

COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

August 24, 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.

TMT members in attendance: Doug Baus, **COE**; Ron Boyce, **Oregon**; Russ Kiefer, **Idaho**; Jim Litchfield, **Montana**; Charles Morrill, **Washington**; Tony Norris, **BPA**; Paul Wagner, **NOAA**.

Libby Operations:

A special conference call was held to clarify and discuss Libby operations for the remainder of August. Doug Baus, COE, reminded the group that a plan for Libby operations was developed at the 8/3 TMT meeting at which SOR 2011-4 from the Kootenai Tribe was presented, requesting that the project be operated in August to allow for specified flows in September and October that would accommodate habitat work on the Kootenai River. TMT at that time agreed to a plan for operating Libby that the COE had developed based on current inflow projections. On August 17, the COE again outlined its plan for Libby operations for the remainder of August, and following that meeting, TMT members asked for further clarification on the operation. Today, the COE shared two slides depicting the operation as was described on 8/17 (Slide 1) and a current proposed operation based on TMT feedback the COE had received following the 8/17 meeting (Slide 2). Both operations would have the project reach elevation 2449' end of August; both operations would have the project ramping down to 6 kcfs in early September; a slightly different ramp down schedule between the two operations would result in an end of August elevation difference of about .7'.

Joel Fenolio, Seattle District COE, said the current proposed operation depicted in Slide 2 would allow the COE to meet its commitment stated on 8/3 to maintain a 14 kcfs day average flow (14 kcfs day average flow would be based on LIB discharges between the dates of 8/15 – 8/31) through the end of August, as well as commitments to reach elevation 2449' end of August and set the project up to meet the specifications requested in SOR 2011-4. Joel Fenolio also stated that the actual shape of the ramp down was not finalized but that the final schedule would have Libby Dam releases averaging 14 kcfs between 8/15 – 8/31. Tony Norris, BPA, added that depending on future inflows, Libby may end up below or above elevation 2449' at the end of September.

Planned Operation Moving Forward:

TMT discussed the COE's plan and had no objections to the planned operation moving forward:

Maintain 14.6 kcfs flows until the project reaches elevation 2449', LIB discharges between 8/15 and 8/31 will have a day average of 14 kcfs; then ramp the project

down in September to 6 kcfs. Specific shaping of the ramp down will be gradual and intended to support the fish while maintaining day average 14 kcfs flows.

Procedurally, TMT members agreed that for the future, planned operations need to be clearly articulated at the meetings and in the summary notes (including operation objectives, specifics and any caveats). Modifications to the operation should be communicated with TMT and given an opportunity for further discussion.

Finally, it was clarified again that, given changing forecasts, Libby might end up above or below 2449' by the end of September. No objections were raised.

Columbia River Regional Forum
TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM OFFICIAL MINUTES

August 24, 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 Washington, NOAA, BPA, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, the COE and others attended. This summary is an official record of the proceedings, not a verbatim transcript.

2. Libby Dam Operations

The reason for today's call was to clarify the COE's intended operation of Libby Dam in light of recent changes to the hydrograph, as well as confusion that arose between the operation as discussed at TMT on August 17 vs. the operation TMT members thought they had agreed to on August 3. The COE's intent with the proposed operation on August 3 was to maintain flat flows in September and October to accommodate habitat restoration work as requested by the Kootenai Tribe in SOR 2011-04, while drafting to 2,449 feet by August 31 instead of September 30. TMT members expressed willingness to accept an elevation above 2,449 feet at end September if inflows increased, in order to accommodate the habitat restoration work.

Paul Wagner, NOAA, recalled that part of the August 3 discussion included moving the draft target date from end September to end August, which TMT members accepted when polled. Wagner and Tony Norris, BPA, agreed that TMT members acknowledged a rainflow event or high streamflows could cause the end of September elevation to exceed 2,449 feet.

In response to concerns that NOAA and Idaho raised after the August 17 TMT meeting, the COE presented an operation today that attempts to reconcile the initial intent to draft the reservoir to 2,449 feet elevation by end August with expectations that daily flows out of Libby would be at least 14 kcfs from August 15-31.

Joel Fenolio, COE Seattle, reported that forecasts were higher than actual inflows for August. Kristian Mickelson, COE Seattle, reported that the unit outage on August 15 allowed for releases of 14.6 kcfs, more water than the conservative estimate of 14 kcfs. The COE has been holding Libby releases at 14.6 kcfs since August 15. The reservoir will probably hit 2,449 feet Friday August 26, and releases have been higher than planned, so the COE's intent was to begin a gradual ramp down, Fenolio explained. Current reservoir elevation is 2,449.6 feet. Dan Feil, COE, noted that the reservoir is expected to be at or under the BiOp target of 2,449 feet by end August and probably all through September.

Fenolio said the official meeting notes and facilitators' summary from August 3 did not completely and accurately capture all aspects of that discussion. He presented two scenarios for Libby July to September operations, linked to today's agenda.

Scenario 1 depicts the operation the COE presented to TMT on August 17 with an updated STP forecast. This graph represents the COE's interpretation of what TMT had agreed to on August 3, with outflows ramping down from 14.6 kcfs to 12 kcfs and finally 9 kcfs at the end of August after 2,449 feet is attained. This operation would have put Libby elevation at 2,448.5 feet on August 31 and 2,448.1 feet on September 30, Fenolio said.

Scenario 2, created in response to the concerns Idaho and NOAA raised, shows the COE's intention to release daily average outflows of 14 kcfs for August 15-31. It fulfills a primary purpose of today's meeting: to clarify the COE's plan for Libby going forward. Current flows of 14.6 kcfs will continue until elevation 2,449 feet is attained on approximately August 26-27, then flows will ramp down accordingly to 12 kcfs from approximately August 28-31. Flat flows of 6 kcfs for the habitat restoration work will begin on September 4.

The main goal of this operation is to hold 14 kcfs daily average outflows at Libby from August 15-31, to satisfy TMT expectations. Fenolio emphasized that 14 kcfs is a daily average flow for August 15-31, not a daily flow, and the shape might change. Some days flows could dip below 14 kcfs. The COE will shape flows to be as fish-friendly as possible. Fenolio said that Libby could end up in a situation like last year, with a rainstorm at the end of September and a September 30 elevation that exceeds the BiOp draft target because inflows are being limited to 6 kcfs in accordance with SOR 2011-04.

The COE's intention is to operate according to the second scenario, which meets what has been interpreted from the August 3 notes. This scenario puts the Libby end of August elevation at 2,447.8 feet based on current STP inflow projections.

Jim Litchfield, Montana, asked how much additional water will be drafted by beginning the rampdown on August 26, as shown in scenario 2. About 0.9 feet more than the current proposed operation shown in scenario 1, Mickelson replied. Russ Kiefer, Idaho, said he raised the issue because his understanding on August 3 was that the COE would use its best professional judgment regarding the 2,449 foot elevation target while releasing at least 14 kcfs. Tony Norris, BPA, noted that it's impossible to specify both volume and elevation targets. There was general agreement that intentions on both sides of an operational dispute need to be clearly and accurately articulated in the meeting and in the notes.

An official polling was not conducted but several Salmon Managers stated their views of the Libby operation shown in scenario 2:

- **Idaho** – The biological impact of the discrepancy would probably have been minimal, but what the COE presented to TMT on August 17 differed from the operation TMT agreed to on August 3. That said, Idaho supports the COE’s intended operation moving forward.
- **NOAA** – Agrees with Idaho there was a discrepancy in how intended operations were documented in the August 3 meeting notes and facilitator’s summary and what TMT members thought the operation would be. Requested today’s meeting for the sake of clarity moving forward.
- **Montana** – The discrepancy between scenarios 1 and 2 is insignificant. As long as the COE has released the flow volume TMT agreed to, it should be okay to ramp down. A more gradual rampdown is better for the river. Overall, this has been a great year for flows, so discrepancies of less than a foot in water volume should be acceptable. Agrees with Idaho that there was a misunderstanding.
- **Oregon** – Needs to consult internally before stating a position on this, will provide the COE with any comments by COB August 25.

The COE will implement the operation shown in scenario 2, maintaining a daily average of 14 kcfs releases from Libby from August 15-31 and attaining elevation 2,449 feet by end August, with a fish-friendly rampdown to flows of 6 kcfs in September and 4 kcfs in October to accommodate the Kootenai habitat restoration.

3. Next TMT Meeting

TMT will meet in a week via conference call on August 31.

Name	Affiliation
Charles Morrill	Washington
Paul Wagner	NOAA
Tony Norris	BPA
Russ Kiefer	Idaho
Jim Litchfield	Montana
Ron Boyce	Oregon
Doug Baus	COE
Lisa Wright	COE
Bill Proctor	COE
Joel Fenolio	COE
Greg Hoffman	COE

Karl Kanbergs	COE
Russ George	WMC
Barry Espenson	CBB
Richelle Beck	Grant PUD
Kristian Mickelson	COE
Dan Feil	COE
XX	Thompson Reuters