

## **COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM**

January 6, 2021

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/2021/>.*

### **Review Meeting Minutes & Summaries**

TMT members approved the official minutes and facilitator's summary for the December 16 meeting. The minutes and summary from the TMT YER will be reviewed at the next TMT meeting.

### **Chum Operation**

Doug Baus, Corps, reported on chum operations, as coordinated on December 29 (posted on the TMT website). At 0700 hours this morning, Bonneville total outflow was 194 kcfs, with a project tailwater elevation of 17 feet.

The RFC inflow forecast shows a high of 171 kcfs on January 8, and a low of 155 kcfs at the end of the 10-day period on January 16.

Posted on the TMT website is an email sent from the Corps to highlight the initiation of the chum incubation operation, which was coordinated at end of December with Salmon Managers.

Claire McGrath, NOAA, reported that 193 chum passed Bonneville Dam from October 17 through December 27, with peak daily passage of 20 fish on November 6 and 16. It is estimated that 97% of the run was complete by December 1; there were 5 days in December where a single chum was counted in the Bonneville ladder. Bonneville YTD chum count is 193 fish, or 152% of the 10-year average.

Charles Morrill, WA, updated the TMT on chum operation discussions between NOAA, WA and OR on December 22 and December 29. On December 22, they reviewed survey data, which reported that of the 7 live chum observed on December 22, 6 were nearly dead, one was expected to die soon, and no active spawning was observed. This discussion did not lead to a consensus recommendation to transition from the spawning to incubation phase, and thus the decision was deferred to December 29. According to the December 29<sup>th</sup> survey, one chum was observed. After more discussion with NOAA, WA, and OR, there was still differing thought on when to shift to the incubation operation.

WDFW survey crews had reported that from their observations, they believed that spawning was complete.

Claire added that based on the assessment from field survey crews that active spawning was complete, NOAA recommended transitioning into the incubation phase, while acknowledging that NOAA did not think that maintaining the spawning operation would cause any harm to chum and thus, were also okay if the decision were to continue the spawning operation through the end of the month.

Erick Van Dyke, OR, clarified that OR supported continuing the spawning operation while chum were still present to support spawning. He pointed to periods when tailwater elevations were high enough to impact chum behavior in Ives Island area, and that OR did not want to push chum off redds with high flows from Bonneville. He noted that given the high flows, it was plausible that this was occurring during last few weeks of December, which makes a day's observation alone somewhat less definitive. OR

supported waiting until the end of the designated operation plan on December 31, as specified in the Water Management Plan.

Charlie shared that the January 5 survey reported no live chum; survey conditions were excellent and allowed for all site visits.

Tony Norris, BPA, noted that the WA field experts provided a recommendation to shift into incubation operations, and while there was a lot of precipitation that affected the operation at Bonneville, the continued spawning operation was not doing fish any favors during the daytime. There were periods when Bonneville outflow was as low as 85 kcfs, running to almost a 13-foot tailwater, which resulted in the need to increase discharge at night to 18 feet, which according to studies will move the fish off the redds. BPA believed that the decision to transition to incubation operations should have been made sooner.

As requested by Salmon Managers, Tony will provide data on this year's redd elevations later this month, and in the future will provide it to FPAC as soon as possible (ideally before the spawning elevation is set) in an effort to help better inform chum operation decisions in the future. Tony also noted that temperature data are no longer collected for the incubation phase, as the years of data have provided sufficient understanding of the temperature characteristics in the area. Thus, future water management decisions will rely on survey information and previous temperature findings; it will continue to be a balancing act moving forward.

**Questions and comments from members of the public:** in response to a query from the public, Tony noted that chum spawn in the Ives area, particularly around the warmer areas of ground water upwelling, which in the past has been monitored at various locations. It was also noted that flood control values for risk management requirements will be made available once the official water supply forecasts are released.

**The next scheduled TMT meeting is a conference call on January 20, 2021 at 9:00 AM.  
A DS Consulting process meeting will follow for TMT Members.**

*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 January 6, 2021**  
**Minutes: Melissa Haskin, BPA (contractor, FLUX Resources)**

Today's TMT 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 December 16 facilitator's summary and official TMT minutes were approved with no additional changes.

**2. Chum Operation – Doug Baus, Corps; Claire McGrath, NOAA; Tony Norris, BPA; and Charles Morrill, WA**

Doug Baus, Corps, updated the TMT on chum operations. At 0700 this morning, the Bonneville Dam tailwater elevation was 17 feet and outflow was 194 kcfs. An issue with data not posting on the public website has been resolved. Baus has no additional details on why the problem occurred but could look into it further if requested.

The RFC inflow forecast for Bonneville Dam is 155-171 kcfs over the next 10 days with the high on January 8 and the low on January 16.

As coordinated in December, the chum operation transitioned from spawning to incubation on January 1, 2021, at 0001 hours with a Bonneville Dam minimum tailwater elevation of 11.8 feet all hours. An email notification was sent to TMT members on December 29, 2020 and is posted to today's agenda. The incubation operation is tentatively planned to continue through April 9, ending concurrent with the start of spring spill on April 10.

Claire McGrath, NOAA, reported on passage noting that chum were observed passing Bonneville Dam from October 17 through December 27. Peak passage of 20 chum occurred on November 6 and 16. McGrath reported that 97% of the run was complete by December 1. In December, there were 5 days where the chum count was 1 at Bonneville. YTD passage at Bonneville is 193 fish, which is 61% of last year's count and 152% of the 10-year average.

WDFW's survey, as reported by Charles Morrill, showed 7 live chum on December 22. Of those, 6 were near death and 1 was expected to die soon after the count. No active spawning was observed. OR, WA, and NOAA discussed how to move forward with operations and could not reach a consensus. At that time, NOAA and WA recommended moving to incubation but OR objected. Since NOAA did not believe there was evidence that chum would be harmed should the spawning operation continue, the agency did not further object and without a consensus, the decision was deferred until the December 29 survey.

The December 29 survey showed 1 chum and 4 Chinook salmon. Discussions between OR, WA, and NOAA continued. Once again, the group did not reach a consensus. The next survey, conducted on January 5, showed no live chum.

Erick Van Dyke, OR, shared his rationale for objecting to moving to the incubation phase, noting that he wanted to support any chum present. He added that when tailwater is high, it can impact behavior. Given the high inflow forecast and the expectation would be that chum would be pushed off redds, making counts less dependable during the last weeks of December.

Tony Norris, BPA, noted that WA experts were in the field and had shared a solid recommendation when spawning activity was complete. He noted even if there were still fish in the area continuing to maintain a the daytime tailwater range required 18-foot nighttime tailwater with over 200 kcfs at night. During this period with the Willamette River running high there were periods when the outflow was as low as 85 kcfs that produced close to a 13-foot tailwater. Past studies have shown that fish in the area will move off redds when the tailwater exceeds 16-17 feet. They may have been able to provide better conditions if flows had been lower.

McGrath asked Norris if chum elevation data were available. Norris will present that data later this month. He noted the data supported an earlier protection tailwater for incubation.

Tom Lorz, Umatilla/CRITFC, asked that in the future the data be made available sooner so it can be used in the decision-making process. Specifically, it would be helpful to have the data prior to setting the spawning elevation.

Norris also noted that this year there are no longer temperature gages in the field and thus discussions regarding the end of the chum emergence phase of the operation will default to ending on April 10 when spill starts at Bonneville Dam.

### 3. Other

- Brian Marotz has taken over as the MT representative, following Jim Litchfield’s retirement.
- Members of the public had two questions at today’s meeting. The first question, from Charles Pace, was answered by Norris, who noted that chum tend to spawn in warmer areas where there is ground water upwelling (in the Ives Island area). The second question, from a power company representative (Avista) was about when the flood control values will be made available. Norris noted that PNCA members will receive that information through the AER submittal process.

**4. Next TMT.** The next TMT will be a call on January 20, followed by a process meeting.

### **Today’s Attendees:**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>TMT Representative</b>
Army Corps of Engineers	Doug Baus, Lisa Wright, Julie Ammann
Bonneville Power Administration	Scott Bettin, Tony Norris
Bureau of Reclamation	Joel Fenolio
NOAA Fisheries	Claire McGrath

<b>Agency</b>	<b>TMT Representative</b>
US Fish & Wildlife Service	Dave Swank
Washington	Charles Morrill
Oregon	Erick Van Dyke
Idaho	Jonathan Ebel
Montana	Brian Marotz
Nez Perce Tribe	Absent
Umatilla Tribe/CRITFC	Tom Lorz
Colville Tribe	Absent
Warm Springs Tribe	Absent
Kootenai Tribe	Absent
Spokane Tribe	Absent

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

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

Corps – Dan Turner, Alexis Mills, Jon Roberts

DS Consulting – Emily Stranz (Facilitator), Colby Mills

Public – Charles Pace