

## COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

August 18, 2021

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 Summaries & Minutes**

TMT Members approved the facilitator's summary for the August 11 meeting.

### **Treaty Fishing**

Kyle Dittmer, CRITFC, presented SOR 2021-C2 (posted on the TMT website) for the fall 2021 treaty fishing season. The request on behalf of CRITFC Tribes is to operate Bonneville and The Dalles pools within a 1.5-foot band and the John Day pool within a 2-foot band (hard constraint) from August 23 at 0600 hours through August 26 at 1800 hours, and August 30 at 0600 hours through September 2 at 1800 hours for the fall fishery.

This fall season, the Tribes are focusing their fishing efforts in the Bonneville and The Dalles pools. Fishing periods depend on catch rate and efficiency, and catch data will be released a few weeks after starting. Typically, the fall season is the biggest of the year for the Tribes, going through mid-late September. Aerial flight surveys will provide data on net location and quantity, and the Corps RCC can expect an update from Kyle up to seven days after the flights. Forecasted fish runs are down this year which may mean the fishing season could end earlier.

Kyle noted a more efficient fishing effort compared to a year ago when Covid-19 and forest fires were raging; last year only saw 100-150 nets versus the normal 400-700 nets in the pools during the Fall season. Tribes will be selling salmon, and Kyle urged TMT Members to visit the CRITFC website for more details.

Julie Ammann, Corps, reported that the Corps and BPA will implement the SOR as requested.

### **Dworshak Dam Operations**

Jon Roberts, Corps, reported on operations at Dworshak Dam. The project has been discharging 8.4 kcfs over the past few days, and made a reduction today to 7.7 kcfs. Forebay elevation is 1,548 feet, and is on target to reach 1,535 feet by the end of August.

The 10-day weather forecast provided some potential good news for river temperatures; rain in the headwaters of the Salmon and Clearwater is helping to cool natural river temperatures, although with very low flows (below average), these waters are not influencing the river as much as in years past. Some rain will continue in the same areas into Friday and Saturday, keeping ambient air and water temperatures down for short-term and long-term system cooling efforts as Dworshak expended its remaining extra water with last week's heat wave. The end of the 10-day forecast looks good, without hot temperatures, and cooling conditions from the earlier rain.

Mitigation actions during the historic heatwave in June and up until now have allowed for conserving water and efficiency to prepare for adult trapping at Lower Granite to resume in late August. TMT-coordinated operations allowed river temperatures higher than 68 degrees F in late July and early August, with the anticipation that temperatures could be cooled back down. This was achieved with natural cooling conditions and preserved water from Dworshak. Currently, the Lower Granite tailwater is consistently back under 68 degrees F and will remain so moving forward. The top of the forebay has been 71-72 degrees F over the last couple of days; 15-20 meters at 64-67 degrees F; 15-25 meters (fish trap) at 63-64 degrees F; and 63 degrees F at the bottom of the pool.

The Corps made a reduction in Dworshak outflow this morning and the Dworshak pool is drafting. Another reduction is planned to step flows down on Friday. Dworshak will be out of flow augmentation water, but the

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system is cold enough to continue to maintain at least 67.5 degrees F at Lower Granite with the fish trap close to 66.5 degrees F. Moving forward, Dworshak will discharge 7-7.3 kcfs to slowly decrease flows for the end of August target elevation of 1,535 feet.

Charles Morrill, WA, voiced great appreciation to Jon and Willow Walker, Corps, for their efforts in ensuring water availability for entire month of August.

### **RSW Operations**

Charles reported on Lower Granite RSW operation discussions with Action Agencies at yesterday's pre-TMT meeting. He noted that AAs plan to operate the RSW as much as possible pending sufficient flows. Tony added that this is difficult to predict due to the uncertainty around precisely how much water is flowing over the RSW at any elevation, and uncertainty on inflow coming from Hells Canyon.

*[Facilitators Note: Via email following the meeting, Charles provided the following additional information:*

- 1. Low flow and high water temperature conditions have required a number of in-season changes to water flow and spill management this summer;*
- 2. These changes have been successful in extending the availability of Dworshak flow augmentation through the end of August;*
- 3. Some operational changes have degraded or reduced the effectiveness or magnitude of fish protection measures (e.g., surface passage spill);*
- 4. Given the current projected flows at Lower Granite (23.3 kcfs average) now through Aug 31, a level sufficient to meet minimum generation needs for Unit 1 and RSW operation, Fish Managers request that the RSW be scheduled for 24/7 operation through Aug 31; and*
- 5. Fish Managers oppose closing the RSW to achieve a higher pool elevation.]*

Jay Hesse, Nez Perce, emphasized that maintaining the RSW operation as much as possible is the tribe's desire. In response to a query on how often operations can switch between RSW spill and traditional spillway, Tony Norris, BPA, clarified that AAs will switch as needed depending on changes to inflow; he guessed it won't happen that often during the day. There is uncertainty around how much water is going over the RSW, and the only real indication is whether the pool is drafting when operating at minimum generation and RSW spill. If the forebay is approaching going below the minimum elevation, they will have to close the RSW and spill the rest until there is enough flow to re-open the RSW. Tony encouraged TMT Members to review the USGS data gauge downstream from Hells Canyon to get an idea of the inflow fluctuations. Lisa Wright, Corps, will add the Hells Canyon USGS data gauge to the TMT website.

Erick Van Dyke, OR, noted confusion around the concept of RSW "uncertainty" and that the uncertainty is based on the shape of water and what's available at any moment, not the RSW itself. Tony noted that there isn't a data point to provide precise flow over the RSW for the forebay elevation because of the fixed crest; at any given hour flow over the RSW is reported as 7 kcfs, but this is an assumed flow for a fixed pool elevation. Flow varies based on pool elevation. The AAs don't have visibility on flow rate yet, however, are working to resolve that soon.

### **Sockeye Update**

Jonathan Ebel, ID, reported that IDFG finished genotyping the sockeye that were trapped and hauled from Lower Granite. Specifically of interest are the unclipped (natural origin Redfish Lake) adults. Of the total 28 unclipped sockeye trapped and transported, 15 were genotyped to the upper Columbia's Wenatchee stock, and only 1 out of the 14 unclipped sockeye from the last 2 weeks of trapping were from Redfish Lake. This result coincided with IDFG's understanding of natural origin passage timing at Lower Granite. The 15 upper Columbia fish have been moved to the MK Nature Center in Boise.

**Public questions or comments:** There were no questions or comments from members of the public.

**The next scheduled TMT meeting is a conference call on August 25, 2021 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@diconsult.co](mailto:colby@diconsult.co).*

**Columbia River Regional Forum**  
**Technical Management Team**  
**OFFICIAL MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, August 18, 2021**  
**Minutes: Melissa Haskin, BPA (contractor, FLUX Resources)**

Today's TMT web meeting was chaired by Julie Ammann, Corps, and facilitated by Emily Stranz, DS Consulting. See the end of these minutes for a list of attendees.

**1. Review Meeting Summaries & Minutes**

The 8/11 facilitator's summary was approved with no additional edits.

**2. Treaty Fishing SOR 2021-C2 – Kyle Dittmer, CRITFC**

Kyle Dittmer, CRITFC, presented System Operational Request (SOR) 2021 C-2 for operation of the lower Columbia pools during the fall 2021 Treaty fishery for an initial 2-week season: Monday, August 23, 2021, 6 am, through Thursday, August 26, 2021, 6 pm and Monday, August 30, 2021, 6 am, through Thursday, September 2, 2021, at 6 pm.

The SOR requests that the Corps and BPA operate Bonneville and The Dalles pools within a 1.5-ft. band during the treaty fishing period defined above. It also requests a 2-foot operating band at John Day (this is consistent with last year's operation, which called for a hard constraint of 2 ft. and a soft constraint of 1.5 ft. at John Day). The latest TAC forecast of adult run size at Bonneville Dam for fall Chinook is 386,500 (below average), 96,800 steelhead (significantly below average) and 537,800 coho (significantly above average).

As in the past, CRITFC will sponsor net flights each week to count nets. The data may take up to a week to come in. There will likely be more nets this year than last; Dittmer estimated 400-700. He noted that most vendors are back this year, as opposed to last year when the pandemic was newer and forest fires were active. Since fish counts are down, treaty fishing may end early. Dittmer will update the TMT, if this happens.

Based on today's discussion, the Corps will implement the SOR as requested.

**3. Dworshak Dam Operations – Jon Roberts, Corps NWW**

Dworshak has been releasing 8.4 kcfs but will step down to 7.7 kcfs by 10:00 today. Pool elevation is currently 1,548 ft., which is about 13 ft. above the end of August target. This means the project will draft down by about a foot per day over the next few weeks. Roberts reminded TMT that as the pool reduces in size, it begins to draft faster. Dworshak is on track to hit the 1,535 ft. end of August target. The 10-day weather forecast shows rain in the headwaters of the Salmon and Clearwater Rivers, which will help reduce the natural river temperatures in both the long- and short-term. While flows are lower than normal and contributing less than normal to the Lower Granite pool, any help is valuable, he noted.

Roberts noted that the actions taken from June through today have helped to conserve water in a difficult year. This year, the river did heat up more than usual, but the current forecasts show Lower Granite remaining consistently below 68°F. Forebay surface temperatures are dropping. Right now, the fish trap is at ~66.5°F. This may rise to 67°F over the next few days. Roberts shared that the surface of Lower Granite's forebay is ~71-72°F, deeper down at 15 to 20 meters is 64-67°F, the RSW is near 69-70°F and the fish trap is about 63-64°F.

The Corps will continue to be efficient with available water. In addition to today's reduction, it plans to step down again Friday morning, ahead of the incoming precipitation. At that point, available cool water from Dworshak Dam water will be near its end. The Corps will continue to maintain a tailwater temperature of 67.5°F at Lower Granite's tailwater with the fish trap remaining closer to 66.5°F.

The Corps expects the Dworshak forebay to be within a half-foot of 1,535 ft. and outflows of 7-7.3 kcfs at the end of August.

#### **4. Lower Granite RSW Operations**

Charles Morrill, WA, reported that the Lower Granite RSW operation was discussed at FPAC yesterday and he has confirmed with the Action Agencies that it will be opened to the extent possible as flows allow, as outlined in the Fish Passage Plan. Tony Norris, BPA, confirmed that when there is sufficient water, the RSW will be open. It can be difficult to predict whether flows will be sufficient given forecast uncertainty and low flows, but it will be open if flows are high enough.

Jay Hesse, Nez Perce, shared his desire for the RSW to be open as much as possible but asked if there is a limit to how many times the RSW will open and close on any given day. Norris said that theoretically there is no limit. He noted that BPA is managing to inflow uncertainty and that if it looks like the pool is drafting to the lower end of range, the RSW will be closed and the rest of inflow spilled via deep spillbays until the pool fills sufficiently to avoid drafting below the minimum. His prediction is that this will not happen often during the day. He referenced the USGS gage data for the Snake River at Hell's Canyon Dam, which illustrates the volatility of flows coming from ID power. At the request of Morrill, Lisa Wright, Corps, will add a link to this data on the TMT website.

Erick Van Dyke, OR, expressed confusion about the uncertainty. Norris clarified that the RSW has a constant, fixed spill rate and isn't adjustable like the Little Goose ASW. Norris added that the reported spill through the RSW is about 7 kcfs, assuming the pool elevation is in MOP. The actual flow over the RSW is not reported and varies with the pool elevation. Flows are currently straddling the cusp of being just enough for both RSW spill and minimum generation (about +/- 1-3 kcfs) so it can be a challenge to forecast if enough water is available without drafting the pool below the bottom of the range. Van Dyke was not satisfied with this answer, but it was decided that it would be addressed outside of this forum.

**5. Sockeye Trap and Haul – Jonathan Ebel, IDFG**

IDFG has finished genotyping adult sockeye that were trapped and hauled. He noted that 28 unclipped sockeye were captured and transported. Of those, 15 were genotyped to the upper Columbia’s Wenatchee stock and only 1 was from Redfish Lake. The 15 fish from the Wenatchee area were moved to a nature center in Boise, ID for educational outreach.

**Today’s Attendees:**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>TMT Representative</b>
Army Corps of Engineers	Julie Ammann (Chair), Lisa Wright
Bonneville Power Administration	Tony Norris
Bureau of Reclamation	Chris Runyan
NOAA Fisheries	Trevor Conder
US Fish & Wildlife Service	Dave Swank
Washington	Charles Morrill
Oregon	Erick Van Dyke
Idaho	Jonathan Ebel
Montana	Brian Marotz
Nez Perce Tribe	Jay Hesse
Umatilla Tribe	Absent
Colville Tribe	Absent
Warm Springs Tribe	Jen Graham
Kootenai Tribe	Absent
Spokane Tribe	Absent

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

CRITFC – Kyle Dittmer  
 Corps – Jon Roberts, Dan Turner, Aaron Marshall Willow Walker, Chris Peery, Scott St. John  
 DS Consulting – Emily Stranz (Facilitator), Colby Mills  
 BPA –Melissa Haskin (Notetaker), Stacy Webster-Wharton  
 Yakama Nation Fisheries – Tom Iverson  
 EPA – David Gruen  
 Clearing Up – K.C. Mehaffey  
 Columbia Basin Bulletin – Mike O’Bryant