

**COLUMBIA RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT GROUP
MEETING NO. 501**

1. ATTENDANCE

The following met at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, October 13, 1999, in Rm 118, Custom House, Portland, OR.

Members or Alternates Present

Peter Brooks, Corps of Eng-NWD-NP, Actg Chair
Ted Day, US Bureau of Reclamation
Walter Boyle, Federal Energy Regulatory Comm
Doug McChesney, WA Dept Ecology
Ed Hubbard, US Geological Survey - Portland
Roger Ross, Corps of Eng-NWD-NP

Others Present

Dusica Jevremovic, Fish Passage Center
Dana Reedy, NW Power Pool, Portland
Raquel Mills, Idaho Power Co
Tim Heizenrader, Enron
Cooper Richey, Enron
Cindy Tatham, Enron
Geir Solberg, Enron
Sharon Demeaux, Corps of Eng-NWD-NP

Members Not Present or Represented

Nancy Stephan, Bonneville Power Admin
Dan Moore, Nat'l Resources Conservation Svc
Harold Opitz, National Weather Svc-RFC
, Nat'l Marine Fisheries Svc
Jack Gakstatter, US Environ'l Protection Agy
Bruce McCammon, US Forest Service
Marvin Yoshinaka, US Fish and Wildlife Svc
Bill Brooks, Bureau of Land Management
Barry Norris, Oregon Dept of Water Res
Mike Turnipseed, Nevada State Engineer
Gordon Fassett, Wyoming State Engineer
Jack Stults, Montana Dept of Nat'l Res/Cons

2. WEATHER SUMMARY

July weather was cool and dry, 18-88% of normal rainfall, with the exception of the Washington Cascades and the northern part of Washington State where rainfall ranged from 105% to 166% of normal (see [Enc 1](#) for precipitation indices and their web site http://www.nwrfc.noaa.gov/cgi-bin/r_fcst). In August the temperatures rose to slightly above normal and the rainfall rose to above normal in most sub-basins. In September the weather was very warm (averaging 5.2°F above normal) and very dry (generally 18-67% of normal). The Snake basin received special attention with up to 221% of normal and averaging 144%.

September precipitation was 55% of normal for the Columbia River above Grand Coulee; 144% of normal for the Snake Basin above Ice Harbor; and 82% for the basin above The Dalles. The Willamette Valley averaged 53% while the Rogue averaged 22%. **Seasonal** - water year total (Oct-Sep) - precipitation was 95% of normal for the Columbia River above Grand Coulee; 115% of normal for the Snake Basin above Ice Harbor; and 101% for the basin above The Dalles. The Willamette Valley averaged 98% while the Rogue averaged 119%.

3. STREAMFLOW

During September, flows ranged from a low of 40% of normal for the Wilson River on the northern Oregon coast to highs of 116% of normal for the Snake River at Heise in eastern Idaho and 118% of normal for the Umpqua River in southern Oregon coast ([Encl 2](#)) according to Ed Hubbard.

September also marks the end of a year in which the runoff was generally above normal at all index sites in the Pacific Northwest. This year was the fifth consecutive year in which flows ranged from normal to above normal. The Water Year had begun with monthly flows that averaged 84% of the 30-year normal. By December, these flows were 127% of normal and stayed at that level through April when flows dropped to 104% of normal. By September, average of the index flows had declined to 82% of normal. Annual runoff during this

year ranged from a low of 95% of normal on the MF Flathead River near West Glacier, Montana, to a high of 159% of normal on the Chehalis River in southwestern Washington.

4. **SWSI**

The Surface Water Supply Indices for Oregon for the first of August, September, and October were above normal due to the heavy summer rains as shown at <http://crystal.or.nrcs.usda.gov/snowsurveys/>.

5. **RUNOFF VOLUME FORECAST SUMMARY**

The NWRFC submitted a summary of the runoff volume forecasts for January 1 and April 1 ([Enc 3](#)). The observed flows, adjusted for upstream reservoir storage, ranged from a low of 97% of normal for the Flathead Lake inflow to a high of 160% on the Methow River near Pateros, Washington. The Columbia River at The Dalles (Apr-Aug) volume runoff was 110.336 maf (118%), the Columbia River at Grand Coulee was (Apr-Aug) 70.853 maf (116%), the Snake River at Lower Granite was (Apr-Aug) 27.277 maf (119%), and the Libby inflow (Apr-Aug) was 7.127 maf (112%).

6. **RESERVOIR OPERATION**

Reclamation reservoirs are in good shape both for irrigation carryover and flood control, according to Ted Day. Some samples are the Yakima projects at 60% of their capacity, Minidoka at 63%, Boise at 51% and Payette at 74%. Additional project information will be found in [Enclosure 4](#) and on the USBR web site at: <http://www.pn.usbr.gov/hydromet/>.

Active content available on September 30 at **Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake** (behind **Grand Coulee Dam**) was 4,805,500 af—60% of capacity and **Hungry Horse** was 2,631,200 af—88% of capacity.

The Corps of Engineers projects are being operated within typical limits as reported by Sharon Demeaux ([Enc 5](#)). **Libby** was operated to meet flow requests for sturgeon spawning during the first part of July. Neither lower Columbia salmon flows nor a Libby/Arrow swap were required this year due to the abundant snowmelt runoff. The peak lake elevation for the year was 2458.97 ft on August 9. Project generation was reduced on September 16 to accommodate BPA's transmission line work. The **Albeni Falls** project operated in the top half-foot of its full pool until September 18 when fall drawdown started. Outflows were reduced on September 10-13 to accommodate chemical treatment of Eurasian Milfoil in the lake. **Dworshak** was operated, during July through September, to accommodate Salmon Manager water temperature requests while at the same time being limited by TDG limits on project discharge. On September 20-24 the project ran the large generator unit at speed no load in order to accommodate a BPA line maintenance. The pool reached its maximum elevation for the year of 1593.4 ft on July 15. The **Lower Snake Projects** were operated in the range of MOP+1 until the end of August and then filled to their normal operating pool elevations. The **Willamette projects** were at or near their conservation pool elevations, while maintaining their minimum flows, until September 7 when they began their drafting for winter flood control. (**Foster Dam** drafting begins on October 15).

Brownlee is currently being drafted for chinook salmon flows, according to Raquel Mills. Idaho Power is also initiating sediment/flow-fluctuation studies in anticipation of relicensing.

7. **POWER OPERATIONS**

No power report was submitted by BPA.

There was surplus generation again this year, for the fourth year, according to Dana Reedy.

8. **FISHERIES**

In reporting on system operation for fisheries Dušica Jevremovič reported that through September the count of returning spring chinook is less than the 10-year averages, but the jack counts are 3-5 times greater than their 10-year average. The counts of both adult and jack summer and fall chinook are greater than their 10-year

averages at most projects. Coho counts are also greater than their 10-year averages as are the steelhead counts at some of the mid-Columbia projects. Additional fish-related activities can be found in <http://www.fpc.org>.

9. OTHER

A \$6 million, 5-year study on the over appropriation of water rights in the Yakima basin is being funded in part by the USGS and USBR. More information on this study can be found on DOE's web site, according to Doug McChesney. <http://www.wa.gov/ECOLOGY/wr/hc/yrb-gws.html>

Beginning in the year 2000 the USGS will no longer be computing the adjusted flows in the Comparative Flow Table they distribute at the CRWGMG meetings; only observed values will be listed from then on.

Peter Brooks stated that the Blue Book input requests have been sent out. If they are not received in a timely manner they will not be included in the report, replaced with a comment about lack of participation.

As part of the Corps' regionalization of water management data activities, the three districts, Seattle, Portland, and Walla Walla, have consolidated data collection, quality control, web site development, and archiving into the Division office. All non-proprietary information will be made available on the Corps' FTP site. A study to consolidate all water control functions in the Division office is tentatively scheduled to start in February 2000.

FERC is dealing with a number of issues at major projects, according to Walt Boyle. There is rehabing of Cushman Dam near Olympia that sustained damage from a mud slide. At the Nisqually project a turbine bypass for fish is an issue for relicensing of the project. At the City of Centralia's Yelm project fish screens are being installed and the spillway is being redesigned. Condit Dam is beginning the process of removal. Seven years are needed to earn money to remove the project and an application for the removal must be made. A controlled breach is tentatively planned for the release of stored sediment. Federal funding has been budgeted for the removal of the Elwha Dam. The Bull Run power houses on the Sandy and Little Sandy River are being deactivated. Puget Power is studying the possibility of removing the Lake Tapps project.

Ed Hubbard, who has been a USGS representative to the CRWGMG for at least 20 years is retiring at the end of the calendar year. Good Luck, Ed.

10. NEXT MEETINGS

The next scheduled meeting of the CRWGMG is January 13, 2000, with notification on the web site.

Roger L. Ross
Secretary

Enclosures:

1. Precipitation indices
2. Streamflow Summary
3. ROV Forecast Review
4. USBR Project Summary
5. COE Project Summary

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