

## COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

February 16, 2022

Facilitator's Summary

Facilitation Team: Emily Stranz & Colby Mills, 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; it is not intended to be the "record" of the meeting. Official minutes can be found on the TMT website: <http://pweb.crohms.org/tmt/agendas/2022/>. Suggested edits for the summary are welcome and can be sent to Colby at [colby@dsconsult.co](mailto:colby@dsconsult.co).*

### Review Meeting Summaries & Minutes

TMT Members approved the official meeting minutes from the January 5 and 19 meetings and the official meeting minutes and facilitator's summaries from the January 26 and February 2 meetings. Dave Swank, USFWS, noted a correction to the February 2 summary; in the fish section, there were 3 bull trout counts at Lower Granite, not 2 as previously stated.

### Official Water Supply Forecasts

Joel Fenolio, BOR, reported the official February 1 residual water supply forecast for Hungry Horse Dam. February through July is 2,170 kaf, or 103% of average, and May through September is 1,810 kaf, or 102% of average.

The FRM elevation for April 30 for Grand Coulee based on the February water supply forecast was below 1,265 feet, the trigger this year for drum gate maintenance.

Doug Baus, Corps, reported official February water supply forecasts for Corps of Engineers projects:

- **The Dalles:** NWRFC April to August volume forecast is 89 maf, or 100% of average;
- **Lower Granite:** NWRFC April to July volume forecast is 17 maf, or 87% of average;
- **Libby:** Corps NWS February runoff forecast April to August is 7,249 kaf, or 119% of average, putting the February 28 FRM elevation at 2,363.9 feet; and
- **Dworschak:** Corps NWS February runoff forecast April to July is 2,805 kaf, or 113% of average, putting the February 28 FRM elevation at 1,518.6 feet.

### Chum Operation

Doug reported that there has been no change to the chum operation since the last TMT meeting. The incubation phase, during which Bonneville Dam will be operated to a minimum tailwater of 13ft, will continue through April 9 (spill season starts on April 10) unless otherwise coordinated at TMT. On February 16 at 0800 hours, Bonneville tailwater elevation was 15.3 feet, with a total outflow of 181.1 kcfs.

Tony Norris, BPA, reported on observed and measured chum redds from 2021 (posted to the TMT website), noting that redd distribution was not as common in the typical locations. Redds were observed in Woodard Creek and McCord Creek areas, with only a few in the Breaks, one in Ives Pocket, and none in the Ives Channel. Reports from the field noted that sea lion predation has kept spawning in the Ives Pocket and Ives channel area. The Strawberry area had more redds than typical. All redds had significant submergence. Only the redds that were observed by WDFW field crews were marked, however, there may have been more redds that were not visible due to high water and low visibility. BPA does not see any issue maintaining tailwater of 13' through April 10.

Tony noted that he visited the area prior to the start of operations and there was significant upwelling flow through the gravel in the Ives Pocket area at a BON TW of 8.5'. That, in conjunction with decent precipitation prior to the start of chum, and with Hamilton Creek flowing, contributed to good access to spawning areas prior to the start of the chum operation.

In response to a query from Kirk Truscott, Colville Tribe, Tony noted that no augmentation flow has been required from Grand Coulee this winter to support the chum minimum TW, drafting at Coulee has been for management of the forebay, flood control and the draft for drum gate maintenance.

Charles Morrill, WA, added that the timing of the elevated tailwater elevation had occurred after most of the observed spawning had been completed. Given the shared concern on increased predation activity, he also noted that WA has not incorporated incidental observation of sea lion predation, however, is considering doing so and Charlie will keep the TMT updated.

### **Zero Generation**

Tony reviewed a summary of zero generation usage from 12/17/2021 – 2/14/2022. There continues to be power market conditions that are not conducive to using zero generation, and so the number of hours used remains unchanged; it has not been used since the last cold snap in early January.

### **Contingency Actions Priority List**

Tony provided an update on the Contingency Actions List in the Power System Emergency Actions Plan. BPA reviewed comments provided by Fish Managers and have incorporated them into the updated List. BPA will need the List in place by the end of the month, additional comments can be incorporated after that date. Fish Managers were encouraged to review the updated List.

### **Grand Coulee Elevation**

Kirk noted concern that the current operations at Grand Coulee have the forebay elevation below flood control; he questioned how it could affect the beginning of spring spill and flow augmentation. Joel noted that Canada has healthy snowpack and FRM is looking like it will be lower than drum gate will require. Tony noted that current operations need to be at or below the drum gate maintenance elevation in mid-March to avoid exceeding draft rate limits; the project has 20 more feet to draft before mid-march.

**Questions or 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 March 2, 2022, at 9:00 AM.**

## **Columbia River Regional Forum**

### **Technical Management Team**

### **OFFICIAL MINUTES**

**February 16, 2022**

**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. A list of today's attendees is available at the end of these minutes.

### **1. Review of Official Minutes and Summaries**

Official minutes for the January 5 and January 19 meetings, and the facilitator's summary and official minutes for the January 26 meeting were approved with no additional edits. Dave Swank, USFWS sent in edits to the February 2 minutes and summary that will be incorporated: there were 3 bull trout counted at Lower Granite, not 2. Pending that edit, the minutes and summary for the February 2 meeting were approved.

### **2. Official Water Supply Forecasts**

Joel Fenolio, Reclamation, reported on the official February water supply forecast for Hungry Horse Dam. The residual forecast for February through July is 2,170 kaf, or 103% of average. The May-September forecast is for 1,700 kaf, which is 102% of average. The FRM elevation for Grand Coulee based off the February water supply forecast is below 1,265 ft., which is the trigger for drum gate maintenance this year.

Doug Baus, Corps, reported official January water supply forecasts for Corps projects.

- **The Dalles**: NWRFC April to August volume forecast is 89 maf, or 100% of average.
- **Lower Granite**: NWRFC April to July volume forecast is 17 maf, or 87 % of average.
- **Libby**: Corps NWS April to August runoff forecast is 7,249 kaf; this puts the February 28 FRM elevation at 2,363.9 feet.
- **Dworshak**: Corps NWS April to July runoff forecast is 2,805 kaf, or 113% of average. This puts the February 28 FRM elevation at 1,518.6 feet.

### **3. Chum Operation – Doug Baus, Corps**

Baus updated on chum operations coordinated at TMT and available on the TMT website. As coordinated, the chum operation transitioned from spawning to incubation on December 24 at 0001 hours with a Bonneville Dam minimum tailwater elevation of 13 feet all hours. Incubation will continue until the start of spring spill on April 10, unless coordinated otherwise at TMT.

There have been no changes to the operation since the last update.

The Bonneville Dam tailwater elevation at 0800 was 15.3 ft. Outflow was 181.1 kcfs.

Tony Norris, BPA, gave a brief presentation on 2021 chum redd locations and submergence. He showed pictures of where redds were observed in the Ives-Pierce Complex, specifically at Strawberry, McCord Creek, Breaks, and Ives. For each location, he showed graphs comparing redd elevation to an adjacent water surface elevation. This year, redds were not seen in some of

the typical places. There were no observed redds in the Ives Channel. Field experts noted that sea lions may have kept fish from spawning in these areas. Norris pointed out that there is a pocket in the Ives area where even before starting the chum operation, there seems to be significant water flow through the gravel at a Bonneville tailwater of just 8.5 feet. Norris noted that this shows that the flow of water through the gravel is driven by the amount of precipitation more than the water surface of the river. A photo is available in the presentation. Swank said he visited the area in the photo on November 5. There were salmon in the area, he reported. It seemed like they were chasing each other and it was hard to tell if they were Chinook or chum, he said. He was surprised there were no redds in the area based on the conditions. Norris noted that BPA only marks the redds that are shown to them by the field crews and the report of no redds in the Ives pocket and channel came from them.

Kirk Truscott of the Colville Tribe asked about drafts out of Grand Coulee and if they were for chum flow. Norris clarified that the water can be moved for many reasons, for instance when forecasts increase the agencies may need to move water in anticipation of more water coming in. The forebay must be managed around forecasted inflows, he added. Outside of the period in early November, there was not much augmentation required for chum flow, noted Norris.

Norris noted that BPA doesn't foresee issues with maintaining the 13-foot tailwater through April 10.

Charles Morrill, WA, noted that when the tailwater was elevated, most or all spawning had already occurred. Given the conditions after that and low visibility, the crew could not go out again. WDFW has not finished its report on observed counts this year versus historical counts.

Claire McGrath, NOAA, asked about the increase in pinniped presence in the area and if other agencies had also observed sea lions elsewhere in the region. WDFW has not incorporated sea lion observations into their surveys as of yet. Morrill is requesting internally that it be added in. WDFW is aware of the issue. He thinks it has been more prevalent this year than in past years. He added that when the tailwater elevation is above 14 ft. that sea lions have access to the area.

#### **4. Zero Generation – Norris**

Norris reviewed a current summary of zero generation usage from December 17, 2021 through February 14, 2022. There is not much to report since the last meeting. The operation has not been utilized since the cold snap ended on January 8.

#### **5. Power System Emergency Action Plan - Contingency Actions List**

Norris reported on the Power System Emergency Action Plan Contingency Actions List. The list is available on the TMT website and is used as a last resort. The steps indicated in the action plan are the last actions taken to avoid interrupting transmission and power delivery to the region. Last month, Tony requested comments on the actions list. BPA received comments from salmon managers and incorporated nearly all of the comments. After the last regularly scheduled TMT meeting, BPA reached out to agencies and fish managers to resolve additional questions. BPA is now submitting the revised list to the TMT for any additional comments. There is still some time if changes need to be made before the start of spill in March.

#### **6. Other: Grand Coulee Elevation**

Truscott asked why Grand Coulee is below flood control. It has been a dry February so he is wondering what this means for spring spill and upcoming flow augmentation. Fenolio said The

Dalles water supply forecast set the FRM elevation at Grand Coulee at 1,245 ft. The snowpack in Canada is healthy even though it has been dry in Washington and some of Idaho. The drum gate maintenance elevation is 1,255 ft. It may be lower compared to FRM, but FRM will be below what drum gate would require. Once April comes, the project should not be too far below FRM. Truscott asked why it is below FRM now. The elevation is currently 1,270.3 ft. Fenolio said it is partially to not exceed draft limit rates. Additionally, it is within the variable discharge limit. There is some flexibility below FRM to shape the draft of Grand Coulee to not be too much of a change at once. Norris added that what is driving the operation is that the project needs to be at or below the drum gate maintenance elevation in mid-March. That leaves 20 feet that needs to be drafted before mid-March. Norris said he is happy to talk with Truscott more offline.

**Today’s Attendees:**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>TMT Representative</b>
Army Corps of Engineers	Doug Baus (Chair), Lisa Wright, Julie Ammann
Bonneville Power Administration	Tony Norris, Scott Bettin
Bureau of Reclamation	Joel Fenolio
NOAA Fisheries	Claire McGrath, 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/CRITFC	
Colville Tribe	Kirk Truscott
Warm Springs Tribe	
Kootenai Tribe	
Spokane Tribe	

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

Corps – Aaron Marshall, Alexis Mills, Dan Turner, Willow Walker, Jon Roberts, Leon Basdekas, Scott St. John, Catherine Dudgeon, Kasi Whorley  
 DS Consulting – Emily Stranz (Facilitator), Colby Mills  
 BPA – Melissa Haskin (CONTR, FLUX Resources, Notetaker)  
 Nez Perce Tribe – Anthony Capetillo  
 Oregon DEQ – Marilyn Fonseca  
 Columbia Basin Bulletin – Mike O’Bryant  
 Chelan PUD – Kate von Reis Baron  
 Energy GPS – Joshua Rasmussen  
 West Power Trading – Mark Kruzel  
 Unidentified: Patrick McGonigal, Richard James, Ronnie McGill