

COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

August 22, 2012

DRAFT 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.

McNary Transportation Update

Doug Baus, Corps, updated TMT that collection of fish for truck transport at McNary began on 8/17 and trucking transportation began on 8/18. Due to a high abundance of fish, trucking has occurred daily and Doug said this would likely (but not for sure) continue until next week if current conditions persist. Doug reported that water temperatures over the last week have stayed below 70°, with temperatures at 68.9° on 8/21; and air temperatures in the area had tempered some from last week. Fish mortalities remained below 1%; 0.46% mortality was recorded on 8/21.

Doug reported that with regards to an email he sent on Friday 8/17 with the Corps' proposed alternative operation, the Corps decided not to implement the operation given there was no consensus from TMT and temperatures will likely continue to decrease based on historical data and current forecasts. As such and because the Corps had decided not to implement the salmon managers' SOR, the Corps will continue to implement the current operation of truck transport at the project which is consistent with previous years' operations as well as the operation identified in the 2012 FOP.

Longer term next steps include reviewing performance standard testing results from this year in light of the relocated outfall at McNary and other structural improvements that have been made to the downstream projects to enhance in-river survival. Temperature criteria questions that were raised at TMT (temperature threshold, sample location and sample times) will also be discussed at FPOM during Fish Passage Plan review. Any revisions made to the 2013 Fish Passage Plan will impact operations starting next year. Some TMT members expressed an interest to add McNary Transportation Operations and Performance Standard Testing Results to this year's Year End Review agenda.

TMT members reiterated that they felt the Corps was missing an opportunity this year by not implementing the SOR, a consensus recommendation that the salmon managers felt would be the most cost effective and biologically beneficial operation given all the structural improvements, high temperatures and high flows this year. The Corps said their rationale for not implementing the request was because: 1) while the Corps recognized current temperatures at McNary Dam, the Corps did not share the same level of concern as these temperatures were well below average conditions for this time of year; 2) current mortality rates have been and continue to be low, and do not prompt a change in operations; and 3) the Corps does not have adequate data from this year's performance standard testing of the new McNary bypass outfall that would be necessary to inform any change in transport operations, and the Corps is committed to coordinating with

the region as soon as these data are available to inform future operational changes at McNary Dam.

TMT will hear an update on McNary transportation operations at the 8/29 TMT meeting, which will be held at NOAA Fisheries.

Columbia River Regional Forum
TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM – OFFICIAL MINUTES

August 22, 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, Idaho, the Nez Perce and Colville tribes, BPA, USFWS, COE, BOR, Oregon, Washington and others attended. This summary is an official record of the proceedings, not a verbatim transcript.

2. McNary Transport

The purpose of today's call was for the COE to update TMT on truck transport at McNary following last week's discussion of SOR 2012-4 which gave a consensus recommendation by the Salmon Managers to temporarily suspend transport operations. Baus presented the latest temperature and survival data at McNary; reported on an alternative the COE had proposed via email on August 17 after not implementing the SOR; and laid out next steps for managing the McNary transport operation.

Collection of fish at McNary began August 17. On August 18 the first truck departed McNary and the plan was to conduct every-other-day truck transport. Due to the high abundance of fish collected and increasing water temperatures, the project initiated every-day trucking on August 19. Subsequently the project has been trucking every day since August 18. Based on current conditions it is likely the project will be trucking every day through August 29, but the project will revert back to every-other-day trucking should real time conditions (fish abundance and water temperature) change. Mortalities have been and continue to remain below 1% (August 21 mortality was 0.46%) since transport was initiated. The high temperatures from last weekend have passed and the August 21 water temperature reading was 68.9 degrees F at the lab at 0700 hours.. The weather has been cooling off, with the latest forecast showing temperatures in the 80s during the day and the 50s at night.

On August 17 the Corps sent out a proposed operation the Corps would like to have implemented regarding McNary transport and asked for comments from TMT. After reviewing TMT feedback there was no consensus on the proposed operation therefore the COE will continue to implement the current operation. As for long-term plans, the COE is committed to working with the region through FPOM to develop an appendix to the Fish Passage Plan that more clearly articulates the McNary transport operation, including temperature criteria (threshold, sample location and sample time) that will define conditions when transport operations are likely to be less beneficial than bypassing fish to

the river. The COE will analyze data from this year's performance standard testing to evaluate the new McNary bypass outfall survival data and will coordinate with the region when those data are available to inform future decisions regarding transport operations at McNary.

Charles Morrill, Washington, reported that temperatures in the McNary raceway exceeded 71.4 degrees F from 1500-2200 hours on August 19 and remained above 70 degrees until 2230 hours that evening. He emphasized that conditions for thermal stress are still present, and may have delayed adverse impacts (i.e., not observed at the project a mortality).

Sheri Sears, Colville Tribe, asked why the COE monitors temperatures with readings at 0700 hours in the morning, the coolest time of day, not in the afternoon when spikes can be prolonged and lethal. Sampling in the morning at McNary is consistent with the protocol followed for sampling at John Day and Bonneville, Baus replied. TMT members are invited to participate in the process this fall of identifying sampling protocols to be modified and revised in the FPP.

Some of the Salmon Managers (Washington, Oregon, the Colville and Nez Perce Tribes) objected to using a protocol to monitor temperatures at McNary based on protocols used in other locations. Morrill pointed out that state water quality standards limit water temperatures to 68 degrees in Oregon and 64 degrees in Washington, both of which have been exceeded in the McNary raceway.

Baus said the COE recognizes the regions concern associated with current temperatures at McNary Dam but wanted to reiterate that current daily water temperatures are well below average for this time of year. Between the years of 1995 and 2011 water temperatures on average would be warmer 75% of the time. The COE has not shared the same level of concern regarding water temperatures as some TMT members have expressed because water temperatures are well below average and mortality remains low.

Morrill said a key component in the Salmon Managers' transport recommendation is the new outfall location at McNary. One of the main concerns at McNary this year is the new outfall location, which has yet to be tested, Dan Feil, COE, replied. In the past, the McNary outfall was a primary reason to transport fish there. Criteria for transport operations when raceway temperatures exceed 70 degrees F should be established. Both of these issues need to be resolved before passage season next year.

While there was no official poll today, several of the Salmon Managers expressed strong views of the McNary transport operation for the record. **Washington** found it disappointing that transport isn't being adaptively managed to avoid imposing thermal stress on fish at McNary; **Oregon** also advocated adaptive management under these conditions. **Idaho** signed the SOR last week

because they believe public dollars the Action Agencies invested to improve migration conditions have been effective, and allowing fish to migrate in-river during above-average flow years would return more adults. Conditions this year are such that the Salmon Managers would prefer to implement the change now. The **Nez Perce** said an opportunity is being missed this year to protect fish from high temperatures when flows are available to provide better migration conditions, and requested that this topic be covered at the TMT year end review. **NOAA** sees transporting fish daily as a viable solution in the near term and approves of the COE's plan to address this issue long term via revisions to the FPP with supporting data. TMT will revisit the McNary transport operation next week.

3. Next TMT Meeting

The next TMT meeting will be held in person on August 29 at NOAA's Portland office.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Paul Wagner	NOAA
Russ Kiefer	Idaho
Dave Statler	Nez Perce
Scott Bettin	BPA
Sheri Sears	Colville
David Wills	USFWS
Doug Baus	COE
Barry Espenson	CBB
John Roache	BOR
Richelle Beck	Grant PUD
Rick Kruger	Oregon
Charles Morrell	Washington
Dan Feil	COE
Lisa Wright	COE