

## **COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM**

September 23, 2020

DRAFT Facilitator's Summary

Facilitator: Emily Stranz; Notes: Colby Mills

*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. Official minutes can be found on the TMT website: <http://pweb.crohms.org/tmt/agendas/2020/>.*

### **Review Minutes and Summaries**

TMT Members approved the official meeting minutes and summary for the August 26 meeting. The official minutes and summary from September 2 will be reviewed at the next TMT meeting.

### **Little Goose Dam Operations**

Doug Baus, Corps, reported on operations at Little Goose Dam, in response to a request for clarification. A summary of dam operations from September 22 is posted to the TMT website. The transmission line and transformer 1 are now in service, and transformer 2 is on standby while the transformer oil reaches operating temperature, which is expected to take 12 hours. BPA clarified that units 4, 5 or 6 are the units that can be run at speed no load for station service, but only unit 4 was available to provide station service during the outage. From a fish management perspective, units 1-3 would be preferred, but those units aren't equipped to provide station service power so unit 4 is the best alternative.

On September 22, TDG started low around 98% then bumped to 103.6%, peaking between 116-117.2% and was back down to 100% by the end of the day.

Tom Lorz, CRITFC, requested more communication from the Action Agencies (AAs) regarding operational updates in the future, noting that there was a lot of uncertainty regarding upcoming operations when last discussed at the September 18 meeting. Doug acknowledged this request, clarifying that from the Corps perspective reporting out at TMT meetings is more efficient than via email. Doug also noted that much of the update provided during today's call was late breaking information, even to the AAs.

Salmon Managers appreciated the efforts of AAs to minimize disruption of adult passage during the outage. It was noted that adult passage was maintained for most of the operation, however, there was a drop in passage.

### **SOR 2020-06 Snake River Zero Nighttime Flow**

Jay Hesse, Nez Perce Tribe, presented SOR 2020-06 (posted on the TMT website), which recommends the continued application of Zero Nighttime Flow limitations and criteria, implemented since 2005, at the Snake River projects. The SOR addresses pending operations included in the NOAA and USFWS Biological Opinions that could start as early as October 15, assuming that the Record of Decision (ROD) reflects operations consulted on in the BiOps. Jay noted that SOR 2020-06 includes a change in the criteria from the 2005 SOR: a shift in the start date for the enumeration process, from June 1 to July 1. This shift was not considered to be a significant change, however, more accurately reflected the adult run timing.

FPAC acknowledged that the 2005 SOR is not the preferred operation from a biological perspective, but it is what has been historically agreed on and implemented. Salmon Managers shared concerns over impact to adults and juveniles with passage and reproduction success.

The Corps appreciated receiving the SOR information sooner rather than later. They noted that in regards to process, although discussion is fine among TMT members, the AAs cannot respond to the SOR until the ROD has

been signed. The ROD signing is projected for the end of the month, after which the SOR can be finalized and the TMT polled.

Salmon Managers posed questions for the AAs to begin considering in the meantime:

- What would the AAs expect the new proposed BiOp operation to look like?
- Does the Juvenile Bypass System (JBS) remain operational when not running water through a turbine or a spillway? What are the impacts to the JBS during zero flow conditions?
- Will there be changes in the hourly collection pattern during zero flow conditions?
- How is the frequency of this operation going to change from October through December; what are the load and economic benefits of this operation?

As the AAs anticipate the ROD signing by September 30, a TMT meeting was tentatively scheduled for September 30, right after the signing, in an effort to provide enough time for elevation to RIOG if needed. The AAs will check in ahead of the September 30 meeting to provide an update to the best of their ability. If it looks like the meeting will not be substantive, it will be cancelled and the SOR discussion will resume on October 1 or 2.

### Operations Review

*Reservoirs:* Joel Fenolio, BOR, reported on Bureau of Reclamation projects:

- **Hungry Horse:** midnight elevation was 3,550.48 feet. The project is currently operating to the Columbia Falls minimum and should be  $\frac{1}{2}$  - 1 foot below 3,550 feet by end of the month. Joel noted the project would be moving to the sliding scale next year per the BiOps, once the ROD is signed.
- **Grand Coulee:** midnight elevation was 1,281.7 feet and is on target to reach 1,283 feet by the end of the month.

Lisa Wright, Corps, reported on Corps of Engineers projects:

- **Libby:** midnight elevation was 2,446.9 feet, with average inflows of 4.2 kcfs and outflows of 6.0 kcfs;
- **Albeni Falls:** midnight elevation was 2,062.1 feet, with average inflows of 9.8 kcfs and outflows of 13.1 kcfs;
- **Dworshak:** midnight elevation was 1,521.7 feet, with average inflows of 0.9 kcfs and outflows of 2.4 kcfs;
- **Lower Granite:** average outflows of 21.4 kcfs;
- **McNary:** average outflows of 85.7 kcfs; and,
- **Bonneville:** average outflows of 87.3 kcfs.

*Water Quality:* Dan Turner, Corps, reported generally good water quality. He noted the higher TDG downstream of Little Goose Dam yesterday due to the powerhouse outage, and that the Corps is keeping an eye on McNary Dam due to the ongoing spill operation of 4 hours of spill through the surface weir. The Corps is still working on the request from Jay to consider moving Dworshak down to level 2 on the spill priority list; Dan will bring updates to the TMT as there is progress to report.

*Fish:* Claire McGrath, NOAA, reported that sub-yearling Chinook are passing in low numbers throughout the system. There is good passage of adult fall Chinook, coho and steelhead. Across the projects, fall Chinook YTD are about 75% of 10-year average; with jack Chinook YTD at 78% of the 10-year average at Bonneville. Coho numbers are strong throughout the system, between 150-170% of the 10-year average, while steelhead are between 30-50% of the 10-year average.

*Power System:* Tony Norris, BPA, reported moderate temperatures heading into the fall season; wind has been up and down as new fronts have moved in. In terms of the forecast outlook, NOAA has forecasted a moderate La Niña, which can mean a wet fall, although climate, weather and timing all remain uncertain.

**Goodbye to Jim Litchfield**

The group thanked Jim for all his years at Montana's representative at TMT; Jim has been a part of TMT since 1998! Matt Boyer of Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks will step in as Montana's TMT representative beginning in October.

**Questions and Comments from members of the public:** there were no questions or comments from members of the public.

**The next scheduled TMT meeting is a conference call on September 30 at 9:00 AM.**

*This summary is respectfully submitted by the DS Consulting Facilitation Team. Suggested edits are welcome and can be sent to Colby at [colby@dsconsult.co](mailto:colby@dsconsult.co).*

## **Columbia River Regional Forum**

### **Technical Management Team DRAFT OFFICIAL MINUTES**

**Wednesday, September 23, 2020**

**Minutes: Melissa Haskin, BPA (contractor, FLUX Resources)**

Today's unscheduled TMT meeting was called to discuss operations at Little Goose Dam as well as an SOR from the Nez Perce Tribe. The meeting was held via conference call and webinar, chaired by Doug Baus, Corps, and facilitated by Emily Stranz, DS Consulting. See the end of these minutes for a list of attendees.

#### **1. Review of Meeting Minutes**

The August 26 facilitator's summary and official TMT minutes were approved with no additional edits. Julie Ammann, Corps, asked for more time with the September 2 minutes and summary.

#### **2. Little Goose Dam Operations - Doug Baus, Corps & Trevor Conder, NOAA**

Doug Baus, Corps, provided the TMT with the following update on operations at Little Goose Dam on 9/22. The update is also posted to the TMT website.

1. Hour Ending 0100 to 0500. Generation ranged from 16.7 to 15.2 kcfs by Unit 1. Transmission Line. In Service. Transformer 1 (Units 1-4). In Service. Transformer 2 (Units 5-6). Out of service.
2. Hour Ending 0600 to 1700. Generation for station service was provided by Unit 4 (5 kcfs). Transmission Line. Out of Service. Transformer 1. Out of Service. Transformer 2. Out of Service.
3. Hour Ending 1800 to 2400. Generation 16.5 to 36.3 kcfs was provided by Units 1 and 2. Transmission Line. In Service. Transformer 1. In Service. Transformer 2. On standby while transformer oil comes up to operating temperature.

Charles Morrill, WA, asked how long it takes the transformer to get to operating temperature. It takes 12 hours.

Jay Hesse, Nez Perce, asked about TDG downstream of the project that day. It started around 98%, rose to 103.6% and then peaked at 117.2% before dropping back down to 100%.

Tom Lorz, Umatilla Tribe/CRITFC noted that an email notification would have been preferable to no communication. He felt that some TMT members had a better idea of what was happening than others since not everyone was receiving the same emails.

Doug Baus, Corps, noted that the Corps had notified TMT during last Friday's unscheduled TMT meeting that there would be an outage this Tuesday. At that meeting, today's meeting was scheduled so he assumed that satisfied the desired level of coordination. He added that email updates can create uncertainty and confusion and are not always the most effective way to communicate.

Transformer T2 has been out of service for Double testing and repairs. Erick Van Dyke, OR, asked if crews were able to complete work on T1 at the same time they were bringing T2 back online. Scott Bettin, BPA, shared that crews were able to complete enough work on T1 yesterday that it should be back to normal condition and should be able to run for an extended period of time. There are no future outages planned for T1. Due to the evolving nature of the emergency with T1 and COVID, which limits staff at the project, communication was not as quick as what some TMT members may have preferred. The project staff was dealing with the emergency and BPA did not have answers about T1 until last night, like if the project could be run at speed no load. Bettin said that BPA shared what information they had as soon as it was available.

Chris Peery, Corps, noted that BPA was able to spill at fairly low levels and spread the spill over days, thus keeping TDG from rising excessively high. He commented that BPA did a great job given the conditions and that fish were able to pass all day. Hesse, however, commented that there was a drop in adult counts from previous days and that fish managers will have to look at the larger pattern of adult movement. He said there was impact to fish though it was not as drastic as other recent drops.

### **3. SOR 2020-06 Snake River Zero Nighttime Flow - Jay Hesse, Nez Perce Tribe, and Doug Baus, Corps**

Hesse presented SOR 2020-06, which requests Zero Nighttime Flow limitations and criteria at the Snake River projects consistent with past operations that began in 2005. This request would replace the operation defined in the new BiOp that has a start date of October 15 and no steelhead abundance criteria. The SOR is posted in full on the TMT website. The SOR includes a change to criteria, in that the run date definition for quantification of adult steelhead has been shifted from June 1 to July 1. Hesse argued this date is more representative of the run, adding that it's "not a huge change". He also noted that there has not been a huge number of fish passing in June.

Jonathan Ebel, ID, shared that last year 44 steelhead passed Lower Granite between June 1 and July 1, saying it is an insignificant change, as far as counts.

The Corps feels this is a significant and noteworthy change since it is a change to how something is calculated that triggers the start of an operation. Baus thanked Hesse for the early notification; however, the joint Record of Decision (ROD) for the Columbia River System Operations (CRSO) BiOps has not been signed yet. The Corps expects it to be signed by the end of the month but noted that until it is signed it would be premature to poll on the SOR. Baus suggested it be added to the October 7 agenda. Hesse wondered if there would be enough time for the SOR to be elevated to RIOG with a start date of October 15. He added that many fish are passing on October 15 and any delays in migration may impact reproductive success. In response, the Corps added an unscheduled TMT call to the calendar for September 30. Ebel expressed his expectation that the Action Agencies should be ready to poll by that date. However, Baus noted that these are high-level decisions. Thus, he cannot commit to promising that the Action Agencies will be ready to poll on September 30. The meeting will be scheduled and if he expects the Corps will not be able to vote, he will notify the TMT and cancel the meeting.

TMT members had a few questions about the SOR, including:

1. How often will the Snake River projects be at Zero Nighttime Flow (Claire McGrath, NOAA)?
2. What are the impacts to the juvenile bypass system during zero flow conditions (Hesse)? Do the changes pose risk to fish?
  - a. Answer: Ann Setter, Corps, said not that she is aware of. Recently, a similar operation occurred at the project. Setter communicated with the project after that operation and they reported that everything functioned as normal. In follow-up, Charles Morrill, WA, asked if the operators saw any difference in hourly collection patterns. Setter did not ask that and referred Morrill to the assistant project biologist, David Miller.
3. Ebel also wondered about the frequency of the operation, particularly through the progression of the season from October to December. He also wondered how it interacts with the load and economic benefits of the operation.

#### **4. Operations Review**

##### ***4a. Reservoirs – Joel Fenolio, Reclamation; Lisa Wright, Corps***

**Hungry Horse** – Midnight elevation 3,550.8 ft. The project should end the month within a foot of 3,550 ft.

**Grand Coulee** – Midnight elevation 1,281.7 ft. The project should be at 1,283 feet at the end of the month.

**Libby Dam** – Midnight elevation 2,446.9 ft., yesterday's average inflows were 4.2 kcfs and outflows were 6 kcfs.

**Albeni Falls** – Midnight elevation 2,062.1 ft., inflows 9.8 kcfs and outflows 13.1 kcfs.

**Dworshak Dam** – Midnight elevation 1,521.7 ft., yesterday's average inflows 0.9 kcfs and outflows were 2.4 kcfs.

**Lower Granite** – Yesterday's average outflows were 21.4 kcfs.

**McNary Dam** – Yesterday's average outflows were 85.7 kcfs.

**Bonneville Dam** – Yesterday's average outflows were 87.3 kcfs.

##### ***4b. Water Quality – Dan Turner, Corps***

Outside of the exceedance at Little Goose noted in section 2 of these notes, the projects have been within state water quality standards. On September 21, McNary hit 107% TDG due to the coordinated spill operation (the state water quality standard criteria is 110%).

Dan Turner, Corps, also reported that the Corps is still looking into Hesse's request to consider moving Dworshak Dam down on the spill priority list, and whether that would be consistent with WA water quality standards. Turner will report back when he has an answer.

##### ***4c. Fish – Claire McGrath, NOAA***

McGrath reported on fish. There are low numbers of subyearlings passing and projects are still monitoring smolt. Thus far, passage of adult fall Chinook is about 75% of 10-year average across the system. Jack Chinook are also strong and Coho are about 150-170% of the 10-year average thus far.

**4d. Power – Tony Norris, BPA**

Temperatures are moderate and wind is fluctuating as fronts move in. Charles Morrill, WA wondered about outlook 30 days out when the fish managers begin to monitor the tailwater at Bonneville Dam for chum spawning. Norris noted that NOAA forecasted a moderate La Nina this year, which can mean a wet fall. That said, climate and weather are uncertain.

**Today's Attendees:**

| <b>Agency</b>                   | <b>TMT Representative</b>                    |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Army Corps of Engineers         | Doug Baus (chair), Julie Ammann, Lisa Wright |
| Bonneville Power Administration | Scott Bettin , Tony Norris                   |
| Bureau of Reclamation           | Joel Fenolio                                 |
| NOAA Fisheries                  | Claire McGrath                               |
| US Fish & Wildlife Service      | Dave Swank                                   |
| Washington                      | Charles Morrill                              |
| Oregon                          | Erick Van Dyke                               |
| Idaho                           | Jonathan Ebel                                |
| Montana                         | Jim Litchfield                               |
| Nez Perce Tribe                 | Jay Hesse                                    |
| Umatilla Tribe/CRITFC           | Tom Lorz                                     |
| Colville Tribe                  | Absent                                       |
| Warm Springs Tribe              | Absent                                       |
| Kootenai Tribe                  | Absent                                       |
| Spokane Tribe                   | Brent Nichols                                |

**Other Attendees (non-TMT members):**

Corps – Dan Turner, Ann Setter, Chris Peery, Alexis Mills, Aaron Marshall, Laura Hamilton

BPA – Melissa Haskin (CONTR, FLUX Resources, Notetaker)

DS Consulting – Emily Stranz (Facilitator)

Columbia Basin Bulletin – Mike O'Bryant

Clearing Up – K.C. Mehaffey

Portland General Electric – Ruth Burris

FPC – Brandon Chockley