

## COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

Friday, May 25th, 2018 – Unscheduled Conference Call

Facilitator's Summary

Facilitator: Donna Silverberg; Notes: Donna Silverberg, DS Consulting

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://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/tmt/agendas/2018/>

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### **Operations at Little Goose**

TMT members met via conference call for an unscheduled meeting to discuss Little Goose operations. Paul Wagner, NOAA, reviewed adult fish passage data relating to Little Goose and referred to several Adult PIT-Tag monitoring Tools (the data and tools are attached in the agenda for this conference call) that demonstrated delay because adult fish are still lagging below expected conversion rates. That said, he noted that conversion from Ice Harbor to Lower Granite is starting to go up. Conversion from Lower Monumental to Little Goose, the reach of original concern for salmon managers, is also starting to improve with 67% passed in a two-day timeframe. The passage indicators are showing no problems with delay at this time, while spill has been at about 40% at Little Goose due to high flows and involuntary spill conditions (above the gas cap).

→ The question for the call is: Should the Corps reduce involuntary spill during hours of peak adult fish passage? Salmon managers met prior to the call and agreed that a special operations to reduce involuntary spill was not warranted at this time.

**Discussion:** At the TMT meeting on Wednesday, May 23, the salmon managers discussed the delay at Little Goose, but were encouraged by recent increases in adult counts so the recommendation was to wait until today to review data and trends. At this time, there are no red flags in the PIT-tag monitoring tools. Dave Swank, USFWS, noted that he and others do not see a two-delay as a real problem; instead, a short delay, under certain circumstances and for certain runs IS acceptable. Paul noted that he struggled with this, and NOAA still had concerns given the coming three-day weekend. Yet, he understands the co-managers' desire to balance this action to protect both migrating adults and juveniles in the system. For the weekend, salmon managers would prefer to continue with the current operation. For the adults this year, Dave Swank noted that the co-managers prefer to react when/if there is a problem (rather than 'in case there is a problem').

The Corps and BPA noted the shift in approach this year and expressed some concern that we have conditions that are delaying adult fish in the Little Goose tailrace and forecasted conditions indicate it may only get worse and we are not taking action to improve the situation. They were willing to wait until a joint review of data following the FPAC call on Tuesday, 5/29. If there is a problem, they will likely implement last year's operation at Little Goose to support passage of adult fish, as follows:

- 4AM -12 PM - spill 30% and store remaining inflow in the Little Goose pool above MOP;
- 12 PM - 4PM – increase spill to pass inflow and begin drafting the pool
- 4 PM - 4 AM - increase spill as necessary to draft back to MOP while remaining under 130% TDG (approximately 125 kcfs).

TMT members were polled regarding their support for the operation to continue the current involuntary spill operation over the weekend and review data on Tuesday 5/29:

**Nez Perce:** OK not to change and revisit Tuesday after reviewing the data.

**Umatilla:** OK to wait to review the data on Tuesday.

**ID:** Ok with salmon managers' plan for now, revisit on Tuesday.

**OR:** OK to wait, supports Umatilla and Nez Perce.

**WA:** OK to wait.

**MT:** Supports AAs proceeding with 40%, but has a contingency: monitor effects of fishing on adults below LGS (salmon managers will do so and provide information back to TMT).

**USFW:** OK with no change now.

**NOAA:** OK with the salmon managers' approach, but has concerns (as noted above).

**Corps:** Think it is risky, but will support the team's desire for flexibility. Will implement the salmon managers' recommendation to maintain the current spill operation. The Corps' preference is to begin the 30% spill operation at LGS in order to improve adult conversion from LMN to LGS. DART and FPC delay tools are indicating delay may be occurring, and the increasing flow forecasts suggest the situation may worsen the problem prior to the next TMT meeting.

**BPA:** Supports the Corps' decision.

**ACTION:** The Corps and BPA will continue the current involuntary spill operation and the group will check in on this operation via a call on Tuesday, 5/29, and again at the Face-to-Face TMT meeting on Wednesday, May 30.

### **McNary Operations**

Tony Norris, BPA, shared hourly turbine operations at McNary Dam and noted units have been operating toward the upper end of the 1% range since the operation to shift contingency reserves above the 1% upper limit. He noted that this operation isn't a test, but rather is how they are able to run as per the BiOp.

At this time, and following on the discussion at the 5/23 TMT meeting, BPA and the Corps would also be able to shift reserves from John Day to The Dalles above the 1% range in order to reduce spill and TDG at John Day. They expect that this action would provide TDG reduction down the entire river below The Dalles, having a positive impact on all fish in the river. They brought the issue to TMT to coordinate with the salmon managers even though they believe this is within their operative documents.

Salmon managers expressed appreciation for the coordination and, again, noted their concerns about the impact of moving fish from passage via spill to passage through the powerhouse. In 2011, when flows also were very high, they saw some reductions in survival through the powerhouse. However, data regarding this aren't as clear to help with this decision. That said, the current level of TDG is a known problem. So, how might we ensure the positive benefits of this proposed action?

The group agreed: if the shift can reduce TDG in the John Day tailrace to 130% or lower, then do the shift because there are expected benefits from the reduced gas and enhanced travel time benefits for juveniles from the high flows. If TDG is already below 130%, then don't make the shift and risk injury via the powerhouse routes.

Also, if possible, do daily condition monitoring at the site. The SMP crew at JDA have been notified and can accommodate monitoring. The Corps will follow-up with District staff to see if contract and budgets will allow for this added monitoring and will seek implementation TODAY, if at all possible.

**The next regular TMT meeting will be a Face-to-Face Meeting on May 30, 2018, at 9:00 am.**

*This summary was prepared by the impartial facilitation team of DS Consulting. Please send questions, comments or revisions to [donna@dsconsult.co](mailto:donna@dsconsult.co)*