a plan forward. If agreeable, the COE will implement a change before the weekend.

Columbia River Regional Forum
TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM OFFICIAL MINUTES

June 22, 2011

Notes: Pat Vivian

1. Introduction

Today's TMT conference call was chaired by Doug Baus, COE, and facilitated by Robin Gumpert, DS Consulting. Representatives of the COE, Oregon, Idaho, BPA, USFWS, BOR, 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. Spill Priority List Update

In response to an anticipated lack of load over the next 2-3 weeks, the COE proposed today that Chief Joseph Dam be moved to the top of the spill priority list that has been previously been coordinated with TMT for level 1 spill only. One benefit of implementing this change, Baus said, would be improved ability for the COE to manage system wide TDG and increase the opportunities to achieve spilling in accordance with voluntary spill targets defined in the FOP by spilling through the Chief Joseph deflectors. Another benefit would be a significant reduction in the amount of wind energy that needs to be redispached, Tony Norris, BPA, noted.

Speaking as FPAC chair, Tom Lorz, **CRITFC/Umatilla**, said the proposed change in spill priorities would exacerbate gas levels in the mid-Columbia, which has the highest gas levels now of anywhere in the system, while gas on the Snake isn't a problem. He expressed reluctance to move Chief Joseph up on the list because increased spill on the Columbia would expose fish to more injury from debris accumulating in bypass systems. It was noted that FPAC had not had an opportunity to discuss the proposal prior to this conference call and therefore couldn't provide the COE with a recommendation. Scott Bettin, BPA pointed out that spill at CHJ is reducing TDG by 8% when you compare the forebay gage of CHJ to the forebay gage at Wells.

Rick Kruger, **Oregon**, agreed with Lorz's concerns and said more information is needed before he can explain this proposal to decision-makers at his agency. Lorz asked whether the COE has modeled the potential effects of this proposal. Without knowing the percentage by which TDG conditions would improve, Lorz couldn't say whether the tradeoff involved would be worthwhile.

Laura Hamilton, COE, said the Chief Joseph tailrace gage, which was enclosed in a pipe for a June 11 spill test, has been giving readings that are 3-5% too low and can't be repositioned until flows drop. These unreliable tailrace readings have shifted the focus to TDG levels in Wells forebay downstream as a

means of assessing gas levels accurately on the mid Columbia. Hamilton noted that Chief Joseph has been experiencing wide swings in spill ranging from 80-160 kcfs, while all other federal dams are consistently spilling at capacity.

Dave Statler, **Nez Perce**, questioned the urgency of this change in spill priorities, and Margaret Filardo, **FPC**, questioned any addition of spill to the mid Columbia when TDG levels are already 124% in Wells forebay. Lorz said TDG levels on the Snake River appear to be less of a problem than debris, therefore spill on the Snake would be preferable to anywhere else. Kruger said Oregon supports this view.

Russ Kiefer, **Idaho**, suggested moving McNary down on the spill priority list because it now has the highest TDG levels of all federal projects where fish pass. Tony Norris stated that this would not likely change the level of TDG at MCN because the project is turbine limited. Without more information, Idaho couldn't support the proposal to move CHJ on the spill priority list.

Given the general feedback that more information is needed before TMT members can evaluate the proposed change in spill priorities, and the urgency to implement a change for the sake of water quality and environmental redispach, the COE and BPA will collaborate on a fast track and attempt to provide written information to TMT by noon tomorrow in preparation for a conference call Friday. The data will be emailed to TMT members and posted to the TMT webpage. Information on the effects of the proposed change will cover:

- Chief Joseph spill volume and TDG level changes that would occur with this change;
- Impacts to spill and TDG that would occur at other projects (in the context of total river flow);
- Data from a 6/5 spill test at Chief Joseph that showed an impact to TDG at Wells; and
- Environmental re-dispatch effects that would result from this operation change.

3. Next TMT Meeting

There will be a conference call at 11 am Friday, June 24, to follow up on this conversation. The next regular TMT meeting is June 29.

Name	Affiliation
Rick Kruger	Oregon
Russ Kiefer	Idaho
Scott Bettin	BPA
Doug Baus	COE
David Wills	USFWS
Lisa Wright	COE

John Roache	BOR
Tony Norris	BPA
Tom Lorz	CRITFC/Umatilla
Stu Leavitt	Kootenai
Shane Scott	PPC
Dave Benner	FPC
Alex Cibarra	Grant PUD
Margaret Filardo	FPC
Russ George	WMC
Laura Hamilton	COE
Scott English	COE
Dan Feil	COE
Steve Hall	COE Walla Walla
Barry Espenson	CBB
Ruth Burris	PGE
Rob Allermann	Deutsch Bank
Dave Statler	Nez Perce
Mike Shapley	Snohomish PUD
Doug Vine	Thompson Reuters
Bill Rudolph	NW Fish Letter
Jim Litchfield	Montana