

COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

January 9, 2013

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.

Meeting Minutes

TMT needed more time to review the notes from the November and December 2012 conference calls and meetings, and committed to reviewing and sending comments in before the next TMT meeting so they can be finalized at that time.

Water Supply Forecasts

The action agencies reported on the current official water supply forecasts at a number of projects:

- The Dalles April-August: 92 MAF (105% of average)
- Lower Granite April-August: 22 MAF (105% of average)
- Dworshak April-July: 2,587 kaf (96% of average)
- Libby April-August: 6,898 kaf (118% of average)
 - Doug Baus, Corps, revisited inquiries from the last TMT meeting about the end of December elevation, and reported that it was 2409.67 feet, just shy of the targeted 2411' based on current forecasts and unit availability.
- Hungry Horse May-September: 1,968 kaf (116% of normal)
- Grand Coulee April-August: 58 MAF (103% of normal)

Doug Baus referred TMT to the two additional links to the TMT agenda, showing SNOTEL snow water equivalents and a map of actual SNOTEL site data – both indicating average to above average conditions across the basin.

With regards to Libby, there have been discrepancies between the RFC official and NWS forecasts. The Corps explained the difference is due to different methodologies being used – and both are indicating higher than average WSF at this point. Further, the Libby forecast is high in part due to the higher forecasts coming from areas north in to Canada.

The NWRFC hosts a monthly webinar conference call on water supply forecast and climate outlook; the next one is scheduled for tomorrow, 1/10. Call in information can be found on the NWRFC web site.

Chum Update

Paul Wagner, NOAA, shared that the last field report indicated zero chum spawning. The salmon managers were comfortable with the current operation maintaining a minimum tailwater elevation of 13.5 feet at Bonneville to protect incubating chum. The action

agencies indicated this operation would be maintained until further notice. TMT will revisit this operation in the spring as conditions change.

Operations Review

Reservoirs: John Roache, Reclamation, reported on projects. Hungry Horse is at elevation 3547.6 feet (high for this time of year), with 3 kcfs outflows. Grand Coulee was at elevation 1279.3 feet, operating to meet system requirements. At this point, he said there are no end of month elevation requirements. Lisa Wright, Corps, reported on projects. Libby was at elevation 2405.7 feet with 3.1 kcfs inflows and 11.7 kcfs outflows. Albeni Falls was at elevation 2055.6 feet, with 20 kcfs inflows and 15.9 kcfs outflows. Priest Rapids inflows were 144.6 kcfs. Dworshak elevation was 1543.9 feet with 2.7 kcfs inflows and 5.7 kcfs outflows. Lower Granite inflows were 29.2 kcfs; McNary inflows were 191.9 kcfs; and Bonneville inflows were 181.3 kcfs.

In response to a letter sent and follow on TMT inquiry, Steve Hall, Walla Walla District Corps, reported that an incident occurred on Monday when the Corps increased discharges using a more rapid than normal rate given a unit outage at the project. While the Corps stayed within its operating protocol, they did not send a public notice about it, and a letter was sent indicating that fishers on the river were impacted by the change and that safety was a concern. Steve acknowledged the impact and said the Corps would be responding directly to the letter. To address the concern, the Corps is taking steps to improve and update its notification process, including using local radio stations to get the word out that a change will be made, so that fishers and other recreationists are given advanced warning about the changes and can plan accordingly. They will also work to make discharge changes earlier to avoid the impact during day light hours, thereby minimizing the impact to people on the river.

Some of the salmon managers emphasized the importance of this issue and offered additional suggestions to the Corps for how to improve their operations and notification processes so this does not happen again. They also emphasized that several fly fishermen reported the same safety river conditions and associated safety concerns to the author of the letter sent to the Corps.

- **Action:** Steve Hall and Russ Kiefer, Idaho, will discuss resolution of this matter in more detail off line. TMT will be briefed at a future meeting on the actual steps taken to resolve the issue.

Fish: Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported that steelhead counts at Bonneville are in the 'teens'. Dave Statler, Nez Perce Tribe, added that downstream movement of juvenile lamprey typically occurs this time of year, with a spike coincident with the winter freshet conditions.

- **Action:** Charles Morrill will share the spring fish forecast at a February face to face meeting.

Water quality: Laura Hamilton, Corps, said the website will be updated with 2013 water quality data soon.

Power: Nothing to report at this time.

Next Meeting: (Tentative) January 23 conference call

Agenda items will be identified at a later date. The meeting will be canceled if no agenda items are identified.

Current TMT Schedule

- January 23 conf call as needed
- Feb 13 and 27 face to face
- March 13 and 27 face to face
- April 3 and 17 face to face; April 10 and 24 conference calls as needed

Columbia River Regional Forum
TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM – OFFICIAL MINUTES

January 9, 2013

Notes: Pat Vivian

1. Introduction

Today's TMT meeting was chaired by Doug Baus, COE, and facilitated by Robin Gumpert, DS Consulting. Representatives of the COE, NOAA, BPA, Montana, USFWS, Washington, BOR, Idaho, Colville Tribe, CRITFC/Umatilla Tribe, Salish-Kootenai Tribes and others attended. This summary is an official record of the proceedings, not a verbatim transcript.

2. Review of Meeting Minutes – November 28, 30, December 4, 12, 18

There were no comments on these notes today. The plan is for TMT members to review them in time for the next TMT meeting on January 23.

3. Update on Water Supply Forecast

Baus and John Roache, BOR, presented the official forecasts (BOR, NWRFC, and Corps) for January as well as NRCS SNOTEL snow water equivalent data shown in attachment 3a to today's agenda. Karl Kanbergs clarified that these are now based on 3-day forecasts:

- The Dalles (April-August) – 92 MAF, 105% of average
- Lower Granite (April-August) – 22 MAF, 105% of average
- Dworshak (April-July) – 2587 KAF, 96% of average (based on 1929-1999 data)
- Libby (April-August) – 6898 KAF, 118% of average (based on 1929-1999 data)
- Hungry Horse (May-September) – 1968 KAF, 116% of average (based on 1981-2010 data)
- Grand Coulee (April-August) –57 MAF, 100% of average

As predicted at the last TMT meeting, the Libby end of December elevation was 2409.67 feet as of midnight December 31, meaning that Libby came in slightly under the 2411-foot flood control target for December.

Baus informed TMT members that further information on specific dates of the NWRFC official water supply forecasts may be found in Table 3 of the Water Management Plan.

David Wills, USFWS, asked whether the NWRFC forecast for Libby is consistent with recent changes in RFC forecasting formulas. The COE forecast for Libby is 118% of average, while the RFC forecast is only 101% of average.

The two forecasts are based on completely different methodologies, which accounts for the disparity, Joel Fenolio, COE, replied. The NWRFC uses ESP traces, which vary based on inflow conditions, while the COE uses a multiple regression methodology.

Russ Kiefer, Idaho, asked where the precipitation and snowpack for Libby reservoir is originating. Mostly from the northern end of the basin and Canada, Fenolio replied. Most of the Canadian sites have snotel sites that are significantly above average. Almost all sites in the upper Columbia are 115-144% of average as of January 8, Charles Morrill, Washington, confirmed.

The NWRFC snow information presented in attachment 3b shows average to above average water supply conditions throughout the basin, Baus reported. Kanbergs noted that the NWRFC conducts a monthly webinar on forecasting, which can be accessed through their web page.

4. Chum Update

The latest survey information indicates that chum are incubating in a 14-foot area, with a plan of maintaining a minimum tailwater elevation of 13.5 feet, Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported. Yesterday's average tailwater elevation was 14-15 feet, Baus reported. BPA studies indicate there should be no problem maintaining an elevation of 13.5 feet below Bonneville, Tony Norris reported.

In light of this information, TMT members decided to take this item off the agenda until late March when chum emergence begins.

5. Operations Review

a. Reservoirs. Hungry Horse is at elevation 3547.6 feet, which is high for this time of year. Current discharges are 3 kcfs, with an increase to 5-6 kcfs expected later this week. Grand Coulee is at elevation 1279.3 feet, operating to meet requirements including maintaining a Bonneville tailwater elevation of 13.5 feet for chum.

Libby is at elevation 2405.7 feet, drafting 11.7 kcfs with inflows of 3.1 kcfs. Albeni Falls is at elevation 2055.6 feet, with inflows of 20 kcfs and releases of 15.9 kcfs. Priest Rapids inflows are 144.6 kcfs. Lower Granite inflows are 29.2 kcfs. McNary inflows are 191.9 kcfs. Bonneville inflows are 181.3 kcfs.

Dworshak is at elevation 1543.9 feet, with inflows of 2.7 kcfs and outflows of 5.7 kcfs. There was discussion of an incident the morning of Monday, January 7, when Dworshak discharges were increased more rapidly than normal due to a unit 2 outage. At 5 am, the Clearwater River elevation increased 0.5 feet, with another 0.9 foot increase at 6 am, followed by another 0.5 feet increase at 7 am, Steve Hall, COE, reported.

The resulting 1.5 foot elevation increase in the Clearwater River over a 3-hour period surprised steelhead fly fishermen 20 miles downstream of Libby on the Clearwater, one of whom emailed the COE to complain. In response to this public safety incident, the COE is taking two steps to prevent further problems:

1. Automate the process for public notification of river elevation changes. This will include public outreach efforts via local radio stations, especially if the change is to occur on a Monday morning.
2. Attempt to make any changes in outflows well before normal daylight hours in order to avoid impacting fishermen.

Charles Morrill, Washington, suggested the COE also install an alarm at the site downstream of Libby where fishermen have the best river access. Russ Kiefer also said he has ideas which he will present to the COE. Further discussion of this issue will continue outside of TMT.

b. Fish. Steelhead passage at Bonneville is the only fish activity at present, Wagner reported. Morrill will give an update on 2013 spring run forecasts at the next TMT meeting January 23. Dave Statler, Nez Perce Tribe, noted that movement of Pacific lamprey downstream typically peaks at this time of year.

c. Water Quality. A link for the 2013 water quality reports is not yet available on the TMT website, Laura Hamilton, COE, reported. The COE will inform TMT when this is available.

Statler asked how the Snake River programmatic sediment management plan (PSMP) will relate to pool level operations this year in the lower Snake River, particularly at Lower Granite. The operation the COE implemented in 2012 will also be implemented in 2013, Baus replied. Hall noted that the first opportunity to take action under the PSMP will occur during the December 2013 construction season.

The PSMP will help determine how dredging moves forward. Statler asked whether one of the goals is to get back to MOP operations; Baus confirmed that is correct. Lorz suggested the COE provide the region with a public outreach presentation on the PSMP. Hall will follow up on this with the project manager.

d. Power System. There was nothing to report today.

6. Next TMT Meeting

TMT will meet next on January 23. Potential agenda items include a report on the Grant County PUD spawning protection program.

Name	Affiliation
Doug Baus	COE
Paul Wagner	NOAA
Lisa Wright	COE
Tony Norris	BPA
Russ George	WMC
Agnes Lut	BPA
Scott Bettin	BPA
Scott English	COE
Karl Kanbergs	COE
Laura Hamilton	COE
Jim Litchfield	Montana
Scott English	COE

<i>Phone:</i>	
David Wills	USFWS
Charles Morrill	Washington
John Roache	BOR
Russ Kiefer	Idaho
Sheri Sears	Colville
Steve Hall	COE
Margaret Filardo	FPC
Richelle Beck	Grant PUD
Barry Espenson	CBB
Don Tinker	SCL
Ruth Burris	PGE
Greg Lawson	Thompson Reutters
Dave Statler	Nez Perce Tribe
Tom Lorz	CRITFC/Umatilla
Stu Leavitt	Salish-Kootenai
Joel Fenolio	COE Seattle