

COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

May 18, 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.

Review Meeting Summaries & Minutes - TMT Members finalized the facilitator's summaries from the May 4 and 6 meetings. Official meeting minutes from the May 4, 6, and 11 meetings, and the facilitator's summary from May 11, will be reviewed at the next TMT meeting.

System Operational Request (SOR) #2022-4 - Jonathan Ebel, IDFG, presented on SOR #2022-4 (posted to the TMT website), which requests that the remaining 53.3 kaf of Palisades Powerhead water in Reclamation's reservoirs in the upper Snake River above Milner Dam, be kept in the storage system in 2022. It is IDFG's technical opinion that the risks to wild resident trout from releasing the remaining Palisades Powerhead water outweighs the benefits to anadromous fish, given the water supply and water conditions in the upper Snake River.

Brian Stevens, from Reclamation's upper Snake field office, reported on expected reservoir elevations moving into summer and fall. He highlighted projections for pool levels throughout the basin, including 100 kaf remaining at Henry's Fork at the end of the year and 75 kaf expected at Jackson Lake (mainstem of the Snake basin upstream of Palisades). Brian emphasized that powerhead use and irrigation will influence where Palisades ends up at the end of the year, and estimated that Palisades will be in the lower range regardless of whether the powerhead water is used or kept in the system. Brian also noted that due to the dry conditions, Reclamation expects that there will be sediment concerns at Palisades and throughout the watershed. Although there is limited flexibility due to the dry year, it is anticipated that the remaining 75 kaf in Jackson that could potentially help address sediment concerns from Palisades. In response to inquiry from Jonathan, Brian shared that Reclamation meets with Wyoming Fish and Game regularly and will address the sediment concerns and use of Jackson water.

Joel Fenolio, Reclamation, noted that conditions can easily fluctuate moving forward, and although the water supply has improved a bit, it's going to be a hard year for managing the reservoir system. Reclamation has a responsibility to deliver contracted water to space-holders and provide BiOp flows, while also working to efficiently manage the system to lessen biological effects throughout.

Discussion and Points of Clarification:

- Projected upper Snake flow augmentation for this year is anticipated to be around 280 kaf, including the 53 kaf of powerhead, 20 kaf from Boise, and remaining natural flows and Payette River systems. Reclamation is still waiting to see how the Boise and Payette systems will fill moving into June to determine a final number for those systems.
- Although it's hard to quantify, Reclamation thinks sediment loads will be similar to last year, or slightly more if pool levels drop lower than last year.

- Dave Swank, USFWS, asked if there was a trigger or hard stop for Reclamation if Palisades reached a very concerning level. Joel noted that Reclamation intends to run as lean as possible, while still delivering the allocated water. Leftover water in Jackson could buffer effects of sediment, and Reclamation will continue to work with the local interested parties to manage the situation as best they can.
- Leaving the Palisades Powerhead could still leave a chance to enter negative space.

TMT Members were polled on the SOR, with some providing additional rationale for their responses:

TMT Member	Polling Response	Rationale (optional)
NOAA	Object without elevation	NOAA considers the flow augmentation as described in the proposed action and considered in the BiOp to be meaningful for both habitat quality and ecosystem process. They also understand the increased flow will lead to measurable improvements in travel time, which data generally show improve survival and increase adult returns. NOAA believes the flow augmentation remains important and doesn't agree with some minimal language in the SOR. Current information shows that the magnitude of the reduction in the reservoir elevation and the associated sedimentation in the hypothesized impact to cutthroat trout is not certain, and will be largely impacted with reservoir management like the Jackson operation and irrigation. NOAA is also sympathetic to the IDFG concern for their resource and think it's important. NOAA looks forward to working with IDFG, Reclamation and the surrounding region to find good solutions to help preserve the resources while protecting ESA listed salmonids.
Oregon	Object (with/without elevation not stated)	Oregon's concerns align with NOAA's statement. They emphasized their concern that this is yet another situation where different uses of the resources are pitted against each other, resulting with biological components losing coverage. Oregon is also concerned about sediment management actions and wondered if the sediment could have been managed differently and to help avoid the current situation.
Washington	Abstain	Washington abstained as they had not yet fully vetted the SOR internally. They appreciate the difficulty in taking a course of action, and recognize valid concern on both sides. The potential sedimentation is a significant impact, and Washington supports further discussion and the elevation to RIOG.
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation	Abstain	Colville Tribes also have not had an opportunity to fully vet the SOR internally. They abstained from polling given the volume of water in question indicated that this is likely more of a Snake River Basin issue rather than a Columbia River mainstem issue.
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla	Object without elevation	Umatilla Tribes acknowledged and understood that Idaho had worked on mitigation but it had failed. They felt that the SOR should have included what mitigation had been considered, as

Indian Reservation		mitigation would be critical to get Salmon managers support of this SOR. They invited other parties to come up with possible offsets that might be easier for the AAs and Salmon Managers to support the SOR. They sympathize with Idaho and recognize this is a challenging issue. It is difficult to balance all needs and to not to pit one species against another.
Reclamation	Object without elevation	Reclamation hears Idaho's concerns and has been working with this issue for the past couple months; they will continue to work with irrigators and local agencies to address sedimentation issues as they arise throughout the summer. The BiOp dictates that Reclamation's position is that they need to release the water as stated in the 2008 BiOP.
Corps	Abstain	The Corps abstained because they need more time to coordinate with Accord partners.
USFWS	Abstain	USFWS abstained not because they are uninterested in Idaho's concerns; they are struggling to determine the likelihood of a sedimentation event actually occurring and its impact, and their primary charge is Bull Trout. They agree that flow augmentation water is important and the region has responsibilities to native trout species. The issue warrants more discussion and careful monitoring; overall USFWS doesn't have enough information to make a fully informed decision.
IDFG	Support	The State of Idaho supports the flow augmentation program and has kept their commitment to provide water to the border for 15 years. The BiOp recognized that the full flow augmentation would not always be available and after two years of drought, this is a very difficult water year for managing resident fish. They believe the risks to resident fish caused by releasing water vastly outweighs the benefits of this volume of water to anadromous fish in 2022.
Montana	Abstain	Montana empathizes with the challenge Idaho faces, recognizing that often with high temperatures and low water, resident fish are more sensitive than the downstream anadromous fish. They abstained due to the amount of uncertainty around the water supply and think it's a good idea to keep this SOR on the radar for later. Montana is encouraged that Reclamation acknowledged the sediment problem, and think working together is important for the common good of upstream and downstream species; it's also good to consider the Columbia basin as a whole. They still have uncertainties on if other water users understand the sediment issues, and if there are other ways to conserve water or intercept sediment.
Nez Perce Tribe	Object with elevation	The Nez Perce Tribe is sympathetic to potential impacts to resident fish, however, their bottom line is that the efforts to secure water for anadromous fish were born out of a congressionally approved settlement that was followed by a

		biological assessment in the BiOp, and those commitments for water downstream are absolutely essential to maintain.
Bonneville	Abstain	BPA supports Reclamation as manager of the upper Snake system as they work to meet requirements in the BiOp, and to meet the needs of the State of Idaho as best as they can.
<i>Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, Spokane Tribe of Indians, and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs were not present to register a polling response.</i>		

Action Agency Decision

Reclamation plans to release the Palisades Powerhead water. The water was previously slated for release starting on May 23, however, given the colder weather conditions and the desire to elevate the issue to RIOG, Reclamation can wait to release the water until May 30 at the latest. Joel noted that the BiOp asks Reclamation to release the water early, particularly in dry years, but in this case, the issue will be elevated and discussed further so the delay is appropriate. It was recognized that RIOG may offer a different recommended path forward.

TMT Members were polled on Reclamation's decision to not implement the SOR, and to delay the water release no later than May 30.

TMT Member	Polling Response	Rationale (optional)
NOAA	Support	No additional comments
Oregon	Abstain	No additional comments
Washington	Abstain	No additional comments
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation	Abstain	No additional comments
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation	Support	No additional comments
Reclamation	Support	No additional comments
Corps	Abstain	No additional comments
USFWS	Abstain	No additional comments
IDFG	Object with elevation	Idaho will elevate the issue to the policy level. They noted that TMT is charged to look at the technical merits of the request and believes that much of the technical information has been glossed over, including the risk/benefit analysis. Idaho believes that TMT partners may be objecting to the request on principal. Idaho remains very concerned for fisheries in the Upper Snake system.
Montana	Support	No additional comments
Nez Perce Tribe	Support	No additional comments
Bonneville	Abstain	Once again, abstaining but supporting Reclamation as they are the decision makers and technical experts on managing the BiOp, while doing their best to meet Idaho's needs.
<i>Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, Spokane Tribe of Indians, and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs were not present to register a polling response.</i>		

- **ACTION**: IDFG will bring the SOR to RIOG, as quickly as possible before May 30, at which point Reclamation will begin flow augmentation unless RIOG conversations result in a new path forward.

Jonathan asked that the Palisades water not be released prior to the RIOG discussion. Facilitator, Emily Stranz, encouraged TMT Members to brief their RIOG representatives on the technical aspects of the SOR as soon as possible.

Lower Snake River Fixed Block / Lack of Load Decision Criteria - In response to a request for language clarification in the Lack of Load Decision Criteria, Tony Norris, BPA, reported on an updated version of the guidance document (posted to the TMT website), that clarifies that John Day would indeed be curtailing the flexible spill, prior to accessing the SPL. Also added is a footnote identifying the input from FPAC in the process for developing the criteria. Jay Hesse, Nez Perce Tribe expressed appreciation for the footnote addition.

Questions or Comments from Members of the Public - There were no questions or comments from members of the public

May 25 TMT Meeting Proposed Agenda Topics - No additional topics were addressed at this time.

The next scheduled TMT meeting is on May 25 at 9:00 AM.

Columbia River Regional Forum
Technical Management Team
OFFICIAL MINUTES
May 18, 2022

Minutes: Melissa Haskin, BPA (contractor, CorSource Technology Group, LLC)

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 Meeting Summaries

The 5/4 and 5/6 meeting summaries were approved with no additional edits. Charles Morrill, WA, asked for additional time to review the 5/11 summary. It will be reviewed at the next meeting.

2. SOR 2022-4

Jonathan Ebel, ID, presented SOR 2022-4 to the TMT. The full text of the SOR is available on the TMT website. The SOR asks that all remaining Palisades Powerhead flow augmentation rental water be held instead of released. ID believes that continued threat of drought will necessitate the need to reserve the remaining 53.3 kaf of water.

Brian Stevens, Reclamation, briefed the TMT on current conditions and forecasts noting:

1. By fall, Henry's Fork will have about 100 maf left at the end of the year.
2. Jackson Lake will likely have 75 maf available at the end of the year.
3. Powerhead and irrigation will affect Palisades rentals, which are estimated to come in at 15 maf, based on the 50th percentile estimates. This is about 1% full with an elevation of 5,501.16 ft. The full range forecast is for -47 maf (below 0% full) on the low end and 78 maf on the high end.

Joel Fenolio, Reclamation, added that cold weather has pushed back irrigation, which has led to some improvement in Upper Snake conditions. However, it is still going to be a difficult year to manage the reservoirs, he warned.

Stevens noted that if Palisades drops below 0%, sedimentation occurs.

Following the update on conditions, TMT members and representatives asked the following questions. *Please note that these notes are not meant to be read as a transcript but as a summary. Some questions were asked more than once by more than one member and were only included once in the section below.*

- ❖ Tom Lorz, Umatilla Tribe/CRITFC
 - What is the total projected augmentation flow available for the year? Answer: 280,000 acre-feet.
 - Compared to last year, are this year's conditions similar, better, or worse? Answer: This year is similar to last year, however, it is hard to quantify. There may be additional sedimentation if the available augmentation volume drops.

- ❖ Dave Swank:
 - Comment: The water supply forecast has improved and USFWS does not believe it is likely that conditions will reach the situation that ID is concerned about.
 - Question: Is there a trigger to reduce flows if Palisades reaches a concerning level?
Answer: The intent is to run as lean as possible while delivering water Reclamation has contracted to space holders.
- ❖ Charles Morrill, WA
 - Does the total projected augmentation flow of 280 maf include the powerhead water?
Answer: Yes, it includes the 53.3 kaf of powerhead out of Palisades.
- ❖ Ebel
 - If the low-end forecast were to occur, what will the sedimentation impact be? Can you predict where a serious discharge of sediment will occur? Answer: There is potential that water will be available from Jackson Lake to address the sediment issue. If the space goes negative, the water may not be able to curtail all of the sediment. In terms of specifics, it is hard to know. There is some information that sediment last fall was in line with a chart released in 2021. At the time, decreasing flow through irrigation decreases were used to reduce sedimentation. Stevens noted that there are some minor adjustments and tools like this that can be used if sedimentation occurs. There would be motivation to intervene if space drops below 0% because Reclamation would not be able to generate power.
 - Comment: There is a trigger where sediment can increase significantly. ID has experienced this in other places as reservoirs have dipped to lower elevations.
 - Would leaving the palisades powerhead water in the system lead to a different forecast, where the region would not enter negative space, if the low end forecast were to occur?
Answer: There is an even lower projection, even keeping powerhead in the system. There is still a chance of hitting 0 or below 0.
 - What level of communication does Reclamation have with Wyoming Fish & Game?
Answer: Reclamation meets formally with WYFG twice a year. There has been more coordination this year than there was last year. Reclamation believes that if communication occurs early and often that there would not be concerns if the region needed the 75 kaf out of Jackson Lake.

Emily Stranz, DS Consulting, polled TMT members on the SOR. There was some concern about the process of polling. Several members, including Ebel, Jay Hesse, Nez Perce, and Erick Van Dyke, OR, felt the polling responses did not make sense and follow the process in the TMT Guidelines, available on the TMT website. Stranz directed members to the chart on page 5 of the guidelines, which states, “TMT members are polled on the SOR as written: support, no objection, object with or without elevation, or abstain.” The group agreed to table the process concerns for a process meeting. Poll results are as follows:

Agency	TMT Representative	
Army Corps of Engineers	Doug Baus	Abstain
Bonneville Power Administration	Tony Norris	Abstain
Bureau of Reclamation	Joel Fenolio	Object
NOAA Fisheries	Trevor Conder	Object
US Fish & Wildlife Service	Dave Swank	Abstain
Washington	Charles Morrill	Abstain
Oregon	Erick Van Dyke	Object
Idaho	Jonathan Ebel	Support

Agency	TMT Representative	
Montana	Brian Marotz	Abstain
Nez Perce Tribe	Jay Hesse	Object with elevation
Umatilla Tribe/CRITFC	Tom Lorz	Object
Colville Tribe	Kirk Truscott	Abstain
Warm Springs Tribe	Jen Graham	
Kootenai Tribe	Shawn Young	
Spokane Tribe	Absent	

Several TMT representatives voiced a need for additional time to further review the request. Both OR and Umatilla Tribe/CRITFC had not received guidance from their policy folks and thus chose to abstain from the poll at this time.

Following polling, comments and clarifications were stated for the official record. All voting members expressed empathy for ID’s concerns and desire to protect native trout.

NOAA: NOAA believes that flow augmentation is important and meaningful for habitat quality and ecosystem processes. Increasing flow has shown to improve travel time, which increases survival and adult return rates. NOAA does not agree with some of the minimal information in the SOR. NOAA believes that the amount of sedimentation from a reduction in the reservoir level is uncertain, as are the potential impacts to trout from that sedimentation. NOAA would like to work with the region to find a solution that will also protect ESA-listed salmonids.

OR: Van Dyke commented that OR agrees with many of the issues raised by NOAA. This SOR pits one use of a resource against another, which causes biological components to lose coverage. OR wonders if there are different ways to manage sediment and if there are issues that were not addressed earlier that could have negated today’s issues. OR will await guidance from its policy team regarding if this SOR needs to be elevated to RIOG.

WA: Morrill expressed that both sides have valid concerns and potential sedimentation could lead to significant impacts. WA believes this should be elevated for further discussion but did chose to abstain from this poll. WA is waiting to receive guidance from its policy team.

Colville Tribe: This SOR is more of a Snake River issue than a mainstem Columbia issue. The Colville representative, Kirk Truscott, has not had time to discuss today’s SOR with the Tribe’s RIOG representative.

Umatilla Tribe/CRITFC: Lorz commented that if the SOR had included offsets, that his agency might had been more likely to support it. When you pit one species against another, it becomes challenging, he noted. Lorz is waiting from his policy folks to hear if they would like to elevate the issue or just object.

Reclamation: Reclamation will continue working with irrigators and agencies to mitigate summer sedimentation issues. Reclamation consulted on the 2008 BiOp and plans to release water as coordinated through that process and the document it signed on to.

Corps: The Corps chose to abstain on the grounds that there has not been adequate time for coordination. The Corps needs to coordinate with ID as well as its Action Agency partners.

USFWS: Swank noted that his agency is struggling to determine the likelihood of a sedimentation event and the impact, should that happen. Flow augmentation is an important part of ecosystem processes, said Swank. Bull trout is of particular interest to USFWS. His agency has a responsibility to protect native trout in the Snake River above anadromous waters. Swank does not have enough information to make a decision and thus his agency has chosen to abstain from today’s poll. He believes the situation should be monitored and more discussion is necessary.

ID: Ebel started by noting that his agency has met its commitment to provide and protect flow augmentation water for almost 15 years. He noted that both the 2007 Biological Assessment and 2008 BiOp recognized that the full flow augmentation volume will not be available in all years. This is the first year that the full volume is not available. It comes on the heels of 2 consecutive years of drought. This year will be a particularly difficult year for fish management, he noted. Risks to resident native trout caused by releasing powerhouse water vastly outweigh benefits to anadromous fish. He thinks the region is downplaying risk to aquatic resources while overestimating the benefit to anadromous fish.

MT: Brian Marotz, MT, noted that resident fish are more sensitive than anadromous fish when temperatures are high and water supply is low. MT is abstaining because of the uncertainty in the water supply forecast. He wondered if other water users understand the sediment issue and if they can take measures to mitigate the issue. For instance, he wondered if there are other water conservation measures that can be taken or devices that can be built to intercept sediment.

Nez Perce: Efforts to secure water for anadromous fish were born out of a congressionally approved settlement and biological assessment. It is essential to maintain that commitment.

BPA: The agency supports Reclamation as the manager of the Upper Snake System as it works to meet the requirements of the BiOp and the needs of ID in this complicated issue.

Decision: Given today’s polling responses and comments, Reclamation will release flow augmentation on May 23, unless there is a desire for elevation to RIOG. Should the issue be elevated to RIOG, Reclamation can hold the water until May 30.

Next step: Following Reclamation’s response. Stranz polled TMT members to see if there was additional interest in elevating the SOR (The Nez Perce Tribe polled “object with elevate” during the first round of polling). This poll asked members if they were supporting or objecting to Reclamation’s decision to release the water. The poll results are as follows:

Agency	TMT Representative	
Army Corps of Engineers	Doug Baus	Abstain
Bonneville Power Administration	Tony Norris	Abstain
Bureau of Reclamation	Joel Fenolio	Support
NOAA Fisheries	Trevor Conder	Support
US Fish & Wildlife Service	Dave Swank	Abstain
Washington	Charles Morrill	
Oregon	Erick Van Dyke	Abstain
Idaho	Jonathan Ebel	Object and Elevate
Montana	Brian Marotz	

Agency	TMT Representative	
Nez Perce Tribe	Jay Hesse	
Umatilla Tribe/CRITFC	Tom Lorz	Support
Colville Tribe	Kirk Truscott	Abstain
Warm Springs Tribe	Jen Graham	
Kootenai Tribe	Shawn Young	
Spokane Tribe	Absent	

Again, TMT members expressed confusion at the polling process and asked that it be revisited at a process meeting.

Only one member, Ebel, added a comment for the official record. Ebel noted that the TMT is meant as a place for considering the technical merits of the SOR. He felt like the technical information was glossed over and risks to resident fish were not adequately acknowledged. He voiced concern that TMT members and agencies were objecting on principle as opposed to the technical merits of the request. ID expressed concern for Upper Snake fish. ID asked that water not be released until the RIOG process is complete.

Reclamation commented that RIOG should be able to meet in the next 12 days, before Reclamation releases the water, if this is an important issue to them. Stranz commented that TMT members can help speed up the RIOG process by consulting with their RIOG team members.

The issue has been elevated to RIOG.

3. Lower Snake River Fixed Block / Lack of Load Decision Criteria

Tony Norris, BPA, noted that there is a new version of the Lower Snake River Fixed Block / Lack of Load Decision Criteria guidance document posted to the TMT website. The new version clarifies steps that will be taken at John Day prior to spill priority list actions (The document reads, “*JDA is not included since choosing not to flex will have been implemented prior to spill at CHJ, GCL and DWR and cannot further increase spill within the state water quality standards given the level of spill (up to 125% all hours) included in the 2022 FOP*”). The updated document also includes a note about the process for developing criteria, which includes soliciting feedback from FPAC.

Hesse asked for clarification on where The Dalles falls into the provided guidance. Norris replied that The Dalles is above the projects noted in the document. It would not be impacted until the agencies hit level 2 of the Spill Priority List.

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	Joel Fenolio
NOAA Fisheries	Trevor Conder, Kelsey Swieca
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	Tom Lorz
Colville Tribe	Kirk Truscott
Warm Springs Tribe	
Kootenai Tribe	
Spokane Tribe	

Other Attendees (non-TMT members):

Corps – Aaron Marshall, Alexis Mills, Dan Turner, Chris Peery, Ashlynn Tate
Nez Perce Tribe - Anthony Capetillo, Bobby Hills
DS Consulting – Emily Stranz (Facilitator), Colby Mills
Reclamation – Mike Hilliard, Brian Stevens, Jen Johnson, Eric Rothwell, Chris Runyan
Clearing Up – K.C. Mehaffey
PPC – Shane Scott
Grant PUD – Peter Graf
Snohomish PUD – Jesse Price