

# **GUIDELINES FOR TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM**

June 27, 2001

## **I. Introduction**

The National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Biological Opinion on the "Reinitiation of Consultation on Operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS), Including the Juvenile Fish Transportation Program, and 19 Bureau of Reclamation Projects in the Columbia Basin", dated December 21, 2000, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Biological Opinion on the "Effects to Listed Species from Operations of the FCRPS", dated December 20, 2000, call for the utilization of a Technical Management Team (TMT) to advise the operating agencies on dam and reservoir operations, thus optimizing passage conditions for juvenile and adult anadromous salmonids and resident fish. These guidelines are adopted in accordance with those Opinions.

The TMT is one of several technical teams within the Columbia River Regional Forum established by the NMFS, USFWS, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). The Regional Forum provides for regional discussion and recommendation on the operation and configuration of the FCRPS. Its goal is to develop consensus among the various members on these recommendations. The TMT's mission is specifically to ensure broad technical participation and use of the best available technical information, and to encourage consensus in recommendations on operating the FCRPS. When consensus is not achieved, the TMT ensures that the basis for participants' recommendations and Federal decisions is fully explained and documented. In such situations, questions can be elevated to the Implementation Team (IT) for resolution if requested by a TMT member.

The TMT operates under the Interim Procedures adopted for the Regional Forum. The following, more specific guidelines supplement the Forum's procedures for TMT operations in 2001. As the Forum procedures are refined, these guidelines may be revised.

## **II. Scope**

The focus of the TMT is to implement the NMFS and USFWS Biological Opinions on operation of the FCRPS while considering the provisions of (and effects on) the Northwest Power Planning Council's (NPPC) Fish and Wildlife Program, other biological opinions, State and Tribal plans and programs, and other relevant operational requirements. Specifically, the TMT should explore operational scenarios under the Biological Opinions that would serve to protect other fish and wildlife in the Columbia River Basin and promote coordination and consistency with these other objectives to the extent possible.

## **III. Membership**

See Forum Rules and Procedures.

The members and alternates of the TMT are listed in Attachment 1. Initial confirmation of membership, designation of representatives, and any changes in representation should be provided in writing to the NMFS Implementation Team Chair.

#### IV. Roles and Responsibilities

The TMT is responsible for discussion and recommendations to the Action Agencies (COE, BOR, and BPA) on hydro system flows at designated control points and expected project operations to implement the Biological Opinions for listed salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, and bull trout species within the Columbia River basin while taking into account the needs of (and effects on) other listed and non-listed species.

The TMT is to engage in joint decision-making that works toward consensus within the recognized authorities and management jurisdictions of its participating members. Specifically, the State, Tribal and Federal salmon managers (Salmon Managers) recommend the flows at the control points that best meet the needs of salmon and steelhead. These may include specific project operations, but this does not foreclose TMT consideration of alternative means of providing the same operating condition. Other participants (e.g., Resident Fish Managers) may also make recommendations consistent with the scope of these guidelines. The vehicle for communicating a river or project condition, which will benefit salmon/steelhead/sturgeon migrations or resident fish, is a system operational request (SOR). See Section V(d). All parties submitting SORs are encouraged to coordinate with other participants to the extent possible.

The Salmon Managers are responsible for the management of anadromous and resident fish in the basin. The COE and BOR are responsible for decisions on operation of the FCRPS projects; and the COE and BPA are responsible for Treaty agreements with Canada regarding storage in Canada and other Treaty-related matters. The participation of other affected sovereign and non-sovereign entities is intended to ensure that decision-makers have the broadest possible source of information upon which to base their decisions. All parties are encouraged to succinctly present their views regarding biological or operational recommendations. Input can provide alternative options for the appropriate authority to consider when making their decisions, but authority for implementing the request remains with the appropriate agencies.

The TMT is a year-round technical body. Winter planning will consist of development of a Water Management Plan and updating the 1-year and 5-year Biological Opinion Implementation Plans. The purpose of in-season management is to implement the Biological Opinions and the Water Management Plan. Post-season review will consist of a review of the previous year's activities and performances, and updating operating procedures as needed. Throughout the year the COE, BOR, and BPA will coordinate planning and operational decisions that may affect salmon and other species, through the TMT (e.g., yearly agreement on Non-Treaty Storage Agreement spring/summer operation, the 5-year Idaho Power Company Agreement, and the Libby/Arrow swap). The COE, BOR and BPA will specifically use the TMT as a forum for the coordination and consideration of potential effects on salmon, steelhead and other species prior to a final decision. Idaho Power Company, the Mid-Columbia Public Utility Districts, and other non-sovereign participants are also encouraged to use TMT as a forum for coordination of planning and

operational decisions throughout the year.

## V. Operating Procedures

### a) Annual Water Management Plan

By April 15 each year, the TMT will finalize an annual Water Management Plan based on the run-off forecast and other factors specific to that year. A complete draft, subject to refinement based on the April 1 forecast, should be available for review no later than March 10 each year. All interested parties may participate in the plan development and will be given an opportunity to review and comment on the draft plan. In general, the Salmon Managers will provide information on salmon and salmon operational requirements to be included in the plan. Resident Fish Managers will provide information on resident fish needs. The Action Agencies will provide information on reservoir status; planned project operations (and operating constraints); flow forecasts; anticipated special operations for research and other purposes; turbine outage and maintenance plans; and operating agreements and contracts that may affect annual operations. Priorities among competing needs should be resolved within the context of the scope of these guidelines.

### b) Summary of In-season Management Key Events

Monday	Begin implementing operations based on last week's decision.
Tuesday (9 a.m.)	The COE posts or otherwise distributes flow projections to TMT members for Priest Rapids, McNary and Lower Granite, along with resulting reservoir operations and elevations, and current dissolved gas and temperature data. Salmon Managers will post or otherwise distribute biological information.
Tuesday (4 p.m.)	TMT Members (or others) submit SORs to the Reservoir Control Center (RCC) and send (fax) hard copies to TMT members and participants. The Salmon Managers will fax SORs to all project owners for which an operation is requested. The Salmon Managers will post the SOR to the Fish Passage Center web page, or an electronic version of any SOR will be simultaneously sent to the Corps so that it is available for the TMT web page as soon as possible.
Wednesday 9 a.m.	The TMT meets bi-weekly, with conference call on alternate weeks if needed, to discuss in-season management data and SORs, document operations, and recommend the following two week's operations. By the start of the meeting all SORs and the disposition will be posted to the TMT web page for use by members who can not attend the meeting. If necessary, the TMT frames the issue(s) to be raised to the IT before 12 a.m.
Thursday (3 p.m.)	In case of impasse, disputes are resolved through the IT.
Friday (noon)	In the event an issue has been raised to the IT and the IT has resolved the issue, the Action Agencies document the operation to begin on the following Monday. This decision, and rationale, are posted on the TMT

homepage or otherwise distributed.

Friday (p.m.)            The TMT draft meeting notes are posted or otherwise distributed

#### c) In-season Management Data

The TMT will use the National Weather Service's River Forecast Center's (RFC) streamflow forecast for the Columbia River Basin. This forecast (and the basic reservoir operations that are assumed when producing it) is the official forecast to be used for the decision-making process. The BPA forecast may be used as supplemental information. The COE will use the RFC forecast to prepare flow projections for Priest Rapids, McNary and Lower Granite. By 9 a.m. (or as early as possible after that) on Tuesday, the flow projections and resulting reservoir operations will be distributed to TMT members. The Action Agencies will also provide dissolved gas, temperature, and other physical monitoring data available for decision-making.

During the anadromous fish migration period, the Salmon Managers will provide biological information on salmon and steelhead numbers, migration timing and condition, for both the current year and historically. The USFWS, and others as appropriate, will provide relevant information on other fish and wildlife resources. These data will be posted by NMFS and USFWS each Tuesday by 4 p.m.

#### d) System Operational Requests

TMT members will provide recommendations to the TMT on hydro system flows and/or expected project operations consistent with the scope of these guidelines. Non-TMT members may also submit recommendations for consideration. These recommendations will be in the form of system operational requests (SORs) stating the flow objective(s) sought (e.g., keep flows at a location X in a W-Z range). Expected project operations may also be added. Each SOR will include the biological basis for the recommendation. Each SOR will also indicate whether the request is to implement a NMFS or USFWS Biological Opinion, NPPC Fish and Wildlife Program, or other Federal, State or Tribal program. Non-TMT members may also submit SORs for special operating purposes for TMT consideration.

All SORs will be submitted by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday via fax to the action agencies, or any other project owner that may be required to delivery a specified operation, provided that the flow projections were available by 9 a.m. that day. Electronic submittal through the Proposal Submission/Review form on the TMT homepage may also be used. TMT and public comments on the proposal can also be appended via the Internet form. If proposals are incomplete, or are not received in time for sufficient review, the TMT may choose to delay action, but lack of an SOR should not preclude discussion of relevant matters at the meeting.

SORs should list members of the agencies who have reviewed and support the request.

The SOR will be outlined for description on the TMT SOR disposition web page. The SOR will be posted to the disposition page prior to the start of the TMT meeting so that telephone participants can follow the meeting.

When an SOR has been properly submitted, the Action Agencies (COE, BOR, BPA) should be prepared at TMT to describe the operational options and implications of meeting the request.

#### e) Meetings

Between the last week of March and up to at least August 31 the TMT will meet every other Wednesday, or more often if necessary, to conduct in-season management. All meetings will be open to interested parties. A conference line will be available for those who cannot attend in person.

An agenda for each meeting will be distributed at least two business days prior to the meeting (the preceding Monday in the case of the regularly scheduled in-season meetings). The principal purpose of the meetings and standing agenda items during the migration season is to review the status of the preceding week's SOR and operations, biological data, new SORs and project operating data, and to reach informed decisions on FCRPS operations for the following week(s). As other items are brought forward for TMT consideration they will be added to the agenda for future discussion, but lack of an agenda item will not preclude discussion of relevant matters at the meeting.

The discussion of SORs at TMT meetings will include distinct segments dealing with both biological and operational issues. Biological questions associated with an SOR will be addressed to ensure that the biological basis of the SOR is clear, and to allow the TMT to consider any additional biological information that may be made available at the meeting. The meeting will then move on to a discussion of operational alternatives to meet the SOR by the Action Agencies and members of the TMT. The Chair should ensure that adequate time is allotted to each segment of the meeting.

The Chair should also ensure that the support or opposition of each TMT member for an SOR and a final decision by the Action Agencies are noted in the minutes.

#### f) Meeting Facilitation

Meetings of the TMT will be facilitated by an impartial facilitator, who will allow all TMT members the opportunity to fully participate in discussions and to help members resolve conflicts as they arise. The meeting facilitator shall serve at the will of all members of TMT and should have skills as a meeting manager and conflict resolver. The meeting facilitator's role will include:

- Assisting the chair and TMT members in the development of meeting agendas
- Managing the meeting agenda in a balanced and even-handed fashion so that all members have an opportunity to speak and be heard
- Helping the group stay focused on the agenda and prioritize items that need action and further discussion
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- Enforcing the ground rules established by the TMT (see Attachment 2)
- Helping the group reach consensus on decisions
- Helping the group resolve conflicts that may arise in the course of discussion
- Highlighting any decisions the group may reach

- Working with members between meetings to clarify issues, resolve disputes, and seek potential solutions to impasses
- Assisting members to develop opportunities that may resolve conflicts and increase the overall satisfaction with the TMT process in the long term, and
- Helping the group maintain a sense of humor

TMT members may give feedback directly to the facilitator or to the chair if they have concerns with the manner by which meetings are managed. The facilitator will be replaced if, after discussion with the facilitator, members believe he or she is not remaining impartial in the delivery of service.

#### g) In-season Decision making

On Thursday morning the TMT will decide on operations for the following two weeks based on the available information and any pending SORs. These operating decisions will be made by consensus whenever possible. Consensus is defined as lack of an objection that would prompt one or more of the TMT members to elevate the issue to the IT. In the absence of consensus, the decision will be referred to the IT in accordance with the dispute resolution process described below.

If the recommendation is to implement the SOR or a modification of the SOR as agreed to by the TMT, then this should be documented for the minutes, and the SOR (and the Biological Opinion, Council's program or other plan on which it is based) may form the basis for the decision. If the Action Agencies do not agree to implement an SOR, they will describe for the minutes both the intended operation and the basis for that decision. The basis for the decision could include that the proposed operation is inconsistent with a Biological Opinion, that operational constraints prevent its implementation, that cost is prohibitive beyond that already included in the so-called "Fish Cap", or that the Action Agency has an alternative view of the best available biological information. If the Action Agencies believe the best available biological information supports a position that differs from that of the SOR sponsor(s), then the explanation should acknowledge this difference and should provide a clear, succinct written explanation of the data, analysis or judgement that supports the alternative view. In each case, a full explanation will be provided by the Action Agencies to the TMT and IT.

The final decision made by the COE and BOR on the following week's operation will be made at the meeting whenever possible. The TMT will try to avoid making decisions outside the established process. In-season FCRPS operating decisions made through a separate process, such as those under the Action Agencies' authority for emergency situations, will be explained and documented as soon as possible, but in any case no later than Friday following the TMT meeting.

#### h) Documentation

Minutes of all TMT meetings will be prepared in accordance with Regional Forum procedures and approved by the TMT. Every effort will be made to post the draft meeting notes to the TMT home page by close of business Friday afternoon following the meeting. Comments will be due by the following meeting.

The TMT meeting minutes will be used to keep track of the decision-making process. The minutes will include the substance of any SOR, the decision, the decision-maker, and the basis for the decision. The minutes will also include: (1) documentation of consensus or a listing of members objecting to an SOR or a final decision; and (2) when an SOR is not implemented, clear documentation of the reasons provided by the decision-maker.

If a decision is elevated to the IT and therefore not made at the weekly TMT meeting, documentation on the final decision reached will be provided separately in writing by the IT and will include the same information noted above. This documentation of the decision should be distributed via home page and other appropriate means by noon on Friday when possible.

Each member is responsible for reviewing the decision documentation and the meeting minutes, especially if the agency he/she represents is one of the decision-makers.

Interested parties may request copies of the minutes if they have no access to the TMT homepage.

#### i) Distribution of Information

Meeting notes and material will be made available to TMT participants throughout the year. These materials will be made available through the TMT home page and may be reproduced on other Internet home pages where available. They will also be faxed to members and participants that request such services. Regular mail may be used for materials when time permits.

#### j) Public Participation

The public may comment on an issue at the end of the discussion on that issue or at the end of the meeting, based on the discretion of the group and the facilitator. They may also comment outside the TMT process.

### VI. TMT Dispute Resolution Process

In the event that the TMT is unable to reach consensus on an issue, any member may request that the item be elevated to the IT. Every effort should be made to ensure that the issue is raised at least one week in advance of the monthly IT meeting (first Thursday of the month).

If, despite all efforts to the contrary, the TMT finds at its Wednesday morning meeting that it is unable to resolve a weekly in-season management dispute, and the decision cannot await consideration at the next regularly scheduled meeting, the IT will meet by conference call at 3:00 on Thursday afternoon. In the event that such a meeting is necessary, the TMT will prepare, and agree to, a brief summary of the issue(s) and a short description of the opposing viewpoints. This document will be given to the IT members by 1:00 p.m. on Thursday afternoon.

The IT will attempt to reach consensus. If the IT is unable to reach a consensus, then a final recommendation will be made by the appropriate agency (e.g., NMFS or USFWS if the issue relates to implementation of a Biological Opinion, or NPPC if the issue relates to implementation of the Fish and Wildlife Program). The member with the authority for the action will then make the decision and will post it on the TMT homepage or otherwise distribute it, along with a written description

and rationale, by noon on Friday if possible.

VII. Emergency Meetings.

Any member of the TMT may call a meeting when an emergency situation requires action of the TMT.



ATTACHMENT 1

**DESIGNATED TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM (TMT) MEMBERS**

ORGANIZATION	REPRESENTATIVE	ALTERNATES
National Marine Fisheries Service	Paul Wagner	Chris Ross
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers	Cindy Henriksen	Rudd Turner
Bonneville Power Administration	Scott Bettin	Robyn MacKay
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	Tony Norris	Pat McGrane
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	David Wills	Howard Schaller/Bob Hallock/Susan Martin
State of Washington	Shane Scott	
State of Oregon	Christine Mallette	
State of Alaska		
State of Idaho	Steve Pettit	
State of Montana	Jim Litchfield	
Kootenai Tribe of Idaho		
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation		
Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation		
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall	Keith Kutchins *	
Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation		
Yakama Indian Nation		
Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley Reservation		
Burns Paiute Tribe		
Kalispel Tribe		
Spokane Tribe of Indians	Tim Peone	Keith Underwood
Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho	Dave Statler *	
Coeur d'Alene Tribe of Idaho		
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservations	Jerry Marco	Kirk Truscott

(\*) Lacks written response to request for designation of representatives

## ATTACHMENT 2.

### **MEETING GROUND-RULES & EXPECTATIONS**

The following meeting ground-rules and expectations were discussed and agreed to by all members present at the June 17, 1998 meeting of the TMT. They may be changed at the request of the Team.

#### I. Ground-Rules

Meetings will start and end on time unless an emergency requires otherwise.

Members will treat each other with respect, which includes:

- Listening to what others have to say
- No interruptions
- Monitoring your own air time
- No side conversations
- Letting the facilitator or chair know when you would like to speak
- Being mindful of tone when speaking directly to other members of the team

During in-season management, each member agency/group will have one primary TMT representative who will sit at the table during meetings. Alternates or technical resource staff are welcome to attend and provide input through their primary representative, or when called on by TMT members. In the off-season, all are welcome to sit at the table --with preference for the primary representatives if there is a space limitation.

Any issues elevated from the TMT to the Implementation Team (IT) will be thoroughly discussed at TMT. TMT members will agree on the "issue statement" for the IT. The TMT Chair will then present the issue at the IT meeting. All TMT members will brief their agency IT representative on the issue prior to the IT meeting.

The meeting facilitator may make process comments in order to keep the group on track, focused and productive.

#### II. Expectations

Members are expected to come prepared to participate in the meetings. This means, they will provide necessary input to discussions and work towards making decisions based on information they have gathered from their respective agencies between meetings.

Members are expected to keep their agencies and staff apprised of decisions or important meeting discussions.

Members are expected to attend all meetings or send an alternate. If an alternate attends the meeting, a briefing, both before and after the meeting, is expected of the primary representative.

The group will not revisit information for members who were absent from or late to a meeting.

Members are expected to follow through on assignments to which they agree, or are given by other team members, on a timely basis. This includes requests for comments on information or reports from other team agencies.

The meeting facilitator is expected to keep the group on track and focused on agenda items. Additionally, the group expects the facilitator to assure equal participation, highlight any decisions that the group reaches, and maintain a sense of humor.

People who listen in on the telephone are expected to “sign-in” as they call in on the conference telephone line.

Group members may contact the facilitator to discuss process issues at any time.