

# COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

December 14, 2011 Meeting

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.*

## **Chum Update**

Paul Wagner, NOAA, shared that the live chum count as of 12/5 was 226 in the Ives area, with 24 'mass redds' observed. Spawning is now past its peak according to observations. This year, he said, good chum numbers and distribution were observed, and the salmon managers recommended continuing the current operation of maintaining a Bonneville tailwater elevation range of 11.7-12.5' during the day time. Paul also said that the operation had been going well in terms of minimizing day and night elevation fluctuations, as had been a goal of the salmon managers' recommendations this year. In response to a question about drafting Grand Coulee, BPA's Robyn McKay said they are trying to meet load during this cold spell.

**Operation Plan:** The operation for chum will continue at the current day time tailwater elevation range of 11.7-12.5 feet. TMT will have a check in call next week (12/21) to discuss this operation.

## **End of Kokanee Spawning**

Russ Kiefer, Idaho, reported on behalf of field staff that kokanee spawning was now past its peak and would likely be completed before the end of December. Russ said he recognized the importance of communicating that message in a timely manner, and said an email would come from IDFG's Andy Dux and include Doug Baus, TMT Chair, so the message could get to all TMT members quickly. When this occurs, a message will also be linked to today's agenda.

## **Zero Nighttime Generation on Lower Snake River Projects**

As follow up to the last TMT discussion, Scott Bettin, BPA, reported that the agency (and all of TMT) received an email last Friday (12/9) that the steelhead criteria had been met to release constraints, and BPA was now operating at zero nighttime generation on the Lower Snake projects.

## **Lower Granite MOP+ Operations**

Doug Baus, COE, reminded the region of past discussions around pending Lower Granite MOP+ operations to address navigation safety, noting that since the 10/26 TMT meeting at which LGR survey data was shared, the COE has been working internally to develop a plan for 2012. At this point, the COE planned to implement a 'variable MOP+2 operation' consistent with 2011 – to balance MOP needs identified in the FCRPS BiOp as well as safe navigation issues raised via an SOR from the Towboater's Association. No longer pursuing a MOP+3 scenario, the COE's plan is to follow the criteria used before:

- Inflow  $\geq$  120 kcfs, MOP (733-734 feet)
- Inflow  $\geq$  80 kcfs and  $<$  120 kcfs, MOP +1 (734-735 feet)
- Inflow  $\geq$  50 kcfs and  $<$  80 kcfs, MOP +1.5 (734.5-735.5 feet)
- Inflow  $<$  50 kcfs, MOP +2 (735-736 feet)

TMT member questions:

- Is the COE expecting another SOR from the navigation community? COE response: No. We are using currently available information to plan this operation.
- At a previous TMT meeting, the COE presented longer term options for addressing the sediment and navigation issue. How will those options come in to play? COE response: A draft EIS is expected to be published sometime around February/March 2012, followed by a public comment period and final EIS around September 2012. The COE will make its Record of Decision (ROD) around December 2012, which will set in motion any further actions. The schedule is tentative at this point.
- The BiOp addresses incremental steps to be taken to avoid jeopardy, particularly in the early Spring during the migration. Are you exploring operation alternatives or offsets given the shift away from MOP operations at Lower Granite? COE response: No. At this time, the COE intends to implement a variable MOP + 2 operation consistent with the 2011 operation that did not include operational alternatives or offsets. That said, we will continue to engage the region in discussions about how best to operate given this and all other needs of the system.
- The 2012 Dworshak forecast has not been posted. When will this be made available? COE (Walla Walla District) response: It is expected that the forecast will be published in January or February of 2012.

### **Operations Review**

Reservoirs – John Roache, Reclamation, reported on projects. Grand Coulee was at elevation 1279.8 feet; Hungry Horse was at elevation 3544.08 feet with 2.5 kcfs outflows to meet Columbia Falls minimums. With about 500 cfs inflows, the project was drafting slightly. Doug Baus, COE, reported on projects. Libby was at elevation 2424.01 feet; Albeni Falls was at elevation 2051.38 feet; and Dworshak was at elevation 1519.72 feet with 1.5 kcfs outflows. Lower Granite flows were 24.8 kcfs; Priest Rapids flows were 136.7 kcfs; McNary flows were 146.0 kcfs; and Bonneville flows were 147.5 kcfs.

Fish – Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported on adult steelhead counts at Bonneville and Lower Granite. Typical for this time of year, the counts were low.

Water quality – Laura Hamilton, COE, reported that the current spill priority list is set to end on 12/31 and asked for any recommended changes from TMT. The salmon managers will review and TMT will revisit this issue on 12/21.

Power system – Scott Bettin, BPA, reported that Libby had to ramp down using a different ramp rate to allow for work on a transmission line, related to an insulator.

**Next Meeting, Conference call 12/21**

Agenda items include:

- Chum operations update
- Spill priority list

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

**December 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 Oregon, NOAA, Washington, Idaho, USFWS, CRITFC, BOR, Idaho, BPA and others attended. This summary is an official record of the proceedings, not a verbatim transcript.

***2. Review Meeting Minutes for November 23 and 30, 2011***

There were no comments today, so both sets of meeting minutes and facilitator's notes were deemed final.

***3. Chum Operations Update***

Spawning has been going well in the channel and mainstem, Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported. The latest count on December 5 found 226 live and 24 dead fish in the Ives area, along with mass redds. This is more chum activity than Ives Island has seen in a long time. The redds are well distributed throughout the spawning habitat, with other sites such as Woods Landing and Multnomah Falls seeing consistently higher counts than in recent years. The peak count in the spawning channel was 500 fish, with the latest count around 100 fish.

The current operation of 11.7-12.5 feet in the Bonneville tailwater is serving the needs of chum, so no change is requested at this time. TMT will check in on the status of chum spawning at its next meeting December 21.

***4. End of Kokanee Spawning***

Russ Kiefer, Idaho, reported that peak kokanee spawning has passed. Idaho will likely declare spawning completed before the end of December, which will give the Action Agencies more operational flexibility. Also, spawning and egg take counts at the hatchery are at predictable levels, based on population surveys last fall.

***5. Lower Snake Zero Nighttime Generation***

On December 8, adult steelhead passage criteria were met and BPA began the zero nighttime generation operation at the four Lower Snake River projects on December 9, Scott Bettin, BPA, reported.

***6. Lower Granite MOP+ Operations Update***

On October 26, 2011, the COE showed TMT the latest survey information identifying additional encroachment in the Lower Granite navigation channel. Since then, the COE has coordinated internally on a tentative plan for 2012 to implement the same variable MOP+ operation (dependent on flows, a variable operation up to MOP+2) that was implemented in 2011. This operation appears to balance the needs of providing safe navigation conditions while maintaining MOP operations as identified in the BiOp as much as possible. Since the tentative 2012 variable MOP+ operation for Lower Granite does not envision going above MOP+2, Baus did not provide TMT any data on a MOP+3 operation as previously indicated. The following were the inflow dependent ranges for the variable MOP+2 operation in 2011:

Inflow >= 120 kcfs	733.0-734.0 feet (MOP)
Inflow >= 80 kcfs and < 120 kcfs	734.0-735.0 feet (MOP+1)
Inflow >= 50 kcfs and < 80 kcfs	734.5-735.5 feet (MOP+1.5)
Inflow < 50 kcfs	735.0-736.0 feet (MOP+2)

Lisa Wright pointed out that disposition of the 2011 SOR regarding MOP at Lower Granite, linked to the TMT webpage, lists the inflow levels and corresponding MOP operations in 2011. The information can be found in the “AA Decision” row at:

<http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/tmt/sor/2011/dispositions.html#01>

Russ Kiefer, Idaho, asked whether the COE expects to receive another SOR this year from the tow boaters. Baus said because the COE is aware of the current conditions in the Federal Navigation Channel the COE will not wait for a SOR to implement a variable MOP+2 operation in 2012. Kiefer asked about progress on the COE’s long-term plans to address sedimentation in the navigation channel. The Programmatic Sediment Management Plan (PSMP) draft EIS is scheduled for publication in February-March 2012, Baus said. The final EIS is scheduled for publication in September 2012, with tentative ROD completion in December 2012. These dates are contingent upon comments received on the draft EIS. Kiefer asked if the COE intends on making operational adjustments to offset a variable MOP + operation in 2012. Consistent with the 2011 operation Baus indicated the COE does not plan on making operational changes to offset a variable MOP+ operation in 2012.

## **7. Operations Review**

**Reservoirs.** Grand Coulee is at elevation 1279.8 feet, operating for chum. Hungry Horse is at elevation 3544.08 feet, with discharges of 2.5 kcfs to meet Columbia Falls minimums. Libby is at elevation 2424.01 feet. Albeni Falls is at elevation 2051.38 feet. Dworshak is at elevation 1519.72 feet, releasing 1.5 kcfs.

Lower Granite discharges are 24.8 kcfs. Priest Rapids discharges are 136.7 kcfs. McNary discharges are 146.0 kcfs. Bonneville discharges are 147.5 kcfs.

**Fish.** A few adult steelhead are passing Bonneville. An average of 25 steelhead per day are passing Lower Granite.

**Water quality.** There was nothing to report today.

**Power.** Scott Bettin reported that Libby had to ramp down outflows more rapidly than the daily ramp rate (5500 cfs instead of 5000 cfs) in order to lower flows enough to allow transmission line repair work.

## **7. Next Meeting**

The next TMT meeting will be a conference call on December 21 to check in on the chum operation and the 2012 spill priority list.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Doug Baus	COE
Rick Kruger	Oregon
Paul Wagner	NOAA
Lisa Wright	COE
Kim Johnson	COE
Laura Hamilton	COE
Dan Feil	COE

### *Phone:*

Charles Morrill	Washington
David Wills	USFWS
Tom Lorz	CRITFC
John Roache	BOR
Russ Kiefer	Idaho
Robyn McKay	BPA
Heather Dohan	Puget Sound Energy
Barry Espenson	CBB
Mike Shapley	Snohomish PUD
John Hart	EWEB
Margaret Filardo	FPC
Shane Scott	PPC
Russ George	WMC
Rob Allerman	Deutsche Bank
Ruth Burris	PGE
XXX	Puget Power
Richelle Beck	Grant PUD
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Steve Hall  
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Scott Bettin  
Alex Ybarra

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