

COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

May 6, 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.

Adult Passage – Jonathan Ebel, ID, reported encouraging adult spring Chinook passage at Bonneville Dam. Regarding passage at Lower Monumental, he reported that with current flows and more spill bays in service, the project is seeing increased passage (around 800-1,000 daily over the past three days). Total cumulative counts still show a deficit, although as Jonathan noted, the 2-3-day travel time between projects indicates that the deficit is actually decreasing more than the total cumulative counts. There is not much PIT tag data from Ice Harbor to Lower Monumental, but data available are indicative of improving conversion between Ice Harbor and Lower Monumental.

Daily average flow yesterday was 54 kcfs at LoMo and flows are expected to increase over the next few days. The project is implementing performance standard spill with a fixed 30 kcfs spill from 4am to noon, and the increased powerhouse flow should further improve tailrace conditions and attraction to the ladders. Additionally, water temperatures are increasing and will help improve travel times and hopefully bring out fish that are entrenched below the project. Jonathan noted the conversion rates are improving and that the slow conversion should resolve over the next few days.

Fish Managers recommend keeping current operations as described in the FOP, and to continue monitoring closely to see if different variables (temperature, flow, abundance of fish coming into the Snake) continue to improve adult passage. Jonathan, and others, commended the Corps for working through the spill bay repairs quickly (another spill bay is expected to return to service today if all goes as planned and weather allows). Jonathan emphasized that Idaho is still concerned and will continue to watch closely; if passage dips back down during the high flows, ID will ask for an operational change next week. Even as flows increase with smooth passage at Lower Monumental, fish can get held up at Little Goose, merely shifting the adult passage problem elsewhere. Additionally, the arrival of juveniles at Lower Granite from high priority recovery populations means there is an increased risk to impact juvenile passage.

Discussion points from TMT Members included:

- Dave Swank, USFWS, noted that water temperature at the Lower Monumental tailrace has been below average the last couple of weeks, and incoming warmer temperatures should help with adult passage.
- Trevor Conder, NOAA, confirmed that with increased flows, returning spill bays, warmer water temperatures, improvement with PIT-tag data and travel times, NOAA feels confident that passage will increase over the weekend. If there is no improvement after

monitoring the situation on Monday, NOAA will support a recommendation to improve conditions.

- Charles Morrill, WA, agreed with NOAA, highlighting the balancing act between adult and juvenile passage. WA is optimistic for adult passage improvement.
- Tom Lorz, CTUIR/CRITFC noted appreciation for the Corps' time and efforts to resolve the issue, and hoped for an increasingly proactive approach to avoid similar situations in the future.
- Tolerance for adult delay does differ between Fish Manager entities.

Scott St. John, Corps, provided a detailed update on repair progress for Lower Monumental. Crews have been working for 2 weeks straight, and plan to continue spill bay 2 stop log removal on Monday if incoming weather patterns delay work today; personnel will not be working over the weekend due to forecasted high winds. Scott clarified that the Corps is confident that all repair work on the spill bays will be completed by Thursday or Friday of next week, and will confirm with the project for a progress update.

The TMT will plan on meeting on May 11, as scheduled, monitoring passage and conditions closely until then. FPAC will discuss further on Tuesday at their regular meeting.

- **ACTION**: If conditions do not improve, FPAC will schedule a TMT meeting on Tuesday, May 10, via Doug Baus, Corps, to address options for improving passage conditions.
- **ACTION**: Scott St. John will update the TMT via email on project repair progress after confirming with the Lower Monumental project staff.

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 May 11, 2022, at 9:00 AM.

Columbia River Regional Forum

Technical Management Team

OFFICIAL MINUTES

May 6, 2022

Minutes: Melissa Haskin, BPA (contractor, CorSource)

Today's special 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. Today's meeting was requested by Jonathan Ebel, ID, in his role as FPAC Chair, to discuss adult fish passage, which has been lagging in the lower Snake River.

1. Adult Passage - Jonathan Ebel, ID

Jonathan Ebel, ID, reported that adult spring Chinook passage is satisfactory at Bonneville Dam and the lower Columbia projects, however, travel between Ice Harbor and Lower Monumental is lagging. Travel time between the projects is 2-3 days right now. With the spillbays back in service at Lower Monumental, passage is improving. Ebel noted that over the past few days 800-1,000 fish, on average, have passed Lower Monumental. He noted that there is still a deficit.

Ebel updated the TMT on conditions at Lower Monumental Dam, sharing that yesterday's average outflows were 54 kcfs. The RFC forecast shows a significant increase in flows over the next few days. Under the Fish Operations Plan (FOP), the project will be spilling 30 kcfs (performance standard spill) for 8 hours each morning. During these hours, there will be increased powerhouse flow, if the forecast holds, which will improve tailrace conditions and attraction to the fish ladders, he said.

The FPAC consensus is to follow the FOP and continue to monitor the situation. The group is not recommending any changes at this time.

Ebel added that from ID's perspective, there is still reason for concern and should things fail to improve, ID will be advocating for a change. This decision is driven by two reasons. First, as flows come up, fish tend to get held up below Little Goose, so passage issues do not necessarily resolve completely. Instead, they can just move further downstream. Second, high priority wild juveniles from the middle fork and upper Salmon River are arriving at Lower Granite. It becomes a balancing act of adults versus juveniles when juveniles arrive since powerhouse passage affects both groups differently. Additionally, fish from the Imnaha River are arriving.

Dave Swank, USFWS, noted that water temperatures in the Lower Monumental tailrace have been below average over the last few weeks. He added that typically when water temperature is below 50 degrees Fahrenheit, fish do not move through the system as quickly as when temperatures are over that. As water temperatures increase, it should encourage the fish to start moving, he said, adding that temperatures do not play as big of a role as spill patterns do in shifting fish behavior.

Trevor Conder, NOAA, added that his agency is confident that passage will increase at Lower Monumental over the weekend. However, if NOAA does not see the change it is expecting, it will advocate for improving conditions.

Charles Morrill, WA, noted his agency agrees with the FPAC consensus to hold steady with the current operation but continue to monitor the situation. He is concerned about the balancing act of juveniles versus adults, especially since the longer it takes to take action now, the more the actions may affect arriving juveniles.

Tom Lorz, Umatilla Tribe/CRITFC, expressed that it was unfortunate that the spillbay work could not have been completed prior to the start of fish passage season. He added that it would be nice to have spillbays 2 and 3 back in service, if flows are as high as forecasted. He asked for an update on the work. Scott St. John, Corps NWW, reported that the project completed the spillbay 2 grease line install for the north portion of the trunnion bushing and drilled all three holes for the south bushing yesterday. Today, the plan is to complete the south bushing grease line install, then grease and cycle bay 2 with the stoplogs in place before removing the stoplogs. There is a weather system coming in that might delay removal of the stoplogs until Monday. Crews have been working nonstop for two weeks. They will take this weekend off since weather conditions will prevent them from doing any additional work. After bay 2 is returned to service, they will get to work on bay 1. All work should be completed at Lower Monumental by the end of next week. The crew has all the components it needs to complete work.

FPAC will meet Monday to discuss the weekend’s fish passage data. If they are not satisfactory, the group will call an unscheduled TMT meeting on Tuesday, May 10. Several fish managers expressed that by Monday, if conditions do not improve, the matter will be urgent enough to require action Tuesday instead of waiting for the scheduled TMT meeting on Wednesday.

Scott Bettin, BPA, wondered if this could be skipped by scheduling a suggested change now. Jonathan Ebel, ID, and other fish managers noted that they have different thresholds for what necessitates change. This makes defining a trigger for an action difficult. The group would like to meet to talk on Monday before bringing any options to the TMT.

Today’s Attendees:

Agency	TMT Representative
Army Corps of Engineers	Doug Baus (Chair), Lisa Wright
Bonneville Power Administration	Tony Norris, Scott Bettin
Bureau of Reclamation	
NOAA Fisheries	Trevor Conder
US Fish & Wildlife Service	Dave Swank
Washington	Charles Morrill
Oregon	Erick Van Dyke
Idaho	Jonathan Ebel
Montana	
Nez Perce Tribe	Jay Hesse
Umatilla Tribe/CRITFC	Tom Lorz
Colville Tribe	
Warm Springs Tribe	Jen Graham
Kootenai Tribe	
Spokane Tribe	

Other Attendees (non-TMT members):

Corps – Scott St. John, Chris Peery, Aaron Marshall, Alexis Mills, Dan Turner
DS Consulting – Emily Stranz (Facilitator), Colby Mills