

**COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM**  
**July 13, 2011 Conference Call**  
**Facilitator's Summary**  
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.*

**John Day TSWs**

Doug Baus, COE, reported on the COE's plan to operate the TSWs at John Day through the end of the spill season (~end of August). In 2009 shutting off TSWs at JDA was initiated based on an SRWG recommendation to minimize predation in the tailrace. In 2010 shutting off TSWs at JDA appeared to result from rolling over operations from 2009. This issue was also scheduled for discussion at FPOM tomorrow, 7/14, and at the request of a salmon manager, the COE added it to today's TMT agenda for additional regional coordination.

Rick Kruger, Oregon, asked for clarity on the process used for making the decision in 2010 – particularly around how this was coordinated through the region. He asked for further dialogue with TMT about how 'rollover' operations are described in the Fish Operations Plan, and how these operations are also coordinated in-season with the region. His concern stemmed from being unclear about last year's process and also that the issue was pending for this year and had not until now been brought through regional coordinating bodies for discussion.

**Actions:** Rick and Doug will discuss the regional coordination process used during 2010, and TMT will revisit the broader process issue of how rollover operations are regionally coordinated and described in the Fish Operations Plan – all toward clarifying and, if needed, improving the process for regional coordination on important operational decisions.

The COE polled TMT members for their level of support for continuing to operate the TSWs at John Day through this spill season:

- Idaho – pending more detailed technical discussion at FPOM, no objection.
- Oregon – pending more detailed technical discussion at FPOM, no objection.
- Washington -- pending more detailed technical discussion at FPOM, no objection.
- CTUIR -- pending more detailed technical discussion at FPOM, no objection.
- Salish-Kootenai Tribe – no objection.
- Nez Perce – need more time and data to consider impacts to juvenile lamprey passage.
- USFWS -- pending more detailed technical discussion at FPOM, no objection.
- NOAA – no objection.
- Reclamation – no objection.
- BPA – no objection.

**Action/Next Steps:** The COE will continue coordinating with the region on the John Day TSW operation via FPOM tomorrow, and, pending no objections, will continue operating the TSWs through the spill season. An update will be emailed to TMT and shared at next week's TMT meeting.

### **Upper Snake Flow Augmentation**

John Roache, Reclamation, reported that there will be a full 487 kaf flow augmentation release from the Upper Snake this year, beginning when flood control operations above Milner are no longer in effect. John suggested this would likely be around mid- to later July, and would likely be a 2.5 kcfs release through the third week of August. More details will be known as the season progresses, and John will continue to update TMT on the augmentation operation.

### **Spill Priority List**

Doug Baus, COE, reminded TMT about the current spill priority list in effect to manage water quality in the system and address over-generation (lack of load) concerns, by placing Chief Joseph Dam at the top of the Level 2 list. Tom Lorz, CRITFC/CTUIR, presented a proposed spill priority list –linked to today's agenda—that he said the salmon managers would like the action agencies to implement as soon as possible, given that flows in the system have receded and based on movement of the fish and other debris issues. Tony Norris, BPA, responded with his agency's commitment to move Chief Joseph Dam back to the position just above Grand Coulee Dam on the Level 2 list as soon as possible, depending on conditions expected over this coming weekend. Doug Baus added that his agency committed to a 2-3 week time period for implementing the current spill priority list and that internal coordination was needed before making any decisions around changing the list.

In response to a question, the COE's Scott English reported that the COE will continue to use the Chief Joseph Dam tailwater gauge to manage for TDG, and that the Wells forebay gauge was showing that TDG was receding toward 115%. He added that Chief Joseph is not a voluntary spill project – it is only used for involuntary spill. Dave Statler, Nez Perce, also emphasized that while some fish are migrating in the lower river, there are still Clearwater Fall Chinook migrating in the Snake.

The salmon managers clarified their request – to use the proposed spill priority list for both Level 1 and Level 2 conditions, as soon as possible. They acknowledged that the list for Level 1 might shift sooner than that for Level 2.

**Action/Next Steps:** The action agencies committed to switching the spill priority list to that proposed by the salmon managers as soon as possible, and will coordinate their decision based on today's TMT discussion and their own internal coordination. The COE will notify TMT via email of when the lists (Level 1 and Level 2) will be changed, will post the new list, and will add this item to the 7/20 TMT meeting agenda. The spill priority list remains a living document and may be changed again at any time – and changes will be coordinated with the region.

### **Dworshak Operations**

Steve Hall, Walla Walla District COE, reported that Dworshak reached full earlier this week and was currently operating very close to the gas cap, around 13.5 kcfs. TDG is influenced by and fluctuates daily based on air and water temperatures, so the COE will monitor this operation closely. Steve shared the latest temperature model which showed temperatures were slowly rising at the Lower Granite tailrace. The model projected out through 7/17. By that date, Lower Granite tailwater temperatures were expected to reach about 62 degrees, well below the 68 degree threshold. Given this, the COE was operating Dworshak for flow augmentation rather than temperatures at this point, and, Steve said, would likely continue to do so in to August.

Dave Statler, Nez Perce, asked why the COE was not just passing inflows at the project. Steve Hall responded that the BiOp targets elevation 1535' by the end of August and 1520' by the end of September. To achieve those targets, the COE's model shows the need to operate to the gas cap. That said, they will continue to watch temperatures and shape the flows to manage to the water quality criteria when necessary. The COE is open to recommendations for shaping the flows, and would like to see an SOR for any preferred alternatives to the current planned operation. Steve said the COE will continue to run the models weekly and will share these updates with TMT as the season progresses.

Finally, Steve noted that there is a minor leak at Unit 3 that the COE is watching closely. The COE does not plan to make any repairs at the moment since to make a repair requires taking the unit out of service. Hopefully the leak will not become larger during the summer draft season. TMT raised some questions about this and would like to stay apprised of this issue.

### **Lower Granite MOP Operations**

Doug Baus, COE, reminded TMT that an SOR had been submitted earlier this year from the Towboaters' Association to alter MOP operations at Lower Granite to address navigation safety concerns, and the COE was currently implementing the request. The purpose of today's discussion was to update TMT as to the COE's plans to conduct surveys in the area to determine if and how sediment shifts will impact operations moving forward. Steve Hall reported that annual surveys will be conducted in August and the research arm of the COE, ERDC, could add survey work to their settlement sampling already scheduled to occur in the next two weeks. The COE was pushing to get the annual survey done as soon as possible, as this would yield the quickest results. The ERDC work would produce very good images and clear data, but processing time might take longer and so results of the surveys might come in later than the annual survey work. Steve Hall also noted that Lower Granite flows, averaging about 100 kcfs, would need to recede before the surveys could be conducted.

**Action/Next Steps:** This will remain a standing TMT agenda item so TMT is sure to receive regular updates on survey progress, results and use for informed decision-making.

### **Libby Operations**

Joel Fenolio, Seattle District COE, reported that, having passed a full. 1.2 MAF, the sturgeon operation was completed on 7/11. Outflows at the project ramped down from 15 kcfs to 13 kcfs that day, and the project was scheduled to ramp down to 11 kcfs later today and remain there for a few days. The project was being managed now to balance between refill and targeting 2449' by the end of September. Joel added that the COE is in discussions with the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, who are interested in shaping flows around habitat construction occurring downstream of the project. The COE will work with the tribe to come up with an operating scenario/recommendation, and share this with TMT in the coming week or two. At this time, no formal operation request had been submitted by the tribe.

**Next Meeting, Face to Face, 7/20**

Agenda items include:

- John Day TSWs – follow up from FPOM discussion
- Spill Priority List – current list in effect
- Dworshak Operations – temperature modeling scenarios, flow augmentation, unit 3 leak
- Lower Granite MOP Operations – survey schedule
- Libby Operations – recommendation for shaping flows?
- Operations Review – other reservoirs, fish, power system, water quality
- Other?

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

**July 13, 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 CRITFC/Umatilla Tribe, Oregon, the COE, NOAA, USFWS, Idaho, BOR, BPA, Washington, the Nez Perce Tribe 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. John Day TSWs**

The current operation is to keep the TSWs in service at John Day through August, Baus said. Data from 2008 – 2010 suggest that use of the TSWs reduces forebay retention time, which favors keeping the TSWs in service through the remainder of spill season, i.e. the end of August. This topic will be discussed in detail at tomorrow's FPOM meeting.

Prior to a COE poll today of TMT members regarding support for this plan, Rick Kruger, Oregon, raised a process concern. The decision to discontinue the operation of the TSWs in 2009 was based on language in the FOP indicating the decision would be based on a recommendation made by the SRWG. The 2010 FOP did not mention the possibility of making an in-season management decision to remove the TSWs. Kruger said a rollover operation should be explicitly described in the subsequent year's FOP, more than a reference to the previous year's operation. Oregon and the COE will follow up on this concern.

TMT members were polled on their views:

- **Oregon** – Tentatively supports continuing to operate the TSWs, but regional discussion is needed of what constitutes a rollover (see above comments). This is especially important for actions that would have significant effects, such as changes in spill or termination of a passage route. In advising the COE today, the TMT poll should be tentative, subject to FPOM technical review tomorrow.
- **Idaho** – Supports the decision to leave the TSWs in place.
- **Washington** – No objection to the proposed operation.
- **Umatilla** – No objection.

- **Salish-Kootenai** – No objection.
- **USFWS** – No objection.
- **NOAA** – No objection.
- **BOR** – No objection.
- **BPA** – No objection.
- **Nez Perce** – Impacts on juvenile lamprey passage should be part of the analysis. Cannot support continued TSW operation for the remainder of spill season based on current knowledge. Will make efforts to participate in FPOM discussion on July 14.

The COE will proceed tentatively on continuing the TSW operation pending the FPOM meeting outcome, Baus said. The current operation calls for continued use of the TSWs through the end of spill season. The COE will follow up with TMT via email on TSW operation before the next TMT meeting July 20.

### ***3. Upper Snake Flow Augmentation***

This water year the BOR expects to deliver the full 487 kaf of flow augmentation, John Roache, BOR, reported. The area above Milner is still on flood control operations. Flow augmentation will begin as soon as flood control ends. TMT will revisit flow augmentation at the next several meetings.

### ***4. Spill Priority List***

On June 29 the COE implemented a revision to the spill priority list with the intention of re-evaluating the operation after a period of 2-3 weeks. Since the June 29 revised spill priority list has been in affect the COE has received a recommendation from FPAC regarding the order of the next spill priority list once the 2-3 week revised operation is complete. FPAC's recommended spill priority is posted to today's agenda. Baus clarified should the Action Agencies implement FPAC's proposed order Chief Joseph would precede Grand Coulee consistent with previous spill priority lists.

Tony Norris, BPA, recalled the Action Agencies committed to revert to listing Chief Joseph above Grand Coulee in Level 2 once it is no longer needed for lack of market spill. This change may happen soon. First, BPA needs to evaluate what this weekend will look like in terms of demand and resulting TDG levels in the system.

Baus asked Tom Lorz, CRITFC/Umatilla, to clarify the intent of FPAC proposed spill priority list. Lorz said the goal is to implement the recommended

spill priority as quickly as possible, given there will be no performance testing at John Day and The Dalles this year. The goal of the proposed spill priority, with John Day and The Dalles in positions 2 and 3, is to put spill in areas where fish are moving progressively downstream. More spill at John Day would also help project staff deal with debris issues.

Cindy LeFleur, Washington, asked whether the Action Agency commitment to follow a spill priority with Chief Joseph at the top of Level 2 for the next 2-3 weeks is still in effect, regardless of changes in river conditions. Conditions have changed enough that we should be able to use the Level 2 spill priority. It's not just river conditions but lack of market that could persist, Norris replied. BPA will move Chief Joseph back down on the list as soon as market conditions allow.

Margaret Filardo, Fish Passage Center, asked whether this means the attached list will be implemented only when overgeneration ends and spill is no longer needed. The issue is the extent of overgeneration, Steve Barton, COE, replied. When the initial considerations behind the current spill order no longer apply, the Action Agencies will consider revising the spill priority list to include the order proposed by FPAC.

Lorz asked who has management responsibility for Wells forebay. Baus replied the COE operates Chief Joseph Dam to the state TDG waivers for 120% in the tailrace and 115% in the Wells forebay. Scott English, COE, said TDG levels in Wells forebay have been approaching 115%, while TDG levels have been dropping throughout the system, including the Columbia and Lower Snake. There is no voluntary spill at Chief Joseph because it is not a fish passage project; all spill at Chief Joseph Dam is involuntary.

Lorz, Kruger, and Russ Kiefer, Idaho, clarified that the Salmon Managers recommend using the attached list for Level 1 spill. This list would also be the Salmon Managers' recommendation for Level 2, but there was acknowledgement the Action Agencies might not be ready to make that switch until tomorrow or Monday. Kiefer recommended that the attached list be implemented for Level 1 spill now, and the Action Agencies notify TMT when they switch the Level 2 spill priority.

The COE will coordinate internally and consider adopting the recommendation for Level 1 spill priorities, Baus replied. TMT will be apprised via email and will revisit this issue at its next meeting July 20.

## **5. Dworshak Operations**

Steve Hall, COE Walla Walla, gave TMT an update on Dworshak operations. Yesterday 24-hour average discharges were 10.9 kcfs; today discharges are 13 kcfs and pushing the gas cap. Yesterday at 2 pm the reservoir touched full at 1,600 feet and is now drafting down. The current forebay elevation

is 1,599 feet. For the remainder of spill season, the operational goal will be to spill as close to the gas cap as possible without violating state water quality standards. This is the case with the current releases of 13 kcfs.

Temperature modeling shows a slow rise in temperatures at Lower Granite through July 17, the span of the model run. The highest temperature predicted for that period is 62 degrees F, well below the 68-degree criterion. This means no temperature operation is needed. The operation will therefore be driven by flow augmentation, not temperature control.

Dave Statler, Nez Perce Tribe, asked why it would not be prudent to pass inflows. The BiOp requires the reservoir elevation to be 1,520 feet by end September, and 1,535 feet by end August, Hall replied. The release of the 200 kaf SRBA water is targeted to be released in September. The COE predicts that Dworshak discharges need to be 13.5-14 kcfs in order for the reservoir to reach the August 31 elevation target. The COE is open to shaping that water volume and invited the Salmon Managers to present an SOR.

Hall reported that the cover on Dworshak unit 3 has a leak, which is not problematic now but could get worse during the summer. Kruger asked whether the COE is prepared to replace that unit because this problem has occurred before. A permanent repair would require the unit to be unstacked, a costly process with broad impacts, Hall replied. Therefore, the COE is not planning to repair unit 3 unless it fails. The COE will keep TMT posted on this.

## **6. Lower Granite MOP Operations**

The COE has implemented SOR 2011-01, presented this spring by tow boaters requesting MOP+2 for safe navigation conditions at Lower Granite, Baus said. Hall gave TMT an update on the status of channel surveys associated with this SOR. There are two mechanisms in place to assess the extent of shoaling at the confluence. Annual COE surveys are scheduled for August, the preferred method. The COE is also pursuing having ERDC researchers do sediment sampling. A survey boat is already on site, but the major drawback to this method is the data requires sophisticated processing, which takes a couple days to a week from the time samples are taken. This raises concerns about whether the data could be processed quickly enough to meet navigation safety needs.

Flows at Lower Granite are in the 100 kcfs range now and dropping, but still too high for surveying. The COE will report back to TMT when their survey crews can begin. Planned surveys include all pools on the Snake River, beginning at the headwaters and moving downstream. Data from this method can be processed more quickly than sediment sampling. Statler asked when information from the ERDC sediment sampling would be available. The plan is to begin work when pools return to normal low flows, probably not before August.

Rick Kruger, Oregon, asked for close coordination with TMT on this issue because it's time-sensitive. The COE will work closely with TMT on any future decisions regarding Lower Granite MOP operations. This item will be on next week's TMT agenda.

### **7. Libby Operations**

In response to SOR 2011-FWS-1, the COE initiated the sturgeon operation on June 2, Baus reported. By July 11, the full 1.2 MAF associated with the operation had passed the project. Sturgeon releases were 15 kcfs, and the project has since ramped down to 13 kcfs, Joel Fenolio, COE Seattle, reported. Flows will probably ramp down again to 11 kcfs tonight for the next 4-5 days until summer flat flows. The goal of Libby operations is to balance refill with reaching the BiOp target elevation of 2,449 feet by the end of September.

In response to an informal request from Idaho to reshape flows for habitat construction, the COE is planning to ramp down to 9 kcfs in August, then 6 kcfs, the bull trout minimum, in September. TMT will revisit this issue at its next meeting July 20.

### **8. Next Meeting**

The agenda for the next meeting on July 20 will include updates for all of the items on today's agenda.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Tom Lorz	CRITFC/Umatilla
Rick Kruger	Oregon
Doug Baus	COE
Bruce McKay	consultant
Laura Hamilton	COE
Russ George	WMC
Bill Hevlin	NOAA
David Wills	USFWS
Russ Kiefer	Idaho
John Roache	BOR
Richelle Beck	DRA
Scott English	COE
Tony Norris	BPA
John Heitstuman	COE
Steve Barton	COE
Joel Fenolio	COE
Steve Hall	COE
Shane Scott	PPC
Cindy LeFleur	Washington
Rob Allerman	Deutsch Bank

Billy Barquin  
Kim Johnson  
Margaret Filardo  
Dave Statler  
John Westman

Salish/Kootenai  
COE  
FPC  
Nez Perce  
ERDC