

COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM
September 14, 2011
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.

Meeting Minutes

With no comments on the 8/17, 8/24 or 8/31 Official Meeting Minutes and Facilitator's Notes, the notes were considered final.

SOR 2011-C8 Treaty Fishery

Tom Lorz, CRITFC/Umatilla, reported on the latest request for treaty fishing, from 9/12-9/16. He said harvest levels had been set and had not yet been reached, thus the request for an additional week of operations to support the fishery. With no further questions or discussion from TMT, the COE's Doug Baus said the COE was implementing the request.

Dworshak Operations

A Dworshak operations update was provided by Walla Walla District COE's Steve Hall. The project reached elevation 1541.4' on 8/31 and was currently operating to release 200 kaf per the Nez Perce agreement. The project continued to discharge full powerhouse plus 2.5 kcfs through 9/3 and reached elevation 1535' on 9/4 and ramped down to full powerhouse, ramped down to 8.2 kcfs on 9/9, down to 5.9 kcfs on 9/13, down to 4.8 kcfs on 9/15 and down to 2.4 kcfs on 9/17. The project will hold here until it intersects with elevation 1520' (expected to be reached on 9/19), at which time it will ramp down to minimums/1.5 kcfs.

Russ Kiefer, Idaho, noted that he intended to check in on how the kokanee fishery went this year given the high flows. Paul Wagner, NOAA, asked about the discharge temperatures at Dworshak which had reached 50 degrees. Steve Hall responded that there is some flexibility around temperature releases given there has not been and will not be any negative impacts downstream at Lower Granite. That said, the COE is targeting 48 degrees. Tony Norris, BPA, asked if there had been any temperature impacts at Lower Granite from the increase in Brownlee discharges, to which Steve replied there had not been significant impacts. Finally, he noted that the leak reported on at previous TMT meetings was scheduled to be fixed in late September after the Nez Perce agreement water release has been completed, and the unit would be back on around mid-October.

Operations Review

Reservoirs: John Roache, Reclamation, reported on projects. Hungry Horse was at elevation 3553.02' and targeting 3550' end of September. Current outflows were 3.0 kcfs and will reduce to meet Columbia Falls minimums at the end of September. The Grand

Coulee midnight elevation was 1282'. After meeting the target 1280' on 8/31 the project will be operated to meet a 1283' minimum elevation at the end of September. Doug Baus, COE, reported on projects. Libby was at elevation 2447.48'; Albeni Falls was at elevation 2062.19'; and Dworshak was at elevation 1523.15' with 6.7 kcfs outflows. Lower Granite inflows were 39.9 kcfs; Priest Rapids inflows were 65.8 kcfs; McNary inflows were 116.3 kcfs; and Bonneville inflows were 117.4 kcfs.

Fish: Paul Wagner, NOAA, provided a fish update. Fall Chinook adults were passing Bonneville dam at a rate of 15,000/day (250,000 total) and counts were close to the 10-year average. The season forecast is approximately 400,000. Chinook jacks were well above the 10-year average, around 2,000/day. Coho jacks also were above the 10-year average, around 5,000/day. Steelhead counts were 2,000/day. Sockeye counts at Lower Granite were well above the 10 year average. Russ Kiefer, Idaho, noted that a single sockeye was found at Hells Canyon Dam and returned to its home. Genetic sampling helped the biologists know the fish's origin. He also shared that they are seeing good returns in lakes where adult sockeye had been released for natural reproduction. . Discontinuing juvenile transportation at McNary resulting from debris problems was coordinated with the region during September 8 FPOM meeting

With respect to juveniles, Paul reported that subyearling Chinook counts at Lower Granite were 200/day – an increase also seen at Little Goose and Lower Monumental that was comprised mostly of Clearwater surrogates. McNary was in bypass mode due to debris issues so no counts were done there. The COE is working to remove the debris, and Ann Setter, COE, reported that they needed to use a gradual approach to remedy the situation so resolution would likely take several days.

Water quality: Nothing to report.

Power system: Nothing to report.

Other:

- Dave Wills, USFWS, said that to prepare for the removal of Condit Dam scheduled on 10/26, a crew was working to move spawning fish to above the dam. Peak returns were hitting and crews notified USFWS that Bonneville pool had dropped two feet below the level needed for crews to continue their efforts. Dave requested the Bonneville pool be elevated by 2 feet while the crews are out there (Monday, Wednesday and Friday of this week and next week) so they can complete their work.
 - Action: The COE, USFWS and BPA will discuss this issue off line and come up with a plan to address needs of the adult collection, debris clean up and treaty fishing at Bonneville. A follow up email will be sent to TMT with the planned operation. This decision will also be posted to the TMT web page, linked to today's agenda under "Other" as a means for the broader public to stay apprised before the next TMT meeting.
 - Tony Norris, BPA, shared that there is a link on the Pacific Corps website that shares information about the dam removal, including photos of the

area pre-dam. The dam removal is set to take place on October 26th and the website will be posting time-lapse photography of the dam breach:
<http://whitesalmontimelapse.wordpress.com/category/dam-removal-updates/>.

- Lower Granite survey data: Steve Hall, Walla Walla District COE, reported that surveys at Lower Granite were still in post-processing and would likely be available to TMT as soon as the information is reviewed internally and this could be some time in October. An additional survey by ERDC (the COE's research arm) was being conducted this and next week, and those results will also be shared with TMT as soon as possible. Tom Lorz, CRITFC/Umatilla, raised a concern that the delay in sharing results has implications for the region's ability to coordinate a response. Steve acknowledged this frustration and said there are strict contractor rules the federal government has to abide by. He will continue to update TMT on progress of the surveys and availability of the data. The differences between the two surveys were in purpose of the studies and resolution of the data.

Next Meeting, 9/28 CONFERENCE CALL

Agenda items include:

- Operations Review
- (tentative) Lake Pend Oreille SOR

Columbia River Regional Forum
TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM OFFICIAL MINUTES

September 14, 2011

Notes: Pat Vivian

1. Introduction

Today's TMT meeting was chaired by Doug Baus, COE, and facilitated by Robin Gumpert, DS Consulting. Representatives of BOR, Idaho, the COE, NOAA, USFWS, BPA, CRITFC and others attended. This summary is an official record of the proceedings, not a verbatim transcript.

Gumpert announced a new resource for members of the public who want to follow TMT's activities closely. Beginning as soon as possible, information on operational coordination that occurs between TMT meetings will be linked to the "Other" item at the end of the TMT agenda for the meeting at which the topic first came up for discussion.

These links, along with attendance at TMT meetings and reading the official minutes and notes, are intended to help the public stay informed of TMT activities. Richelle Beck, Grant PUD, asked whether the public will be notified when new information is posted. Gumpert said the most efficient way of tracking new information will be to check the TMT agendas.

2. Review Meeting Minutes for August 17, 24 and 31

There were no changes today to the meeting minutes or facilitator's notes for these three conference calls, so all were deemed final.

3. Autumn Treaty Fishery – SOR 2011-C8

Tom Lorz, CRITFC, presented this SOR which was submitted to the COE last week. It requests the typical operation for tribal fisheries for another week of fishing beginning at 6 am, September 19, through 6 pm, September 23. The current harvest estimate is 504,000 fish at Bonneville. The COE has implemented this SOR as requested.

4. Dworshak Operations

The August 31 elevation of Dworshak reservoir was 1,541.4 feet, Steve Hall, COE, reported. Hall gave an update on the operation for disposition of the Nez Perce 200 kaf. The operation started out running full powerhouse plus 2.5 kcfs spill through September 3. On September 4, elevation 1,535 feet was attained and the project backed off to full powerhouse discharges. This continued through September 9, then the project backed off to 8.2 kcfs outflows using the big and small unit. This continued through the morning of September 13. The

next step down was to the big unit (5.9 kcfs), which the COE plans to hold through the end of today. Then the project will ramp down to two units for two days (4.8 kcfs), then back off to one small unit (2.4 kcfs) on September 19. Dworshak reservoir is expected to intersect 1,520 feet elevation on September 19, based on current inflow projections. When that occurs, the project will back off to minimum discharges of 1.5 kcfs through the turbines, and the fall maintenance period will begin.

Russ Kiefer, Idaho, said that sounds like a good plan. He will follow up with TMT on the latest information his agency can provide regarding kokanee entrainment during the high flows of this spring.

Paul Wagner, NOAA, asked whether the COE plan is to maintain the current Dworshak discharge temperature of approximately 50 degrees F, or whether there's flexibility on that. Hall said there is some flexibility although project staff have been struggling with temperature management as the project loses units and elevation. At this point, Dworshak outflow temperatures are not affecting temperatures at Lower Granite tailwater. Although Dworshak temperatures were around 50 degrees this weekend, the current temperature is around 48 degrees. Maintaining that temperature is the plan going forward. Temperatures crept up briefly to 50 degrees while the project was switching units from overshot to undershot mode for winter.

Tony Norris, BPA, asked whether increased temperatures in Brownlee Dam releases have affected Lower Granite temperatures. Not much, Hall replied; over the past few days, temperatures rose from around 64-65 degrees F to 66.5 degrees F. Brownlee increased its discharges on September 8. The impact of Brownlee releases has since leveled off, and Lower Granite temperatures are likely to remain in the current zone.

Richelle Beck, Grant PUD, asked about the status of repairs to unit 3. Repairing the leak will be a #1 priority at Dworshak once the Nez Perce releases are completed, Hall replied. Repairs will probably begin on September 19 when the Nez Perce operation is complete, and will take 2-3 weeks. Dworshak unit 3 should be back in service by mid October. TMT will revisit Dworshak operations at its next meeting September 28.

5. Operations Review

Reservoirs. Hungry Horse is at elevation 3,553.02, heading to 3,550 feet at the end of the month. Last night discharges decreased from 3.5 to 3 kcfs, as inflows are dropping off. After September 30, discharges to Columbia Falls will decrease to around 2 kcfs, depending on the weather this fall.

Grand Coulee is at elevation 1,282 feet after hitting 1,280 feet on August 31. The plan is to target 1,283 feet or higher by the end of the month.

Libby is at elevation 2,447.48 feet. Albeni Falls is at elevation 2,062.19 feet. Dworshak is at elevation 2,062.19 feet, with inflows of 0.8 kcfs and releases of 6.7 kcfs. A decimal point shift in the Dworshak inflow data posted online will be corrected.

Lower Granite inflows are 39.9 kcfs. Priest Rapids inflows are 68.5 kcfs. McNary inflows are 116.3 kcfs, and Bonneville inflows are 117.4 kcfs.

Fish. Adults: Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported. Adult migration is slowing but will continue for a few more weeks. Around 15,000-16,000 fall chinook adults per day have been passing Bonneville over the past week. Yesterday's count was 12,455, with a seasonal count of close to 250,000 fish. An earlier run forecast of 500,000 has been reduced to around 400,000 for this year. Fall chinook jacks are passing Bonneville at the rate of 2,800 per day; coho, 5,000 per day; and steelhead, 2,000 per day, with a seasonal count of 328,000. This year's fall chinook count at Bonneville Dam is well above the 10-year average at this point.

Russ Kiefer reported that a single sockeye from the Snake River took a wrong turn and ended up at Hells Canyon Dam. IDFG checks the genetics of any fish included in the sockeye program to make sure that it's a Snake River fish, not a returning kokanee. IDFG has also had success with releasing adults into natural lakes to increase returns from natural reproduction. One of IDFG's long-term goals is to establish a Snake River population based on natural reproduction, not just captive broodstock.

Juveniles: Their passage season is ending, with subyearling chinook as the species of the moment. Passage is around a few hundred per day at Lower Granite; the prior week was less than 100 fish passed. Yesterday the FPC used PIT detection data to try to figure out where these fish are from, Kiefer said. Wagner noted that passage numbers have picked up at all projects (Lower Granite, Little Goose, Lower Monumental).

As coordinated during the September 8 FPOM the COE is still attempting to resume normal juvenile collection operations at McNary Dam due to debris issue. Ann Setter, COE Walla Walla, reported on the debris removal efforts. Cycling the units followed by spill yesterday afternoon was unsuccessful. Most of the debris moved toward bay 14, but the dewatering channel became clogged. Orifice cycling got it functioning again. The path forward will be to spill through bay 20 at McNary until debris removal from the forebay is complete. This will probably take several more days, but the COE believes it will be an effective approach.

Water quality. There was nothing to report today.

Power. There was nothing to report today.

6. Other Issues

Condit Dam removal.

Dave Wills, USFWS, informed TMT the crews associated with the Condit Dam trap and haul effort were unable to collect fish today due to low levels in the Bonneville Pool. The COE and BPA indicated there were several concurrent operations occurring this week in the Bonneville Pool that had been previously been coordinated (treating fishing and the debris clean up operation) but they would work with USFWS after the TMT meeting to see what could be done to meet the need of the trap and haul operation associated with the Condit Dam Removal Project.

Using the new procedure to inform the public, the COE will link subsequent information on this issue to today's agenda item 6.

Lower Granite pool survey. Lorz asked about the status of this survey. The contractor is processing data from the full survey for presentation to the COE, Hall reported. The data are expected sometime next week, then the COE will review the report internally.

Wagner asked what the difference is between the two surveys of Lower Granite now under way. The ERDC study is part of a sediment management study that focuses on sediment transport, while the contractor's official survey is an annual survey of navigation conditions, Hall said. The COE has asked the contractor to work as quickly as possible, but the COE must still review the data before releasing it to outside entities.

The COE is planning to give TMT an expert presentation on this issue sometime this fall.

Water Management Plan. The new WMP will be posted to the TMT site by October 1.

7. Next Meeting

The next regular TMT meeting will be a conference call on September 28. Potential agenda items are Lake Pend Oreille operations, an autumn treaty fishing update, Banks Lake operations and the Water Management Plan.

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