

**COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM**

June 22, 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 June 1 and the facilitator's summary from June 15. Meeting minutes from June 8, 10 and 15, and the facilitator's summary from June 10, will be reviewed at the next TMT meeting.

**Spill Priority List** - Dan Turner, Corps, updated the TMT on the draft summer Spill Priority List (SPL), a tool to be used when spilling during lack of market loads on the system. As a starting point, the spring project order has rolled over, with updated spill caps, and will remain the same unless otherwise coordinated by the TMT.

Jonathan Ebel, ID, noted that there was discussion at FPAC on if Ice Harbor Dam should be moved lower down the list (below Bonneville on Level 1), in an effort to boost upstream adult fish passage at the project. He noted that passage was limited at Ice Harbor within the last week due to high flows, however, with the reduction in spill yesterday for the start of summer spill, there was a boost in passage at Ice Harbor and Lower Monumental dams.

TMT discussed whether to stick with the current SPL and monitor passage data as flows start to decline, to move Ice Harbor down on the SPL, or to reduce the Ice Harbor Level 1 spill cap to around 45-50 kcfs during this remaining period of high flows.

Scott Bettin and Tony Norris, BPA, anticipated that there will be some lack of market spill over the next week or so, and noted that there are also turbine capacity limitations which affect spill levels. Flows are still reasonably high in the Snake, but are expected to sharply drop off by the weekend.

It was noted that there are years of data illustrating successful passage at around 45 kcfs at Ice Harbor and the Action Agencies agreed that lowering the Level 1 spill cap is a feasible tool to support adult passage conditions at the project.

- **ACTION:** The AAs will change the Summer SPL Level 1 Ice Harbor spill cap to 45 kcfs today (1600 hours). FPAC will review the data next Tuesday and the issue will be reviewed at TMT on Wednesday, June 29 as needed.

**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 on June 29, 2022 at 9:00 AM.**

## **Columbia River Regional Forum**

### **Technical Management Team**

### **OFFICIAL MINUTES**

**June 22, 2022**

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

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 Minutes and Summaries**

The 6/1 meeting minutes and 6/15 summary were approved with no additional edits.

#### **2. Spill Priority List**

Dan Turner, Corps, provided an update on the Spill Priority List. The lower Snake projects transitioned to summer spill yesterday.

Turner provided the TMT with a draft summer Spill Priority List, available on the TMT website. The project priority order is the same as in the spring and the spill caps have been updated.

#### **Questions and Comments:**

- Jonathan Ebel, ID, was not sure which list would be active this summer so the list was discussed at FPAC in general but this specific order was not discussed. The group discussed moving Ice Harbor below McNary, John Day, and The Dalles. The group came to a consensus to let the current order in the draft stand, for now, but to evaluate it more closely now that they know which draft is being used.
- Ebel showed some data on adult fish passage at Ice Harbor. There have been delays for about a week. They were alleviated yesterday as spill levels came down with the start of summer spill. Ebel commented that there could have possibly been better passage at Ice Harbor last week had there not been lack of market spill. Trevor Conder, NOAA, agreed, adding that in the past when the project was spilling 45 kcfs, there typically was not a problem with adult passage. Given the improvement in conditions and lower temperatures, Conder feels it is prudent to wait a day to see how things shape up. That said, he added that Ice Harbor should be dropped from Level 1 or should have Level 1 capped at 45 kcfs.
- Ebel asked if lack of market spill is likely to occur moving forward. Bettin said it is likely, especially with the holiday weekend approaching.
- Speaking on behalf of ID and not as FPAC Chair, Ebel noted that his agency is interested in moving fish, especially since it is late in the season and temperatures are low.
- Ebel noted that he does not agree that the passage issues are 100% due to spill volumes. Hourly data suggest that river discharge plays a big part in if fish move into the ladder at Ice Harbor.
- Ebel is fine moving Ice Harbor below Bonneville in Level 1 until flows come down.
- Tom Lorz, Umatilla Tribe/CRITFC, voiced that he has no major issues if people want to move Ice Harbor down on the Spill Priority List. He added that 45 kcfs would be a good

cap, seconding Conder's idea of adding language that says to spill to 45 kcfs and then move down the list to the next project.

- Lorz added that there is complexity to this issue. Pulling spill from Ice Harbor and moving another project up on the list may cause an adult passage issue at another project, he noted.
- Ebel said he would want more data related to 45 kcfs as opposed to another number like 60 kcfs, for example. Conder argued that there is good data for 45 kcfs. Later in the conversation, Ebel said he would be okay with a cap of 45 kcfs.
- Charles Morrill, WA, noted that even dropping to 50-60 kcfs yesterday made a difference in passage. However, he agrees with Conder and Lorz about setting a 45 kcfs cap.
- Kirk Truscott, Colville Tribe, asked about the ramifications to other projects if Ice Harbor is dropped to 45-50 kcfs instead of the current spill cap of 80 kcfs. Turner said the project would be capped at that level and then the Corps would move down the list. It is hard for him to say exactly what would happen. That depends on where forced spill is already occurring. Kirk does not want impacts coming to the Upper Columbia as a result of pulling off spill at Ice Harbor.
- Erick Van Dyke, OR, asked what level we were at yesterday on the list. Turner said it looks like we were at Level 1 on the Spill Priority List, spilling at Ice Harbor (priority order 1).
- Tony Norris, BPA, shared that there are some turbine limitations during the day at Ice Harbor due to screen inspections. Until stream flows drop, this will impact BPA's ability to get spill down to 45 kcfs at the project.
- Norris clarified that there may not be much lack of market spill across the weekend, but it may occur during light-load hours. With the heat in the region, it is not likely during the day, he said. It is likely that spill will drop closer to 30% at Ice Harbor heading into the weekend.
- Conder asked Turner about the example spill caps in today's draft Spill Priority List. Specifically, 17 kcfs does not correspond to 120% TDG at Lower Monumental, he noted. He wondered which column drives the spill priority list: the spill percent or the example spill level. He also asked if the 80 kcfs for Ice Harbor could be swapped to 45 kcfs.
  - Turner said the 17 kcfs relates to a bulk spill pattern. Switching to uniform pattern, which produces less TDG, results in a higher spill cap.
  - BPA spills at the current spill cap rate (kcfs). The Corps evaluates the spill cap daily and adjusts as necessary to meet but not exceed the gas cap.

After a robust discussion, Van Dyke shared that he was not fully in support of the proposed change. He did not see a strong reason for the change, especially considering the recent uptick in passage. His preference would be to leave the order as is and continue to monitor the situation. Morrill agreed that he does not see a need to change the list today.

Conder shared that he thinks that if the group waits, changes will not be made and that these changes would be an improvement. With flows coming down and BPA's confidence that there will not be significant lack of load on the system, Ebel is fine staying with the current list.

Lorz noted that this issue will likely only persist for the next 4-5 days and proposed an option that most seemed on board with: cap Ice Harbor at 45 kcfs in Level 1. Lorz proposed evaluating

on Friday. Later in the meeting, it was decided to run this operation through next Wednesday, which allows for the fish managers to have their FPAC meeting on Tuesday to look at the data and discuss if the operation should be continued or not.

Following this proposal:

1. Truscott said he could support the change through next week as long as the difference in spill is not made up in the upper Columbia projects like Chief Joseph Dam and Grand Coulee Dam.
  - a. Turner said it is not likely but that he cannot promise it. Bettin clarified that the way the list is laid out right now, the remaining 35 kcfs would be pushed down the list but still be on the list before Chief Joseph Dam and Grand Coulee Dam so the list would essentially act the same as it would prior to the proposed change.
2. Conder and Lorz indicated they did not have strong feelings either way and that they would not elevate the issue.
3. Morrill and Ebel noted that in an effort to do what is best for fish, they felt themselves going back and forth on a decision.
4. Ebel noted that he recognizes that 45 kcfs may not be achievable at Ice Harbor due to the high flows, so the intent of changing the Spill Priority List would be to try the operation knowing it may not happen and he is ok with that.
5. Members wondered when the change would be made. Typically, Spill Priority List changes are implemented at 1600. Turner said an exception could be made to send the list to BPA ASAP and see how quickly they could implement it. No TMT member spoke up to request this so the change will be implemented today at 1600.
6. There has been a reduction in unit capacity at Ice Harbor. This is due to STS inspections, which are scheduled to continue through July 11. During the day, powerhouse capacity is limited to 50-55 kcfs.

Julie Ammann, Corps, commented that capping Ice Harbor at 45 kcfs in Level 1 looks like it could help fish and thus, the Corps is open to the suggested change. Ammann noted that even if the operation can be implemented for just a few hours, it could give the region data. The Action Agencies could proceed if they heard support from the region, especially NOAA.

Turner took the TMT through the proposed change, which the Corps will implement starting today at 1600

- ➔ The Corps will change the spill cap at Ice Harbor from 80 kcfs to 45 kcfs in Level 1 in the Spill Priority List. The rest of the list will remain the same. (Spill at Ice Harbor will increase to 80 kcfs starting in Level 2 of the Spill Priority List)

**Today’s Attendees:**

Agency	TMT Representative
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	Trevor Conder, Kelsey Swieca
US Fish & Wildlife Service	
Washington	Charles Morrill

Agency	TMT Representative
Oregon	Erick Van Dyke
Idaho	Jonathan Ebel
Montana	Brian Marotz
Nez Perce Tribe	
Umatilla Tribe/CRITFC	Tom Lorz
Colville Tribe	Kirk Truscott
Warm Springs Tribe	Jen Graham
Kootenai Tribe	
Spokane Tribe	

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

Corps – Aaron Marshall, Alexis Mills, Dan Turner, Elizabeth Holdren, Scott St. John  
DS Consulting – Emily Stranz (Facilitator), Colby Mills  
BPA – Melissa Haskin (Contractor with CorSource Technology Group)  
Chelan PUD – Jay Fintz, Kate von Reis Baron  
Oregon DEQ – Marilyn Fonseca, David Gruen  
PPC – Shane Scott