

## COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

May 21, 2014

Facilitator's Summary

Facilitator: Emily Plummer, Notes: Tory Hines, DS Consulting

*The following Facilitator's Summary is intended to capture basic discussion, decisions and actions, as well as 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.*

### **Review of Meeting Minutes**

The group approved the May 14th official Meeting Minutes and Facilitator's Summary pending the following changes/additions to the Meeting Minutes:

- In the *Review of Meeting Minutes* for the May 7<sup>th</sup> Minutes, OR and WA were noted as signatories to SOR #MT2014-1 and instead should have been noted as signatories for SOR 2014-01 (request to change spill pattern at Lower Monumental).
- In regards to the Dworshak spill operations, the Minutes state that along with WA, ID, and CRITFC, OR commented that increased flow was a "good idea"; OR clarified that the Minutes should read that OR did not object.

### **John Day Spill Operations**

TMT conversations continued on the John Day spill operation change that was proposed by BPA at the May 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. The operation would provide the same amount of spill, however, shift to spilling 30% during the day and 40% at night. The proposal is intended to allow for easier scheduling of energy, while also producing it at a time that load is more likely to be available, and potentially lower TDG levels and direct fish to the spillway instead of the powerhouse. Scott Bettin, BPA, reported that the PNNL data on acoustic tag tracking data from prior study year at John Day was provided to FPAC for their review. Paul Wagner, NOAA, informed TMT that FPAC had discussed the data and needed clarification and more specific data. Tom Lorz, CRITFC/Umatilla, said that the data supplied does not differentiate the 30/40 operation and because the reports combined the information for both treatments, it was not possible to determine the impact of going to 30% during the day and 40% at night. Tom clarified that data distinguishing between the two treatments is needed in order to determine the impact of the operation and whether or not there is biological benefit for fish. It was noted that at this point FPAC is generally not supporting the proposed shift because a greater number of fish pass during the day; however, Salmon managers requested additional information in order to make a more thorough assessment.

- **ACTION:** Tom Lorz, CRITFC/Umatilla, will provide a written request to Scott Bettin, BPA, with specifics on what data is desired by FPAC. TMT will revisit the proposed operation at the June 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Treaty Fishing SOR 2014-C1**

Kyle Dittmer, CRITFC, shared an operation request for spring fishing support. The request is to hold the BON, TDA and JDA pools steady with 1.5ft variation from the morning of May 20<sup>th</sup> through the evening of May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Kyle noted the current forecast indicates a return of 207,000 spring Chinook, which is higher than average. Doug Baus, USACE, reported that Corps has received the SOR, coordinated with the project and is implementing the request as best as possible. Doug requested that SOR's are submitted in advance of the actual proposed implementation dates.

## **Operations Review**

**Reservoirs:** Mary Mellema, BOR, reported on Reclamation projects:

- Hungry Horse elevation was 3,505.4 feet with 6.8kcfs outflow.
- Grand Coulee elevation was 1,244.6 feet and is on slow refill.

Lisa Wright, USACE, reported on Corps projects:

- Libby was at elevation 2,392.4 feet, with 42.6kcfs inflow and 24.7kcfs outflow. The 1st sturgeon pulse is currently underway at Libby.
- Dworshak was at elevation 1,534.4 feet with 20.2kcfs inflow and 2.4kcfs outflow.
- Lower Granite average outflow was 117.6kcfs.
- McNary average outflow was 346.4kcfs.
- Bonneville average outflow was 353.8kcfs.

**FOP Implementation Reports:** Doug Baus, USACE, noted that although no longer under court order, Corps is still producing FOP Implementation Reports and is now posting the reports on the TMT website. Doug noted that Corps is not looking for TMT coordination regarding the reports, however, felt that the TMT website was the most appropriate place to house the reports.

**Spill Priority List:** Doug Baus, USACE, reported that the Performance Standard Testing projects (MCN and JDA) will be omitted from the Level 1 SPL and will be placed at the bottom of the Level 2 SPL. Doug noted that the SPL is a tool used to help attain the target spring and summer FOP spill levels, is consistent with the BiOp, and that Corps is operating with the intent to acquire meaningful performance standard test results. Erik Van Dyke, OR, noted that the Performance Standard Testing methodologies are not supported by Oregon and that the state feels that the methodologies do not yield meaningful results. Doug noted that McNary will be omitted from Level 1 and moved down on subsequent levels of the SPL soon, followed by John Day once sub-yearling counts trigger initiation of testing.

**Fish:** Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported on fish, however, due to a lack of internet connection, did not have access to all of the passage numbers. He noted that due to an increase in flow the passage index number of yearling chinook has increased to around 100,000 at Lower Granite Dam and the Columbia River passage index numbers are of a similar magnitude. Steelhead have also picked up and passage in the Lower Columbia is looking strong. Sockeye were reported between 13,000-15,000 per day at Lower Granite, and passage timing is within expectations. Adult spring Chinook have reached 142% of the 10 year average, with 167,259 fish past Bonneville. Paul also noted that 63,548 spring chinook have passed Ice Harbor (166% of the 10 year average) 15,135 have passed Rock Island (179% of the 10 year average), and 15,135 have passed Priest Rapids (175% of the 10 year average). Paul was encouraged by the increased passage at upriver projects. Jacks passage at Bonneville is at 116% of the 10-year average.

**Descaling at McNary:** Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported an increase in sockeye descaling at McNary, with between 9-15% descaling over the past week. He shared that the cause is not yet certain. Tom Lorz, CRITFC/Umatilla shared that debris on the screens may be the culprit. Salmon Managers requested that screen cleaning be a priority for the project. Scott Bettin, BPA, noted that an increase in tumbleweed in the trash racks may also be contributing and that it may be valuable to check with state weed programs to see if there are programs to manage the weed.

- **ACTION:** Doug Baus, USACE, and Paul Wagner, NOAA, will follow-up offline to coordinate with the project to troubleshoot the descaling. TMT will revisit the descaling issue at the June 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Water Quality:** Nothing to report.

**Power System:** Nothing to report.

**The next TMT meeting will be face to face on May 28th at 9:00am at the USACE Division building.**

**Potential Agenda topics (some topics may be tabled until the June 4<sup>th</sup> meeting):**

- John Day Spill Operation
- McNary Sockeye Descaling
- Sturgeon Pulse Operation Update
- Treaty Fishing SOR

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

**May 21, 2014**

Minutes: Pat Vivian

***1. Introduction***

Doug Baus, COE, chaired this TMT meeting facilitated by Emily Plummer, DS Consulting. Representatives of the COE, Washington, Oregon, NOAA, BOR, BPA, USFWS, Montana, CRITFC, Colville and Yakama tribes, and others participated. This summary is an official record of the proceedings, not a verbatim transcript.

Lack of internet access in the meeting room today constrained the ability of meeting participants to access current data for discussion.

***2. Meeting Minutes – May 14***

Erick Van Dyke, Oregon, had two comments regarding the official minutes. Washington and Oregon were signatories to the SOR regarding LMN spill not the Montana SOR. While Oregon didn't object to an increase of approximately 2 kcfs at Dworshak, neither did Oregon think it was a good idea. With these two changes, the official minutes and notes for May 14 will be considered final.

***3. John Day Spill Operation***

Scott Bettin, BPA, followed up with TMT after its May 7 discussion of a BPA proposal to rearrange the John Day Dam spill treatments. The current spring spill operation is comprised of alternating two day treatments of 30% vs 40% spill with treatment changes occurring at 2000 hours. The BPA proposal would be comprised of implementing the 30% spill treatment during the day (0700 to 1900 hours) and implementing the 40% spill treatment at night (1900 to 0700 hours). While BPA's proposal would rearrange the spill treatments there would be no change in the current level of spill at JDA. At that meeting the salmon managers requested data to help evaluate the biological effects of the BPA proposal on juveniles, and Bettin said he would contact PNNL to provide relevant data, which he provided today. The purpose of the spill proposal is to draw fish away from the turbines and into the spillway. The PNNL data did show an increase of steelhead and chinook passage at night, Bettin said. He asked TMT for their views of the proposal in light of this data.

FPAC discussed the proposal during yesterday's call, Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported. In general it was not supported by the salmon managers. NOAA's position is that approximately four times more fish pass in daytime than at night, so a switch from 40% to 30% daytime spill is risky given that the biological effects of 30% spill are uncertain. Tom Lorz, CRITFC, said the data provided are insufficient to assess the effects of a change from 40% to 30% daytime spill. Given that survival rates are apparently higher at 40% spill, plus NOAA's finding that juvenile passage rates are

higher during the day, the proposed operation seems unlikely to have positive or even neutral biological effects. Without more data, it's difficult to evaluate from a biological perspective.

Bettin said it's not a given that 40% spill produces higher survival rates. In one year 30% spill was better, and in another 40% was better. Neither disparity was statistically significant. Lorz and Bettin will communicate via email in an effort to tailor the next request for PNNL data more closely to the salmon managers' request. TMT will revisit the BPA proposal for John Day spill at its next TMT meeting June 4.

#### **4. Treaty Fishing – SOR 2014-C1**

Kyle Dittmer, CRITFC, presented this SOR for a 2 ½-day treaty fishery. The SOR requests 1.5-foot forebay operating ranges from 6 am, May 20, to 6 pm, May 22, to minimize fluctuations for tribal fishers in the Bonneville, The Dalles and John Day pools.

The COE has instructed project operators to implement the SOR to the best extent possible, Baus said. Tribal fishing is in progress. The action agencies appreciate as much notice as possible to implement future treaty fishery SORs.

#### **5. Operations Review**

**a. Reservoirs.** Hungry Horse is at elevation 3505.4', releasing 6.8 kcfs. Grand Coulee is at elevation 1244.6' and refilling slowly.

Libby is at elevation 2392.4' with average inflows of 42.6 kcfs and releases of 24.7 kcfs. It ramped up to full powerhouse for the first peak of the sturgeon pulse starting May 16. Dworshak is at elevation 1534.4' with inflows of 20.2 kcfs and releases of 2.4 kcfs.

Lower Granite daily average outflows are 117.6 kcfs. McNary daily average outflows are 346.4 kcfs. Bonneville daily average outflows are 353.8 kcfs.

TMT had some additional conversations about operational concerns:

**b. Fish operations plan implementation monthly reports.** Baus announced the action agencies are still producing these reports and posting them to the TMT website. Previously they were submitted to the court but since we are no longer under court order posting them to the TMT website provides a convenient location for parties to receive these reports that were previously available through the court. The reports are provided for information only, not necessarily for purposes of discussion at TMT meetings. They can be found under the "fish operations plan implementation reports" link on the TMT site.

**c. Clarification regarding performance standard testing projects on the spill priority list.** Baus reported that MCN is now spilling 50% of the river, which is

incompatible with meeting the BiOp target of 40% spill for performance standards testing. Consistent with previous years' operations that aim to provide targeted spill levels for performance testing under the Fish Operations Plan, the COE will omit performance standards testing projects from the Level 1 spill priority list during test times. MCN has therefore been omitted from Level 1 and moved to the bottom of the Level 2 list for now. The COE typically uses the spill priority list as a mechanism to achieve FOP spill targets for spring, Wagner added.

Tony Norris, BPA, said JDA will soon be up for performance standards testing, so it should likewise be moved to the bottom of the Level 2 spill priority list. Baus told TMT that projects undergoing spring and summer performance standards testing will be placed at the bottom of the Level 2 list during testing and omitted from Level 1 for lack of market spill. Spill levels at projects undergoing performance standard testing must achieve the spill level identified in the FOP or there will be insufficient test blocks to produce a statistically meaningful test. Because fish timing is dynamic, the actual start dates of performance standards testing will vary from scheduled dates. June 11 is when performance standards testing is scheduled to begin at JDA. However, the subyearling run is early this year, so testing could begin earlier than that, Lisa Wright, COE, said. The goal of performance testing is to tag and monitor 80% of the year's run of subyearlings.

Erick Van Dyke noted that for years, Oregon has disagreed with the methodology being used for performance standards testing. He asked whether JDA and MCN are being managed to operational targets. Baus said no, the projects are being operated in accordance with BiOp spill levels in order to achieve meaningful performance standards test results. Oregon's position is that the results are not necessarily meaningful. Tony Norris noted that during performance standards testing, the spill priority list is still being used for its primary purpose of controlling systemwide TDG, with a secondary goal of placing projects at the bottom of the Level 2 list while they are tested.

**d. Descaling of adult sockeye at MCN.** Wagner reported that descaling of sockeye at MCN has been 9-15% over the past week, which is higher than usual. The cause is uncertain, but it could be debris clogging the fish screens. There's an issue with crane availability to clean the screens this week, Baus reported. FPAC expressed a desire for the action agencies to make crane use for screen cleaning at MCN a high priority. Charles Morrill, Washington, reported that Brandon Chockley, FPC, has compiled a summary of descaling over the past 5 years, which TMT members can expect to receive soon via email. Baus will follow up with project staff on the region's recommendation to use the crane for increased frequency of fish screen cleanings at MCN. Scott Bettin, BPA, asked whether Washington has a tumbleweed cleaning program that might help control the debris, and Morrill replied he's not aware of such a program.

**e. Fish.** Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported. Lack of internet access in the meeting room limited his ability to report current data.

Juveniles: Passage on Snake and Columbia River projects remains strong. With increased flows over the past few days, juvenile passage rose to a 100,000 passage index count for yearling chinook at Lower Granite. Counts are slightly lower than that at LGS and LMN. Steelhead passage has picked up recently in response to the increase in inflows. Passage at lower river projects remains strong. Sockeye – real sockeye, not kokanee – are passing LGR at rates of up to 13,000-15,000 fish per day. This time of year is typically peak sockeye passage time.

Adults: So far, 167,259 spring chinook have passed BON to date, which is 142% of the 10 year average. At Ice Harbor, 63,548 fish have passed to date, which is 160% of the 10 year average. Priest Rapids has passed 15,135 fish which is 179% of the 10 year average. Jack passage so far this season is 116% of average.

**c. Water Quality.** There was nothing to report today.

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

### **8. Next TMT Meeting**

The next TMT meeting will be in person June 4, with John Day spill and McNary fish descaling on the agenda. There is a placeholder for a TMT conference call May 28 if needed.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Charles Morrill	Washington
Erick Van Dyke	Oregon
Paul Wagner	NOAA
Lisa Wright	COE
Mary Mellema	BOR
Tony Norris	BPA
Julie Doumbia	BPA
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Eric Rothwell	BOR
Jesse Wright	COE
Karl Kanbergs	COE
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<u>Phone:</u>	
David Wills	USFWS
Jim Litchfield	Montana
Tom Lorz	CRITFC
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Kyle Dittmer	CRITFC
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Sheri Sears	Colville
Tom Iverson	Yakama

Heather Dohan  
Don Tinker  
Bill Rudolph  
Shane Scott

Puget  
SCL  
NW Fish Letter  
PPC