

WATER QUALITY TEAM

April 16, 2002

Facilitator Summary Notes

Facilitator: Donna Silverberg

The following are summary notes of the discussion from the last Water Quality Team meeting. They are meant to serve only as a reminder of issues discussed and actions to be taken prior to the next meeting. They are NOT meant to serve as a formal record of the conversation. Questions concerning these notes may be raised at the next meeting or via email.

UPDATES:

- WQT notes and minutes will be posted on the NMFS' website in the near future.
- Chris Maynard, Washington, mentioned that the California inter-tie was down and could lead to problems from high involuntary spill. He asked whether there are any long-term issues WQT should focus on.

Action: John Picinnini will check with BPA on water quality issues for the WQT (i.e. long-term gas abatement plan). Chris will talk to Oregon about how they want to approach the inter-tie issue. The main issues raised at the WQT meeting were frequency and duration of power line loss (which leads to involuntary spill) and circumstances under which it may occur again. If a longer-term problem is projected, the WQT will be emailed.

- The next WQT meeting will be May 21st, but will change if Bruce Crawford is unable to attend to give a presentation on the Washington Data and Format Standards Project.
- Chris Maynard is leaving the WQT. Mike Herold will be his replacement. The group wishes Chris well in his next assignments.

TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS:

Data Quality Criteria:

At the last WQT meeting, the COE offered alternative information relating to Biological Opinion RPA #143 and asked WQT members to consider their presentation and come to the next meeting prepared for discussion.

Comments:

NMFS is comfortable with the USGS program and is willing to put in writing that the COE proposal meets the needs discussed in the NMFS' Biological Opinion.

Stu McKenzie said he supports the COE proposal.

The COE heard a suggestion from a consultant to put out the probes every four weeks instead of every two, and wondered if the group thought this will produce equally good data. The

USGS expressed concern that precision would be lost by waiting four weeks. Mark Schneider pointed out that from an historical perspective, the two-week period was a compromise from a desire for weekly monitoring.

There was lengthy discussion on how often to collect data and on the need to set up protocols in order to standardize the system. Input is needed from the PUD's. There may be a need for consensus through the RPA #132 group.

The BOR wanted the group to know that if the WQT adopts a standardized protocol, then Grand Coulee will comply (since RPA #132 doesn't apply to Grand Coulee).

Action: The COE will link with the Mid-Columbia PUD's on the issue of monitoring to find the best approach for standardizing protocols.

Database:

Laura Hamilton, COE, is in the process of selecting a water quality database for miscellaneous grab samples and is looking for others to help her in the effort. So far, Jennifer Smout (BOR), Shawn McKinney (USFWS, NRIS expert), and Russ Staw (Washington Dept. of Ecology) are on board. Any PUD's willing or able to assist are strongly encouraged to do so. Bruce Southerland (LCREP) and Mike Schiewe (NMFS) may also join the team. The goal is to find a reliable and standardized data system for the COE to use that can be accessed by the public and other agencies. She is hopeful that the group can go see how some of the systems operate. The USGS spoke of the National Water Information System (NWIS) as another system to review. The role of the group is to review such systems and choose one that best suits regional needs.

RPA #143 Subgroup:

Stu McKenzie updated WQT on the subgroup. He handed out a list of questions and the prioritization process they have been working on. The group has been very active!

POLICY DISCUSSION:

Re-Engagement of the Water Quality Plan (WQP):

A meeting is scheduled for April 25, 10-2 pm, 5th Floor Conference Room at NMFS, to develop the Mainstem WQP. The NWPPC's Provincial Review process opens next week through May 31. Jim Ruff invited WQT members to participate in the solicitation discussion of water quality issues and provide policy guidance to the Council. He is looking for policy representatives for the basin-wide WQP discussion; WQT members are also welcome. An agenda will be available soon.

Next Meeting, May 21st, 1:30 PM:

Agenda items will be developed and circulated before the next meeting.