

COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

March 29, 2012

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.

Spill Priority List

Doug Baus, COE, clarified from yesterday's discussion that the COE will be able to implement the salmon managers' requested list on 4/1 due to TDG waivers that are not in effect until that date. The wintertime spill priority list that is currently in place through March 31 has a Level 1 of up to 110% TDG and a Level 2 of up to 115% TDG to manage within state standards prior to the waiver period.

MOP Operations

Following up from yesterday's meeting, TMT revisited a proposal from BPA to shift MOP operations. The proposal would take a staggered, one project per day approach. Tony Norris, BPA, said Lower Granite will be at MOP for flood control (not later than 0001 hours on 4/3), and the rest of the projects would be drafted to MOP elevations as follows:

Little Goose to MOP no later than 2400 hours on 4/3; Lower Monumental to MOP no later than 2400 hours on 4/4; and Ice Harbor to MOP no later than 2400 hours on 4/5.

Paul Wagner, on behalf of the salmon managers, said they discussed in caucus following yesterday's TMT meeting the concerns and potential benefits/detriments to this operation from a biological perspective. He added that juvenile passage at Lower Granite was about 6,500 as of today, indicating the migration might be a little earlier. That said, the fish will likely respond to changes in turbidity (from flow increases) so he also would expect another change in movement when the MOP operation occurs.

Rick Kruger, Oregon, asked about flow expectations for the projects between now and 4/3. Tony Norris responded that flood control requirements at Brownlee and Dworshak will keep flows on the increase. That said, implementing this proposed operation would shift flows associated with the draft of the Lower Snake projects to their MOP range in to April. Until then, Tony suggested spill will likely occur at night and over the weekend. He also clarified the rationale to do the shift – to better manage for over-generation conditions by moving it from late March in to early April.

TMT members were polled on their support for BPA's proposed MOP operation:

- Idaho: We think there will be more migrating fish in early April, and that increases in flows at that time would be beneficial to more fish. We support this operation.

- Washington – We support this operation, given the specific hydrograph this year.
- Montana – We support this operation.
- Oregon – We are not as convinced there is a positive benefit, but given the increase in flows anticipated between now and 4/3, the benefit to going to MOP now is not as great as it would have been without the flows. We are pleased that the action agencies are willing to make this adaptive management change – we would like to see this adaptive management approach used in future situations during which there would be a significant benefit to fish. We do not object to this operation for this year only.
- USFWS – No objection to the operation.
- NOAA – We see a small benefit to this operation and like the staggered approach to reaching MOP – and see potential benefit to more fish in early April. We support the operation.
- Nez Perce Tribe – As a biologically neutral operation given this year’s water and fish conditions, we do not object to this operation, for this year only.
- Colville Tribes – We support this operation and think it will provide a small biological benefit.
- Umatilla/CRITFC – No objection. (Not in attendance during the March 29 meeting but provided this response during the March 28 meeting.)
- Reclamation – We support this operation.
- COE – We hear consensus to move forward with the operation, and will use the recommendation to inform our legal and policy discussions. We will make a decision as soon as possible.

Action – The COE will follow up via email to TMT with a decision, and post that decision as a link to today’s agenda.

**NOTE:* The COE’s Doug Baus sent an email to TMT following the meeting indicating that “the Action Agencies (AAs) will implement the modified Minimum Operating Pool (MOP) operation proposed by BPA and discussed during today's TMT conference call.”

Next Meeting, 4/11: Face to Face, 9:00 am

Agenda items include:

- Updated Water Supply Forecasts
- Hanford Reach Update
- Spill Priority List Check In
- Chief Joseph Spill Test Report
- Operations Review
- Other?

Columbia River Regional Forum
TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM – OFFICIAL MINUTES

March 29, 2012
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 NOAA, the Colville Tribe, Oregon, Washington, Nez Perce Tribe, BPA, Montana, Idaho, BOR, the COE and others attended. This summary is an official record of the proceedings, not a verbatim transcript.

2. Spill Priority List Clarification

Baus made a clarification to yesterday's discussion regarding the implementation date of the draft spill priority list attached to yesterday's agenda as item 7b. The COE intends to implement the spill priority list agreed upon yesterday, with the recommended order of projects and excluding Chief Joseph until all mainstem projects have reached 120% TDG. However, the COE will not be able to implement the proposed list until the Oregon waiver goes into effect on April 1. Laura Hamilton, COE, explained that the COE is required to have a different "wintertime" spill priority list during non-fish passage season when the Oregon TDG waiver is not in effect (Sept 1 – March 31), which includes a 115% level in order minimize system-wide TDG outside the waiver period. Due to these waiver requirements, the spill priority list discussed at TMT during the March 28 meeting will be implemented April 1-23. From now through March 31, the wintertime spill priority list will reflect the salmon managers' requested order of Lower Snake and Lower Columbia projects, but will include Chief Joseph at the bottom of Levels 1 and 2 (110% and 115%, respectively).

3. 2012 MOP Operation

Tony Norris, BPA, gave a recap of the proposal he presented to TMT yesterday, which would help manage overgeneration conditions on the hydrosystem in March. Lower Granite can be expected to be within its MOP range no later than 0001 hours on April 3. If the BPA proposal is implemented, Little Goose would then be drafted to MOP no later than 2400 hours on April 3, then Lower Monumental to MOP by no later than 2400 hours on April 4, and then Ice Harbor to MOP by no later than 2400 hours on April 5. The purpose of the operation is to move generation out of March into April, when fish spill reduces generation.

In response to the proposal, the salmon managers caucused yesterday and COE and BOR representatives conferred within their agencies. The main

purpose of today's call was to poll TMT members and make a decision on this proposal soon enough to reap any benefits it could provide.

Speaking on behalf of FPAC, Paul Wagner said yesterday's caucus was a gathering of concerns and views that should be expressed individually. One factor to consider is that fish seem to be arriving earlier this year than usual, with 6500 fish passing Lower Granite both yesterday and today.

Rick Kruger, Oregon, asked how much overgeneration spill is expected between now and April 3. At night the likelihood of spill is extremely high, and the lower Snake projects will probably spill during most hours this coming weekend, Norris replied. This proposal would reduce the likelihood of spill at those projects in March and increase the likelihood of additional lack-of-load spill in April. The action agencies are better positioned manage overgeneration in April than in March.

TMT members stated their views:

- **Idaho** – Supports the proposal. A little more spill in early April is likely to benefit fish because there are more fish in the system in early April than in March.
- **Montana** – Supports the proposal.
- **Washington** – Agrees with Idaho's position.
- **USFWS** – No objection.
- **NOAA** – Supports the operation because a small bump in migration counts can be anticipated from the increased hydrograph.
- **Nez Perce** – Sees the operation as being neutral. No objection, with the caveat that this operation applies to this year only.
- **Colville Tribe** – Supports the operation and foresees a small benefit.
- **Oregon** – Because flows are expected to increase, the benefit from drafting to MOP as proposed won't be as significant as it might have been. However, the operation provides a pulse for fish later when there are more fish in the river, a potential benefit. It's good the action agencies are willing to manage operations adaptively. Oregon has no objections to this proposal – as long as the same willingness applies to operational changes that could provide significant benefits for fish. Agrees with Nez Perce's caveat that the modified MOP operation applies to this year only and does not set a precedent.

- **BOR** – Supports the proposal.
- **Umatilla/CRITFC** – No objection. Umatilla/CRITFC did not participate in the March 29 TMT meeting but provided this response to the proposed operation during the March 28 TMT meeting.

In response to this poll of TMT members, the COE will confer with its legal and policy advisers. TMT will be notified by email later today of the Action Agencies decision regarding this operation.

4. Next TMT Meeting

TMT will meet in person on April 11, with a conference call if needed on April 4.

Name	Affiliation
Paul Wagner	NOAA
Sheri Sears	Colville
Rick Kruger	Oregon
Charles Morrill	Washington
Dave Statler	Nez Perce
Tony Norris	BPA
Jim Litchfield	Montana
Russ Kiefer	Idaho
Rich Lanagan	Grant PUD
Scott English	COE
Karl Kanbergs	COE
Laura Hamilton	COE
Lisa Wright	COE
Margaret Filardo	FPC
Dave Benner	FPC
Brandon Chockley	FPC
Richelle Beck	Grant PUD
John Roache	BOR
Doug Baus	COE