

# COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

November 19, 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 October 15<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and November 5<sup>th</sup> Official Minutes and Facilitator's Summary were approved.

## **2014 Chum Spawning Operation**

Doug Baus, COE-NWD, provided an update on the Chum spawning operation. He noted that Bonneville Dam has been operating lower than 13ft tailwater. Today's elevations had not yet been made available, however, yesterday's (11/18) minimum was 11.8 feet and maximum was 12.8 feet. Charles Morrill, WA, noted that due to weather conditions they were not able to survey for Chum last week, however, so far 40 Chum have been counted in the I-205 area and 60 in the Ives area. He noted by the end of the week there should be a survey update. Based on current inflow forecasts, Doug stated that the Corps is continuing with the same operation. The operation and current inflows are provided in a link on the TMT agenda.

## **Programmatic Sediment Management Plan Update**

Steve Hall, COE-NWW, provided the PSMP update noting the ROD was signed on November 14. An additional ROD was signed to allow for an immediate need action to dredge during this year's in-water work window 12/15/14-2/28/15. The Corps will contract to dredge at the Clearwater and Snake River confluence, as well as below Ice Harbor. The operation will require that the Lower Granite pool is kept high in order to dispose of dredge spoils to create habitat. Paul Wagner, NOAA, asked if they plan to return to the normal 1-foot minimum operating pool (MOP) by next season, to which Steve responded yes, if the operation goes as planned. Steve also indicated that Ports of Lewiston and Clarkston will piggyback on the Federal Navigation Channel dredging projects permits to dredge from the port berths out to the federal navigation channel.

## **Zero Nighttime Generation on the Lower Snake River Projects**

Tony Norris, BPA, requested the 2014 criteria for zero generation on the Snake River Dams. Paul Wagner, NOAA, noted that the 2014 criteria will be a rolling 3 day average count of 65 total steelhead and/or 20 wild steelhead at Lower Granite Dam based on a rolling 3 day average. The criteria are based on a sliding scale outlined in the attachment posted on the TMT agenda. Paul indicated that there are currently 100's of steelhead passing Lower Granite daily; however, numbers may be dropping. The recent cold weather may be influencing the recent decrease in passage.

- **Action:** Paul Wagner will continue to track steelhead passage and will contact the Action Agencies when the trigger is hit. An update will be provided at the December 17<sup>th</sup> TMT meeting.

## **Operations Review**

### **Reservoirs:**

Mary Mellema, BOR, reported on Reclamation projects:

- Hungry Horse midnight elevation was 3,548.85ft with 1.9kcfs outflow; BOR increased outflow to 3.2kcfs due to a transmission emergency in Montana and is currently returning back to a discharge between 1.2-1.4kcfs to meet Columbia Falls minimums.
- Grand Coulee midnight elevation was 1,282.4ft.

Lisa Wright, USACE, reported on Corps projects:

- Libby was at elevation 2,442.6ft, with 4.3kcfs inflow and 22.7kcfs outflow.
- Albeni Falls was at elevation 2,051.3ft, with 13.6kcfs inflow and 14kcfs outflow.
- Dworshak was at elevation 1,518.05ft with 0.8kcfs inflow and 1.6kcfs outflow.
- Lower Granite average inflow was 18.2kcfs.
- McNary average inflow was 149.1kcfs.
- Bonneville average inflow was 155.3kcfs.

**Fish:** Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported on fish. He stated there was nothing to report on juveniles and adults at Bonneville Dam are slowing down. Coho counts were really high this year, with a total of 277,000 at Bonneville. He also noted fall Chinook and steelhead are winding down; steelhead counts at Lower Granite are in the hundreds ranging from 124-400. Tony Norris, BPA, indicated that water temperature makes it difficult to determine whether the numbers of steelhead at Lower Granite is a trend or down due to the cold weather. Paul continued that total fall Chinook numbers are at 60,000 at Lower Granite which is a record and a big increase from fourteen years ago when numbers were around 6,000.

**Water Quality:** Nothing to report.

**Power System:** Nothing to report.

**The next TMT meeting will be on December 17<sup>th</sup>.**

**The Year End Review is on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, please RSVP ASAP to [emily@dsconsult.co](mailto:emily@dsconsult.co).**

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

**November 19, 2014**

Minutes: Pat Vivian

***1. Introduction***

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

***2. Review Meeting Minutes – October 15, 29 and November 5***

All three sets of meeting minutes and facilitator's notes were approved as final.

***3. Chum Spawning Update***

The current chum operation posted to today's agenda is the same one TMT approved earlier this fall, Baus reported. The steps for modifying Bonneville Dam operations to deal with increased flows during chum spawning are identical to those outlined at recent TMT meetings; they are posted to today's agenda only as a reminder. The tailwater elevation remains below 13 feet according to hourly data, with a minimum elevation yesterday of 11.8 feet and a maximum of 12.8 feet. Based on the current inflow forecast, the COE will most likely continue the same operation for chum.

Charles Morrill said survey teams report chum sightings in the Ives Island area, although adverse weather conditions and poor visibility are a major impediment in getting exact counts. The latest reports are of 60 live chum in the Ives Island area and 40 chum in the I-205 area. Morrill hopes to gain a more precise idea of chum spawning activity by the end of this week.

David Wills, who will be retiring soon, introduced Joe Skalicky, the new USFWS representative at TMT. Skalicky asked whether chum are spawning in the tributaries off the Columbia River. Not yet, Morrill replied; chum tend to show up in the tributaries only after there are established redds in the mainstem.

***4. Programmatic Sediment Management Plan Update***

The Corps signed two Records of Decision (RODs) on November 14 for the Final Lower Snake River Programmatic Sediment Management Plan (PSMP) and for an immediate need action (dredging), Steve Hall, COE, reported. The ROD for the immediate need action calls for dredging to reestablish the navigation channel to safe depths at the confluence of the Clearwater and Snake rivers and also below Ice Harbor Dam where shoaling has impeded safe navigation through the lock. Since signing the ROD, the COE is preparing to let a contract as soon as possible, with a goal of dredging

the channel during the in-water work window of December 15, 2014, through February 28, 2015. The goal is to restore safe depth in the congressionally-authorized navigation channel, and also to create shallow-water habitat using the dredged material.

The COE intends to begin dredging no later than January 15, 2015. The ports of Lewiston and Clarkston will piggyback on federal dredging permits, but the COE does not know whether they will use the same contractor. The ports will dredge the area that extends from their berths to where the federal navigation channel begins.

Wagner asked whether the COE expects Lower Granite Dam to return to the typical MOP 1-foot range during the 2015 fish passage season. Hall said yes, if all goes well and dredging proceeds as planned.

### **5. Zero Nighttime Generation on Lower Snake River Projects**

With the high fish counts this year, the criteria for starting zero nighttime generation operations on the four Lower Snake projects are also high, Paul Wagner, NOAA, said. This year's triggers for zero generation are: (1) a rolling 3-day average of fewer than or equal to 65 wild and hatchery steelhead; and/or (2) a rolling 3-day average of fewer than or equal to 20 wild steelhead. Because steelhead passage is winding down, these criteria are unlikely to change.

Several hundred steelhead are still passing the Lower Snake projects daily, so it could be a while before the triggers for zero nighttime generation are reached. Tony Norris, BPA, said zero nighttime generation typically doesn't begin until December; last year it began on December 6. Voltage stability issues will determine whether all four projects go to zero nighttime generation after the criteria are reached.

With the next TMT meeting scheduled for December 17, zero nighttime generation will probably start before then. Wagner will notify the Action Agencies when the trigger is reached, and the COE will implement the operation. TMT will review the operation at its next meeting.

### **6. Operations Review**

**a. Reservoirs.** Hungry Horse is at elevation 3548.85 feet with average discharges of 1.9 kcfs, Mary Mellema, BOR, reported. Discharges rose briefly to 3.2 kcfs for a transmission emergency on one of the Montana lines. Currently the project is ramping down to 1.2-1.4 kcfs releases in order to meet minimum flows at Columbia Falls. Grand Coulee is at elevation 1282.4 feet and holding steady.

Libby is at elevation 2442.6 feet with average inflows of 4.3 kcfs and releases of 22.7 kcfs, Lisa Wright, COE, reported. Albeni Falls is at elevation 2051.3 feet with average inflows of 13.6 kcfs and releases of 14 kcfs. Dworshak is at elevation 1518.05 feet with average inflows of 0.8 kcfs and releases of 1.6 kcfs. Lower Granite average

inflows are 18.2 kcfs; McNary average inflows are 149.1 kcfs; and Bonneville average inflows are 155.3 kcfs.

**b. Fish.** Wagner reported that juvenile migration is mostly done for the year. Adult fall Chinook and steelhead passage is winding down. The coho run was strong at 277,000 adults passing Bonneville. Steelhead are still passing Lower Granite with a high of 400 fish per day and a recent daily count of 124 fish. A total of 60,000 fall Chinook passed Lower Granite this year, which is a new record and is 10 times the run of a decade ago.

Sheri Sears, Colville Tribe, asked whether recent documentation sent out via email to FPOM means that passage season counts on the mainstem Columbia projects will be discontinued as of 2017-2021. Wagner replied that FPOM is handling that issue, and FPAC reviewed the documentation yesterday. Tom Lorz, CRITFC, assured TMT there will indeed be counting at mainstem projects during those years. The only question is whether counts will continue after November. Further resolution of this issue was referred to FPOM.

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

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

## ***7. Next TMT Meeting***

The next regular TMT meeting will be December 17, with updates on the chum operation and zero nighttime generation on the Snake. The annual TMT year-end review will be held on December 3.

<b><i>Name</i></b>	<b><i>Affiliation</i></b>
Doug Baus	COE
Paul Wagner	NOAA
Lisa Wright	COE
Michelle Yuen	COE
Mary Mellema	BOR
Tony Norris	BPA
Julie Doumbia	BPA
David Wills	USFWS
Joe Skalicky	USFWS

### ***Phone:***

Charles Morrill	Washington
Kathryn Kostow	Oregon
Tom Lorz	CRITFC
Steve Hall	COE
Don Tinker	SCL
Jim Litchfield	Montana

Russ Kiefer  
Sheri Sears

Idaho  
Colville Tribe