

COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

October 31, 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.

Notes Review

TMT reviewed the 10/3 and 10/17 Facilitator's Summaries and Official Meeting Minutes. With no edits, these were considered final.

2012 Juvenile Survival Estimates

Paul Wagner, NOAA, shared highlights from a NOAA Science Center memo on juvenile survival estimates for 2012. He said spring Chinook and steelhead ranked the second (59.6%) and third (59.8%) highest respectively for survival and that steelhead saw the highest error of 13.9%. This was due to the spring operation at Bonneville which saw fewer fish going through the corner collector so there was low detection. He added that transportation operations were very low this year due to a unique hydrograph that led to early migration of the fish. Russ Kiefer, Idaho, added that the take away was that there was not a lot of control this year, and that NOAA's research is showing that early migrating fish survive better in-river than transported. Overall, he suggested, TMT made good operations choices this year that best supported the fish. Charles Morrill, Washington, echoed this point and said Figure 6 in the memo reflects what was said. Paul said that research monitoring continues to improve our understanding of the effects of in-river and transported fish. Steve Smith, NMFS Science Center, will present this data in more detail at the TMT Year End Review on December 5.

Chum Update

Paul Wagner, NOAA, also reported that chum had been observed in the Grays River, captured in gill nets and also observed in the fish ladders at Bonneville, with a total of 11 passing Bonneville by last count. The salmon managers discussed and offered a consensus recommendation to initiate the operation described in the BiOp.

The action agencies responded that because of the amount of water in the system, the operation had begun. Bonneville is being operated to a daytime 11.3-11.7 foot tailwater range, targeting 11.5 feet. More water is being released at night as needed. As a contingency plan, BPA's Scott Bettin asked the salmon managers for their preferred operation if additional excess water needs to be released. Paul stated a preference to do as much at night, then expand the tailwater range up to 12 foot or a little higher, but use that expanded flexibility later in the day.

Next Steps: TMT will reserve 11/7 for a conference call to check in on chum operations. Paul Wagner will notify Doug by noon on Tuesday 11/6 if there is no expected change to operations, in which case Doug will send out a cancellation notice to TMT. This notice will also be posted to the TMT web page no later than 3:00 pm.

Other

- Comments on the 1st draft Water Management Plan are due to Doug no later than 11/15.
- The TMT water quality page has been reformatted using the Corps' new water quality data system. Laura Hamilton, Corps, pointed out some of these changes including the new system wide daily total spill table. TMT members commented that the changes were an improvement and thanked the Corps for their work on this. Laura welcomed more feedback as folks have a chance to explore the pages.

Columbia River Regional Forum
TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM – OFFICIAL MINUTES

October 31, 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, BPA, Idaho, CRITFC/Umatilla Tribe, COE, USFWS and others attended. This summary is an official record of the proceedings, not a verbatim transcript.

2. Review October 3 and October 17 Meeting Minutes

There were no comments on either the facilitator's notes or official minutes for either meeting.

3. 2012 Survival Estimates

Paul Wagner, NOAA, presented highlights of a NOAA memo on 2012 survival estimates for spring chinook and steelhead from the Lower Granite trap to Bonneville, which has been posted to the TMT site for the past few weeks. The estimate for yearling chinook is the second highest at 59.6% since 1999-2012. For steelhead, the survival estimate is 59.8%, the third highest and nearly identical to the 2011 estimate.

One noteworthy thing about this year's survival is that it has the highest error ratio of any of the recent estimates (the highest was in 2009). In 2009, the survival estimate was 67.8% and the error ratio was 0.06%. In 2012, it was 59.8%, with an error rate of 13.9%. Wagner pointed out that the estimate for steelhead this year is uncertain, based on return numbers from McNary to Bonneville. The reason for the high error rate is low detection rates at the Bonneville corner collector where most steelhead are recaptured.

Another highlight from the NOAA report is the percentage of fish transported, which in 2012 was the lowest seen – in the low range of 20% for spring and summer chinook and the high 20% for steelhead. The reason for that was the shape of the hydrograph. Flows in the Snake River came up high, and passed the projects prior to the initiation of the juvenile transportation operation.

Russ Kiefer said Idaho is concerned about low adult steelhead returns this year. Generally we see a positive transport benefit for steelhead, but the way the hydrograph came up last year will cause confusion in how the data are interpreted. Generally, early in the season fish do better in-river, while later stocks benefit more from transport. TMT's transport decision this year was a good choice, and we can expect good returns from it, Kiefer said. Nevertheless, two points need to be understood in light of the current low steelhead returns: (1) Most steelhead entered the river early this year, when

it's likely better for them to be left in-river and they are likely to do well; and (20 Most of the early migrants passed the project in uncontrolled spill; collection for transport was impossible this year. Charles Morrill, Washington, pointed out that Figure 6 in the NOAA memo highlights this point.

Wagner said Steve Smith, NOAA, will follow up on this memo with a more in-depth presentation on survival estimates at the TMT year end review.

4. Chum Update

Wagner reported that based on field observations thus far, FPAC's consensus yesterday was to initiate the chum operation, typically targeting a range of 11.3-11.7 feet below Bonneville. Tony Norris, BPA, said that would be fine and Scott Bettin, BPA, asked how excess flows should be released if necessary. The preferred operation would be higher flows at night, targeting elevation 11.5 feet below Bonneville during the daytime, Wagner replied. The elevation range could be increased potentially to 12 feet or slightly higher if necessary, shaped later in the day or toward late afternoon, with an emphasis on moving flows at night. Based on FPAC's discussion the Action Agencies will formally initiate the chum operation on November 1 at 6am.

Wagner suggested that TMT schedule a placeholder conference call next week in the event any changes need to be made to the chum operation. The call will be canceled by noon the day before if not needed.

5. Other

Baus asked TMT members to send him comments on the first draft of the Water Management Plan by November 15.

Laura Hamilton, COE, briefed TMT on recent changes made to the water quality section of the TMT website. There are new links under water quality data that provide easy access to total daily spill amounts throughout the hydrosystem. Data for the lower Columbia projects are not posted yet, and Hamilton will let TMT know when the database has been updated. She pointed out that what has been called "historical" TDG data reports is now called "detailed" data reports.

6. Next TMT Meeting

A tentative conference call was scheduled for November 7. The next regular TMT meeting will be on November 14.

Name	Affiliation
Paul Wagner	NOAA
Tony Norris	BPA
Russ Kiefer	Idaho
Tom Lorz	CRITFC/Umatilla

Doug Baus	COE
Laura Hamilton	COE
Karl Kanbergs	COE
David Wills	USFWS
Ruth Burris	PGE
Margaret Filardo	FPC
Dave Benner	FPC
Russ George	WMC
Greg Lawson	Thompson Reuters
Rob Allerman	Deutsch Bank
Richelle Beck	Grant PUD
Barry Espenson	CBB
Charles Morrill	Washington
Peter Richardson	XX
John Roache	BOR
Jim Litchfield	Montana
Don Tinker	SCL
Heather Dohan	Puget Sound Energy
Mike Shapley	Snohomish PUD
Rick Kruger	Oregon
Deb Maloney	PP&L
Scott Bettin	BPA