

**COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM**  
**December 21, 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.*

**Chum Update**

Paul Wagner, NOAA, and Charles Morrill, Washington, relayed a field update that the spawning numbers are declining but still going at Ives and the lower sites will be checked by the field crew on Friday, 12/23. Some redds were observed exposed during low tide, which was expected. Given where the redds have been spawned, the field crew and salmon managers recommended holding the Bonneville tailwater elevation around 12 feet during this protection 'maintenance' period. If the creek level goes up, there may be an opportunity to lower this target, pending further site reports.

TMT members discussed this operation, and agreed that the commitments to protect the chum redds AND meet Grand Coulee April 10 refill targets would continue. This will require a weekly look at conditions and appropriate adaptive management. To date, this protection level has not jeopardized refill. So far, it appears that both goals can be met with the current operation of 11.7-12.5 foot range, with the additional guidance to target 12 feet this week.

**Operation Plan:** Given the discussion, recommendation and no objections, USACE planned to continue at the current day time tailwater elevation range of 11.7-12.5 feet with a specific target of 12 feet to provide adequate protection for the chum redds that have been observed to date. TMT will check in again next Wednesday (12/28) to discuss the latest field reports (crews are expected to be out on Friday 12/23 and Tuesday 12/27) on spawning activity and any resulting recommended changes to this operation.

**Spill Priority List**

Doug Baus, USACE, shared the proposed January-March 2012 spill priority list, with no changes to the current list that is in effect until the end of 2011. While FPAC did not have a discussion on this, Paul Wagner, NOAA; Dave Wills, USFWS; and Charles Morrill, Washington agreed with the list and proposed no changes at this time. They would like to revisit the list in late February prior to the arrival of kelts. This item will be added to a late February TMT agenda.

**Draft 2012 Water Management Plan**

Doug reminded everyone to send any remaining comments on the draft WMP to him by COB tomorrow, 12/22. The plan will be finalized by the end of the year and posted to the TMT web page (along with any comments received on the plan).

**Next Meeting, 12/28 Conference Call, 9:00 am:** Chum operations will be discussed.

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

**December 21, 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 Idaho, BPA, COE, BOR, NOAA, the Colville Tribe, USFWS and others attended. This summary is an official record of the proceedings, not a verbatim transcript.

***2. Chum Operations Update***

Charles Morrill, Washington, reported that field crews are recommending a minimum of 12 feet elevation in the Bonneville tailwater through the end of chum spawning. The increase from an 11.7 foot minimum is needed to protect established redds at Ives Island. Chum spawning is definitely on the wane, but during the heavy flows of November, redds were established at higher elevations than usual.

Tony Norris, BPA, asked whether an 11.8 foot minimum elevation could resume if creek inflows rise again. Morrill and Paul Wagner, NOAA, agreed that seems possible. Their current recommendation was to continue the current operating range of 11.7-12.5 feet elevation but adding a targeted operation of 12.0 feet beginning as soon as possible. The underlying goal is to wet the redds, which are established at elevations up to 12.5 feet, during a portion of every day.

Baus asked for clarification regarding what appeared to be a request to change the chum operation when spawning is almost done. The expectation was that protection flows would drop to half a foot below the highest elevation where redds are established, Wagner explained. Field observations indicate that targeting 12 feet elevation now will protect redds that were established between 12 and 12.5 feet. The height of spawning coincided with peak inflows and releases from Bonneville Dam. Chum were spawning when precipitation was high enough to prevent reverse load factoring during the day to keep spawning elevations below 12.5 feet. This is why the current minimum of 11.7 feet would put a number of the established redds in jeopardy.

Sheri Sears, **Colville Tribe**, said the chum operation cannot jeopardize the probability of Grand Coulee refill – this needs to be closely watched. There was agreement to monitor Grand Coulee refill on a weekly basis through the end of chum spawning. The chum SOR submitted in November established anything less than an 85% probability of Grand Coulee refill as the trigger for suspending chum protection flows, Gumpert recalled. The BiOp clearly identifies Grand Coulee refill as a higher priority than chum, Wagner noted. Refill probability is

being continuously monitored as part of the chum operation. Field crews will visit the Ives Island site on December 23 and 27 to verify the end of spawning, Morrill reported. When spawning ends, the operation will move to the incubation phase.

Tony Norris said **BPA** could reasonably implement a range of 11.7-12.5 feet with 12 feet as a target until the end of chum spawning. John Roache said the proposal is also acceptable to the **BOR**, which is monitoring Grand Coulee refill closely, as always.

Based on today's discussion the AA's will continue implementing the same range of 11.7 – 12.5 feet but will target 12.0 ft Bonneville tailwater elevation.

TMT will revisit the chum operation on December 28 to determine whether spawning has ended and the incubation phase can begin.

### ***3. Spill Priority List***

Baus asked TMT whether any changes are needed to the spill priority list currently in place. The spill priority list posted to today's agenda is the same as the previous wintertime spill priority list coordinated at TMT.

**NOAA** recommended keeping the current list in effect until kelts arrive in March, and **USFWS** concurred with this recommendation. There was agreement to continue implementing the current spill priority list through March 31, 2012, unless the need arises for TMT to coordinate a change. TMT will revisit the spill priority list in late February.

### ***4. Water Management Plan***

Baus reminded everyone that comments on the 2012 WMP are due by the close of business on December 22. USFWS recently submitted comments. All comments will be posted to the TMT website.

### ***5. Next TMT Meeting***

TMT will meet via conference call on December 28 to check in on the chum operation.

<b><i>Name</i></b>	<b><i>Affiliation</i></b>
Russ Kiefer	Idaho
Robyn McKay	BPA
Donald Tinker	SCL
Alex Cibarra	Grant PUD
Tony Norris	BPA
Doug Baus	COE
Lisa Wright	COE

Laura Hamilton	COE
Steve Hall	COE Walla Walla
Russ George	WMC
John Roache	BOR
Rob Allerman	Deutsch Bank
Dave Benner	FPC
Richelle Beck	Grant PUD
John Hart	EWEB
Paul Wagner	NOAA
Charles Morrill	Washington
XX	Puget Power
Sheri Sears	Colville
Mike Shafley	Snohomish PUD
Harvey Hall	EWEB
Ruth Burris	PGE
David Wills	USFWS