

Columbia River Regional Forum
TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM OFFICIAL MINUTES

April 27, 2016
Minutes: Pat Vivian

1. Introduction

Representatives of NOAA, Montana, COE, BPA, BOR, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, CRITFC/Umatilla and others participated in today's TMT meeting chaired by Doug Baus, COE, and facilitated by Emily Plummer, DSC. These notes are an official record of the conversation, not a verbatim transcript.

2. Review Meeting Minutes – April 6, 13 and 20

The meeting minutes and facilitator's summaries were all approved as final.

3. Dworshak Dam Spill Test

Nothing has changed since the last TMT meeting, when the Action Agencies planned a spill test at Dworshak from 1000-1600 hours on April 28 and 29 to gather information that will inform operations next year when unit 3 is down for repairs. Currently, the Action Agencies are still waiting for written approval from Idaho DEQ and the Nez Perce Tribe to exceed 110% TDG levels in the Dworshak tailrace per state water quality standards. While verbal support has been given, written approval is needed for the spill test to occur. Charles Morrill, Washington, asked at what time tomorrow approval would be too late to initiate the test. Baus said that's difficult to pin down due to communications between Division, Walla Walla District and Dworshak project staff in order to implement the test spill levels. Scott Bettin, BPA, noted that project operators are standing by, ready to implement the test if given permission. The Action Agencies will provide an update at the next meeting.

4. Operations Review

4a. Reservoirs. Hungry Horse is at elevation 3532.7 ft, with inflows of 11.7 kcfs and releases of 4.6 kcfs. Grand Coulee is at elevation 1244.9 ft, with completion of drum gate maintenance expected on May 6. Libby is at elevation 2404.1 ft with inflows of 39.2 kcfs and releases of 16.5 kcfs. Albeni Falls is at elevation 2055.2 ft with inflows of 40.1 kcfs and releases of 34.7 kcfs. Dworshak is at elevation 1566.3 ft with inflows of 18.3 kcfs and releases of 14.9 kcfs.

Lower Granite releases are 110.5 kcfs, McNary releases are 318.6 kcfs, and Bonneville releases are 336.9 kcfs.

Doug noted that in accordance with the Fish Operations Plan (FOP) reporting requirements, the Corps will continue to post monthly FOP reports on the TMT website. He noted the April report will be provided by May 20th. The Corps made some revisions to report such as: 1) reporting to whole numbers not to tenths, and 2) routine operations (e.g. short duration spill reduction for navigation safety) and maintenance will no longer be included as a variance. If you have any additional questions regarding changes made to the report you may contact Doug.

4b. Fish. Adults: A total of 16,983 spring Chinook have passed Bonneville to date with a peak count this week of 3,200, Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported. Yesterday's spring Chinook count was 849 which is 50% of the 10 year average for April 26. The next peak could be coming in May, which is typical for spring Chinook returns. Wild steelhead adult returns are close to the 10 year average.

Juveniles: Smolt passage numbers are early and large all the way through the system. Spring Chinook passage is early and large relative to the 10 year average. Bonneville and John Day Dam passage numbers for steelhead are average. Spring Chinook smolt passage is active on the Snake River. Fry are moving through the system because of higher than normal flows for this time of year. The Spring Creek Hatchery release of subyearling Chinook smolts recently passed Bonneville.

Transportation on the Snake River will start May 1, as defined in the FOP. River conditions indicate that passage will be good this year. Wild spring Chinook don't benefit as much from transport, and the benefits from transporting hatchery steelhead have dwindled in recent years. Wild steelhead numbers are at or above the 10 year average and steelhead are lagging behind the 10 year average.

4c. Water quality. Scott English reported. All water quality gauges are operational, and involuntary spill is starting to happen on the system during the last week or so.

4d. Power. Scott Bettin reported. The transformer maintenance that resulted in the transmission emergency at Ice Harbor Dam last week was completed on April 20th and the system is back to normal.

5. Next TMT Meeting

TMT will meet next in person on May 4.

Name	Affiliation
Paul Wagner	NOAA
Jim Litchfield	Montana
Doug Baus	COE
Lisa Wright	COE
Scott Bettin	BPA
Emily Plummer	DSC

Tory Hines	DSC
Laura Hamilton	COE
Julie Ammann	COE
Scott English	COE

Phone:

Russ Kiefer	Idaho
Charles Morrill	Washington
Tom Lorz	CRITFC/Umatilla
Erick Van Dyke	Oregon
Mary Mellema	BOR
Steve Lyman	PGE
Brian Zigler	Snohomish
Margaret Filardo	FPC
Paula Calvert	ODEQ

COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

April 27, 2016

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 Meeting Minutes

The official TMT Minutes and the Facilitator's Summaries for the April 6th, 13th and 20th meetings were reviewed and approved by TMT members.

Dworshak Dam Spill Test

Doug Baus, USACE NWD, provided an update on the Dworshak Dam Spill Test noting that the Corps is preparing to implement the test on Thursday, April 28 (1000-1600 hours) and Friday, April 28 (1000-1600 hours); however, is waiting on formal written approval from the State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and Nez Perce Tribe in order to initiate the test and exceed the 110% TDG standard. Doug asked Russ Kiefer, ID, and Dave Statler, Nez Perce, to reach out to representatives from Idaho and Nez Perce in an effort to get approval in writing. The Corps will update TMT at the next meeting on the status of the test. Charles Morrill, WA, asked how much lead time is needed for the Corps to conduct the operation. Scott Bettin, BPA, stated that the Corps is preparing to implement as if approval has been granted, and will stop if written approval is not provided in time. Doug also noted that both Idaho and Nez Perce have provided verbal support for the operation, the Corps is only waiting on formal written approval at this time. Scott noted that if approval is not received in time, they could change the operation to a one day operation instead of two, however, there are limitations to the time available for the operation, as this has been coordinated with the hatchery and tribe.

ACTION: The Corps will provide an update on the Dworshak Dam Spill Test at the next TMT meeting on May 4th.

Operations Review

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

- Hungry Horse midnight elevation was 3,532.7ft, with 11.7kcfs inflow and 4.6kcfs outflow.
- Grand Coulee elevation was 1,244.9ft, and drumgate maintenance is on schedule to be completed on May 6th.

Lisa Wright reported on Corps projects:

- Libby midnight elevation was 2,404.1ft, with 39.2kcfs inflow and 16.5kcfs outflow.
- Albeni Falls midnight elevation was 2,055.2ft, with 40.1kcfs inflow and 34.7kcfs outflow.
- Dworshak midnight elevation was 1,566.3ft, with 18.3kcfs inflow and 14.9kcfs outflow.
- Lower Granite average outflow was 110.5kcfs.

- McNary average outflow was 318.6kcfs.
- Bonneville average outflow was 336.9kcfs

Doug noted that per their FOP reporting requirement, the Corps will continue to provide monthly Fish Operation Plan (FOP) implementation reports on the TMT website. He noted that the April report will be provided on May 20th. There are a few changes to note: (1) reporting will be provided in whole numbers rather than in tenths, as previously provided, in order to be consistent with the FOP; and (2) variance reporting will no longer include routine operations and maintenance.

Fish: Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported on fish. For adults, a total of 16,983 Spring Chinook have passed Bonneville so far this season. Peak numbers during the week were near 3,200 and 849 passed yesterday. Currently, passage numbers for Spring Chinook are lagging (50% of the 10-year average.) For Steelhead, passage numbers are close to the 10-year average. Jim Litchfield, MT, asked how the cumulative run size for Spring Chinook is tracking compared to the 10-year average. Paul noted that at Bonneville, Spring Chinook numbers were on track with the 10-year average a few days ago, but recently numbers have declined. The month of May is often when peak passage occurs, so hopefully numbers will improve. Looking at other projects, passage numbers for Spring Chinook are down at McNary and near average at Lower Granite. Scott stated that the recent spike in flows may be contributing to low passage numbers as high flows tend to slow down runs.

For smolts, Steelhead and Spring Chinook passage numbers are early and high throughout the system. Numbers are near average at John Day, McNary and Bonneville. A Spring Creek Hatchery release is noticeable as a large spike in sub-yearling Chinook counts at Bonneville. Flows are higher than normal for this time of year, current flows are similar to levels expected in May and June. Scott asked if a transport is still scheduled to start on May 1st. Paul responded yes, the transport is scheduled for May 1st and conditions in the river should be good for passage. Wild Spring Chinook do not benefit from transport as much as wild Steelhead. Presently, wild Steelhead are doing better than hatchery Steelhead in terms of transport benefits, however the benefit to hatchery Steelhead has been diminishing over the last few years.

Water Quality: Scott English, USACE NWD, noted that all gauges are operational and there has been occasional involuntary spill throughout last week. Jim noted that the CCIW (downstream of BON) TDG percentages seem high. Scott noted that BON is running at full powerhouse and spilling well above the FOP 100kcfs. There are currently 5 units out at BON, and they are running powerhouse 2 in the mid-range due to the juvenile trigger.

Power System: Scott Bettin, BPA, noted that transformer maintenance that resulted in the transmission emergency last week at Ice Harbor was returned to service on April 20th.

The next TMT meeting will be a face to face meeting on May 4th at 9:00am.