TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM
MEETING NOTES
February 27, 2002
CORPS OF ENGINEERS NORTHWESTERN DIVISION OFFICES – CUSTOM HOUSE
PORTLAND, OREGON

TMT Internet Homepage: http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/TMT/index.html

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FACILITATOR'S NOTES ON FUTURE ACTIONS
Facilitator: Donna Silverberg

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.

Weather Briefing:
Dan Matusiewicz from the River Forecast Center informed the group on the precipitation forecast for the region. He spoke of current "unsettled conditions" and little clues about the extended forecast. The information can also be found on their website, which has a link on the TMT home page.

Spring Creek Hatchery Release Operation:
Dave Wills updated the group and said there will be an SOR prepared for next week, to be discussed at a March 6th TMT conference call. The mild winter has supported a rapid growth of fish, so the USFWS is eager for an earlier release, March 11th.
FYI: Bonneville project managers joined the TMT meeting to discuss the installation of six new spill deflectors. The teletype will say: screens P1, DSM and P2 will be put in on March 11th in priority of use as noted in the fish passage plan (or language similar to this). The flow pattern at Bonneville will change, as new spill deflectors are being installed. The new patterns developed will allow ½-- 1 foot opening of gates (instead of 4"). Problems have occurred with Bays 1 and 18, but 2 through 17 will be operational. BPA needs to also consider work on a barge in front of Bays 1 and 18. *(The USFWS are running models for release that include analysis of the impacts on redds.)

Flood Control:
Project Manager Tim Kuhn gave a status report of the **Flood Control System Study** relating to Action 35 in the Biological Opinion. The study looks at how the system could be modified to increase flows during spring freshet. An "initial appraisal" document has been approved by the COE and unfortunately, what the COE requested in their budget is not in the President's budget. It could be if non-federal interests show support for the study to the President's '03 budget. A non-federal agency could sponsor the study at a 50% cost share. The estimated cost for the reconnaissance investigation is $200,000 for '02. The total cost for the feasibility study is approximately $10 million. TMT had questions about how the COE will coordinate the regional

effort. Tim expressed a desire for a real cooperative effort with a good public involvement structure. Anyone that is interested in this study can call Tim at 503-808-4752.

Greg Bowers from the COE reported on the possibility of a **flood control shift** in order to move water into the lower Snake River in April. One option is to shift Dworshak's system flood control space to Grand Coulee. This would affect a 4.5 kcfs increase of flow at Lower Granite, decreased flows in the mainstem, and Lake Roosevelt down 4.5 feet but returning to the same elevation as usual on 4/30. After a brief caucus, the Salmon Managers expressed support for the shift, although Washington could not confirm support until checking in with other agency staff.

Cindy Henriksen shared a summary of the February 2002 **Q Adjust model runs** which look at expectations of elevations depending on volumes/flows of the past 60 years' averages matched with this year's forecasted water information.

NMFS Biological Risk Assessment:
Chris Toole gave an overview with a possible matrix for risk analysis of listed stocks in the 2000 Biological Opinion. NMFS cross-studied the risk status of each fish with each action and it's degree of affect (positive or negative) on each of the listed fish. NMFS wants no more than 5% risk of extinction and a 50% probability of recovery in 48 years. NMFS expects to complete the new analysis and evaluation in 2005. They don't want to repeat this study annually, but will do some stock status review (either as a result of the Alsea case, mediation or other needed re-analysis).

Next Steps: TMT members suggested using the NMFS status sheet as a guide and including it as a tool in the decision-making process.

Action: Jim Litchfield and Paul Wagner will work together to establish visual aids for population growth rates/ needed survival improvement to share with the rest of TMT.

TMT Comments on 2002 WMP:
This agenda item was deferred to the next face-to-face meeting, March 13th.

Mid-Month Forecast:
Cindy Henriksen reported normal precipitation for February. The early-bird forecast for March is expected out on February 28th on the River Forecast Center's website.

Agendas:
March 6th, 9:00 AM Conference Call:

- SOR – Spring Creek Hatchery Release

March 13th, 9:00 AM Face-to-Face Meeting: [NOTE: The meeting date and time has been changed to March 14 at 1:00 p.m.]

- Spring Creek Release Updates/Status, Update on BON Screen Program
- Weather Briefing: Water Supply Forecast, TMT Spring Products
- Water Management Plan: TMT Member Comments/Responses – Discussion
- Shiftable Amount

- Hanford Updates – 2002 Agreement

1. Greeting and Introductions

The February 27 Technical Management Team meeting, held at the Customs House in Portland, Oregon, was chaired by Cindy Henriksen of the Corps and facilitated by Donna Silverberg. The following is a distillation, not a verbatim transcript, of items discussed at the meeting and actions taken. Anyone with questions or comments about these minutes should call Turner at 503/808-3935.

Silverberg welcomed everyone to the meeting, then led a round of introductions and a review of the agenda.

2. Weather Briefing.

Dan Matusiewicz of the River Forecast Center began the briefing with an overview of conditions over the past 24 hours: light precipitation, mostly in the form of snow – less than a tenth of an inch. Another weak system is already moving into British Columbia, Matusiewicz said, adding that freezing levels were generally near the surface this morning. Through Sunday, he said, we'll be seeing similar weather, with a ridge of high pressure holding off the Oregon coast and a series of weak storms moving in off the Pacific -- scattered snow showers, with very light precipitation.

Starting Monday, said Matusiewicz, some models are predicting a trough of low pressure moving down from Alaska, bringing cooler, more unsettled weather, although other models are saying that the low pressure won't arrive until mid-week. Whichever model you believe, he said, the next significant precipitation won't arrive before mid-week.

The long-term forecast through March shows equal chances of above-normal, normal or below-normal precipitation and temperatures, Matusiewicz said. There is a slightly greater chance temperatures will be slightly above-normal than below normal.

3. Spring Creek Hatchery Release Operation.

David Wills said the Spring Creek Hatchery release will likely take place on March 11; the Fish and Wildlife Service is preparing an SOR which will be available for TMT review next week. It may be necessary to release the fish a little earlier, because of a weather-driven, higher-than-expected growth rate, Wills said.

The group devoted a few minutes of discussion to the installation of screens at Bonneville to spill patterns and to schedule; Wills said the Fish and Wildlife Service is in the process of finalizing its spill pattern request, in part because it is not known whether the gate work on Bonneville Bays 1 and 18 will be finished by March 11. Egress conditions are better if Bays 1 and 18 are used, Wills explained, hence our preference for including them in the spill pattern if

possible. In response to a question, Wills said the Fish and Wildlife Service is still calculating what volume of spill it will be requesting; one factor to consider is the potential impact of the spill operation on the chum redds below Bonneville. It was agreed that there may be a need to convene a TMT conference call once the Fish and Wildlife Service SOR is received next week.

4. Flood Control.

A. Status of System Study. Tim Kuhn of the Corps, the project manager for the system flood control study called for in the BiOp, explained that the goal of the study is to examine how flood control is calculated, with an eye toward increasing the spring freshet. The Corps has submitted a request for funding for the study, he said, but those funds were not included in the President's FY'03 budget. In other words, said Kuhn, we're stuck, as far as getting the study underway -- as federal employees, we can't lobby for the necessary funds ($200,000, initially, to conduct a recon-level study).

It's important to do a good job at the recon level, because that will lay the groundwork for information that will come out of the study, and ensure that it is responsive to what the region needs, Kuhn explained. In response to a question from Jim Litchfield, Kuhn said any non-federal entities can lobby for funding for a particular project, such as this study. In response to a question from Ron Boyce, Kuhn said funding for the flood control study was included in the Corps' budget request for FY'03; however, he reiterated, it was not included in the President's budget. Another participant observed that Congressional activity on the FY'03 President's Budget is ongoing; there is still opportunity for interested parties to advocate for funding for the flood control study in FY'03. Various entities expressed their displeasure that this study, which is specifically called for in the Biological Opinion, has not been funded for FY'03.

Kuhn said he would like to hear the views of the TMT membership on the proposed study, particularly its scope and goals. He asked anyone who would like to comment to call him directly at 503/808-4752. We'll look forward to receiving regular updates for you, as you know more, Silverberg said.

B. Dworshak/Grand Coulee Shift. Greg Bowers of the Corps said he had been asked to calculate the difference in Lower Snake flows if Dworshak is not drafted for traditional flood control, or shifted flood control, this spring. He distributed graphic information, showing what might be expected this year, noting that the current Dworshak elevation is 1513.6 feet. Under either the shifted, or non-shifted operation, Bowers said, we would draft Dworshak to elevation 1503 feet by March 31.

Under the proposed Dworshak/Brownlee flood control shift operation, said Bowers, Dworshak would provide only local, not system, flood control, and would be at elevation 1512 on March 30. Dworshak would then be able to release an additional 4.6 Kcfs during April, Bowers explained. The difference in the March 31 Grand Coulee elevation would be about four feet less, Bowers said – 1272 feet rather than 1276. Henriksen noted that Priest Rapids flows would be reduced by 4.6 Kcfs during April if this swap is implemented.

In response to a question from Boyce, Bowers said Brownlee has not been factored into

this swap because it is already operating below its flood control elevation. Scott Bettin noted that, at the end of April, if the swap is implemented, Dworshak elevation will be right back where it would have been if it had not been implemented.

The question for TMT, then, is whether or not this swap offers a biological advantage, Paul Wagner observed. That's correct, Henriksen replied. And the time to make that request is now at hand? Wagner asked. Correct, Henriksen replied -- we will need to begin drafting Dworshak soon if the swap is not implemented.

Henriksen also distributed a handout showing the February final water supply forecast, by subbasin, matched against each of the 60 historic water years and runoff shapes. What we wind up with is 60 water years with 60 different runoff shapes, with the goal of gaining some insight into what month-to-month, project-by project inflows and outflows might be, and into refill probabilities at each project, she explained.

Henriksen spent a few minutes going through her handout, explaining that it is primarily for the TMT's information, and will be updated as future forecasts come in from the RFC.

5. BiOp Extinction Risk Analysis.

In response to a request from last meeting, Chris Toole provided a presentation on the extinction risk analysis in the 2000 Biological Opinion. He noted that, in all of its operational decisions, the TMT must weigh the impacts of those decisions on each of the species of concern; one way to do that is by factoring in the current risk of extinction for each species. Any given action can affect multiple ESUs, either positively or negatively, Toole said; the question is, how do you quantify those benefits and detriments so you can make an informed decision?

A good example is the chum operation, which I understand is what gave rise to this agenda item in the first place, Toole said. The lower river chum populations are at less risk of extinction than the upriver stocks, but the annual chum operation can have a negative impact on the system's ability to provide flow augmentation in the spring and summer period. All of the ESUs are at risk, Toole said; the challenge we face is deciding which actions provide the greatest bang for our biological buck.

Toole used the overhead to demonstrate some of the analyses NMFS uses to calculate population trends and extinction risk. He noted that "lambda" denotes the annual rate of change for each species, adding that the focus of NMFS' extinction risk analysis is the magnitude of lambda change needed to reduce extinction risk to an acceptable level. Toole then went through some of the key assumptions NMFS used in its analysis, including time period, sampling error and data quality.

So how does this help us make the decision about the Dworshak/Grand Coulee swap? Litchfield asked. The effect of the swap would be an increase in Lower Snake flows and a decrease in flow at Priest Rapids during the month of April, he said; according to this analysis, the Snake River stocks are at a greater risk of extinction than the Hanford Reach stocks. If you can quantify the proportional changes in survival for each affected ESU, that should be very

helpful in making a decision, Toole replied – essentially, the stocks where the biggest change in survival is necessary are those most at risk.

The group discussed the implications of the NMFS extinction risk analysis for chum populations; Toole reiterated that, overall, chum are at less risk of extinction than most upriver ESUs. The other side of the coin, of course, is the magnitude of the biological benefit your actions will have for those more at-risk stocks, Toole said.

Where do we need to go with this topic at future TMT meetings? Silverberg asked. Perhaps we can at least ask ourselves, when an SOR is proposed, which ESUs will be affected, and use the NMFS extinction risk approach as a guide, Litchfield suggested. Boyce observed that, rather than a fish vs. fish debate, a fish vs. power and other river use debate would be more productive for the TMT.

The discussion then returned to the applicability of this analysis to the Dworshak/Grand Coulee shift. The group spent a few minutes discussing the implications of a 2002 swap for Upper and Mid-Columbia and Lower Snake chinook and steelhead ESUs. Ultimately, it was agreed that Litchfield and Wagner will attempt to apply this analysis to the Dworshak/Grand Coulee swap operation, and to develop a visual aid to inform further discussion of the swap at the next TMT meeting.

6. TMT Members' Comments on the Water Management Plan.

In the absence of representatives from IDFG and CRITFC, it was agreed to defer this discussion until the next TMT meeting.

7. Water Supply Forecast.

The February mid-month forecast has been issued by the RFC, Henriksen said; at Grand Coulee, the new January-July forecast is 61 MAF, up slightly from the February final. At Lower Granite, the April-July forecast is now 20.8 MAF, 94% of average, down slightly from the February final forecast. At The Dalles, the new forecast is 102 MAF, up slightly from the February final, and 97% of average. The March early-bird forecast is expected to be released tomorrow, Henriksen said; it will be available from the RFC homepage.

8. Next TMT Meeting Date.

The next meeting of the Technical Management Team will be a conference call on March 6 to discuss the Spring Creek Hatchery release spill SOR. The next face-to-face TMT meeting was set for Wednesday, March 13; Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.

TMT Meeting Participant List
February 27, 2002

Name	Affiliation
Scott Bettin	BPA
Greg Bowers	COE
Ron Boyce	ODFW
Scott Boyd	COE
Ruth Burris	PGE
Mike Buchko	PowerX
Margaret Filardo	FPC
Roger Fuhrman	IPC
Jim Gaspard	B.C. Hydro
Russ George	Water Management Consultants Inc.
Robin Harkless	Facilitation Team
Tim Heizenrater	
Cindy Henriksen	COE
Cathy Hlebechuk	COE
Jim Litchfield	Montana (consultant)
Ningjen Liu	IPC
Dave Matusiewicz	RFC
Tony Norris	Reclamation
Mike O'Bryant	Columbia Basin Bulletin
Shane Scott	WDFW
Donna Silverberg	Facilitation Team
Chris Toole	NMFS
Glen Traeger	Avista Energy
Rudd Turner	COE
Paul Wagner	NMFS
Steven Wallace	PacifiCorp
David Wills	USFWS