

COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

May 28, 2025

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: <https://public.crohms.org/tmt/agendas/2025/>. Suggested edits for the summary are welcome and can be sent to Colby at colby@dsconsult.co.

Review Meeting Summaries & Minutes – TMT Members approved the official meeting minutes and facilitator's summary from May 21, 2025.

Libby Dam Flow Plan – Greg Hoffman, Corps, provided an overview of dam operations and Flow Planning Implementation Protocol (FPIP) at Libby Dam (LIB) for Kootenai River white sturgeon. For more details, the presentation is posted to the [TMT agenda](#). FPIP (developed in 2006) is now active for the year, with the focus of managing flow and temperature to support white sturgeon spawning

The final May WSF (April through August) of 81% of normal determined that the volume released for sturgeon is in Tier 2, with 0.8 MAF to be timed and shaped for the benefit of sturgeon spawning downstream in the Bonners Ferry, Idaho, reach of the river. Planned outflows are ramping up to 20 kcfs before lowering after approximately 18 days to bull trout minimum flows of approximately 7 kcfs. Temperature management at LIB through selective withdrawal targets optimal downstream spawning temperatures (~50°F) for sturgeon. Greg noted ongoing monitoring throughout the operation and emphasized the collaborative efforts from various groups in shaping the flow plan.

Lower Monumental Dam (LMN) Operations for Transport Update – On behalf of FPAC, Erick Van Dyke, FPAC Chair/ODFW, provided an update on spill and transport operations at LMN, reviewing within-day flow fluctuations as a result of fish transport operations (project graphs/links on the [TMT agenda](#)). Spill reductions at the project appear to be affecting flow conditions at LMN as well as Ice Harbor (IHR). Erick noted that due to a 3-day delay in adult fish passage, per the FOP, spill was reduced, however the passage slowdown was not resolved with the decreased spill. *[Facilitator's Note: after the meeting, the Corps clarified that the adult delay operation is triggered by a 4-day delay.]*

According to some TMT Members, it remains a challenge to explain the unresolved passage delays. TMT members from ID, CTUIR, and WA suggested that factors affecting passage could include timing of PIT-tag data processing, fish counts, differences in fish stock migration distances, temperature differentials from warmer weather; Chris Peery, Corps, added that increased fishing activity below LMN may also be deterring fish. Tom Lorz, CTUIR/CRTFC, suggested a need to revisit, and possibly revise, adult delay criteria to account for additional factors (beyond spill) contributing to passage delays. Emi Melton, NOAA, will raise Tom's request internally at NOAA to decide whether to reconvene the Fish Passage Operations and Maintenance (FPOM) subgroup this fall.

Treaty Flow Augmentation – Tony Norris, BPA, raised the possibility of adjusting treaty flow augmentation releases in June to conserve water for July based on changing streamflow forecasts. Fish managers expressed concern about spring flows, emphasizing the current low flow conditions and the large presence of fish (steelhead and spring Chinook) and a desire to maintain or enhance flows for the out-migrating fish. Fish Managers did not recommend a reduction in flow augmentation at this time. Augmentation flow will be revisited at the next TMT meeting.

Questions or Comments from Non-TMT Members – There were no questions or comments from members of the public.

The next scheduled TMT meeting will be on June 4, 2025, at 9:00 AM.

**Columbia River Regional Forum
Technical Management Team
OFFICIAL MINUTES
Wednesday, May 28, 2025**

Minutes: Andrea Ausmus, BPA (contractor, CorSource Technology Group)

Today's TMT meeting was held via Microsoft Teams and conference call, 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 Summary and Minutes

a. May 21 Summary and Minutes

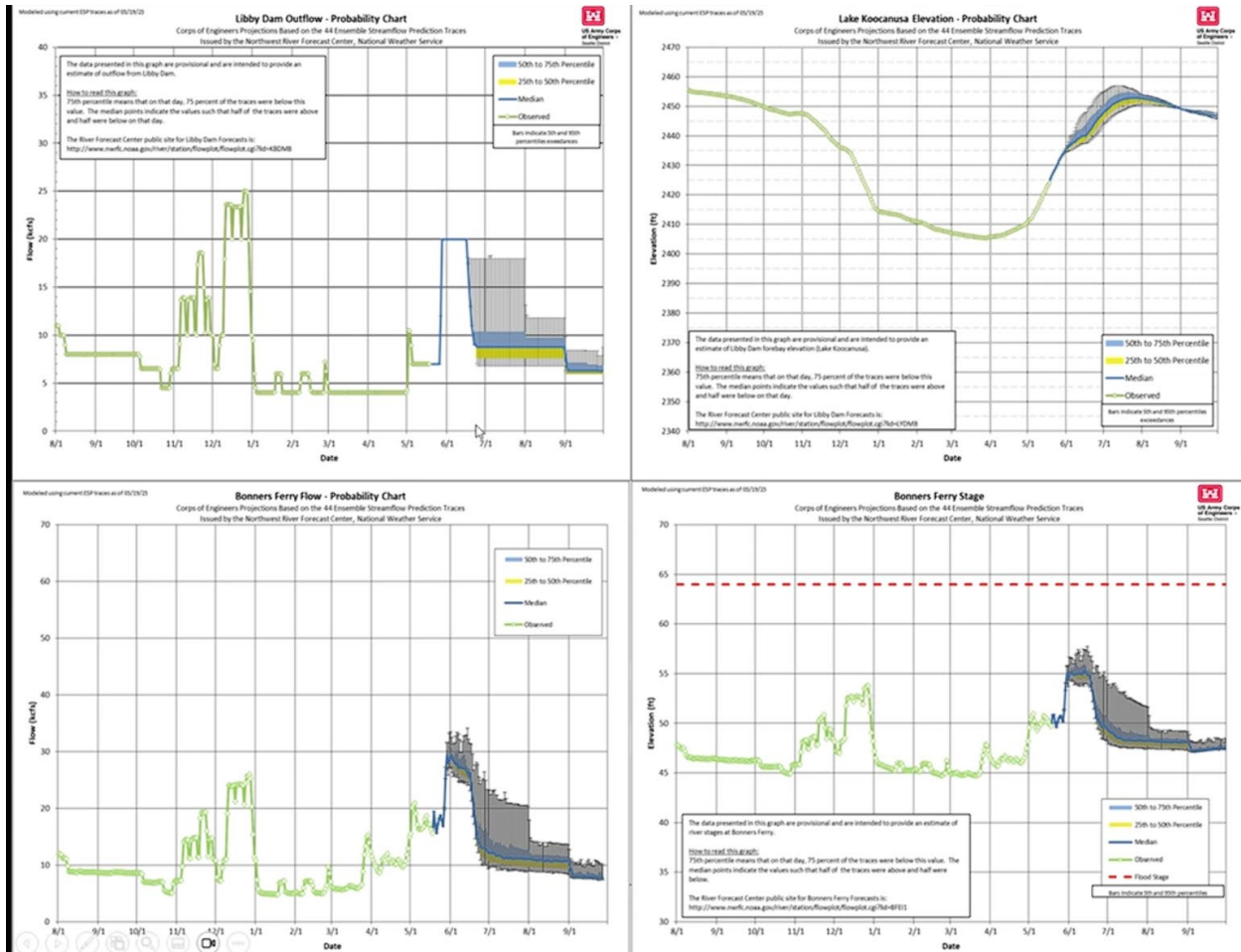
- Approved
- Charles Morrill (WA) asked about an error about percentages in the document.
 - Erick Van Dyke (OR) said that he had already sent in the corrections.
 - Colby Mills (DS Consulting) confirmed that the correction was already included.

2. Libby (LIB) Dam Flow Plan – *Greg Hoffman, Corps-Libby Dam*

a. Kootenai River Ecosystem Function Restoration Flow Planning Implementation Protocol (FPIP) – 2025

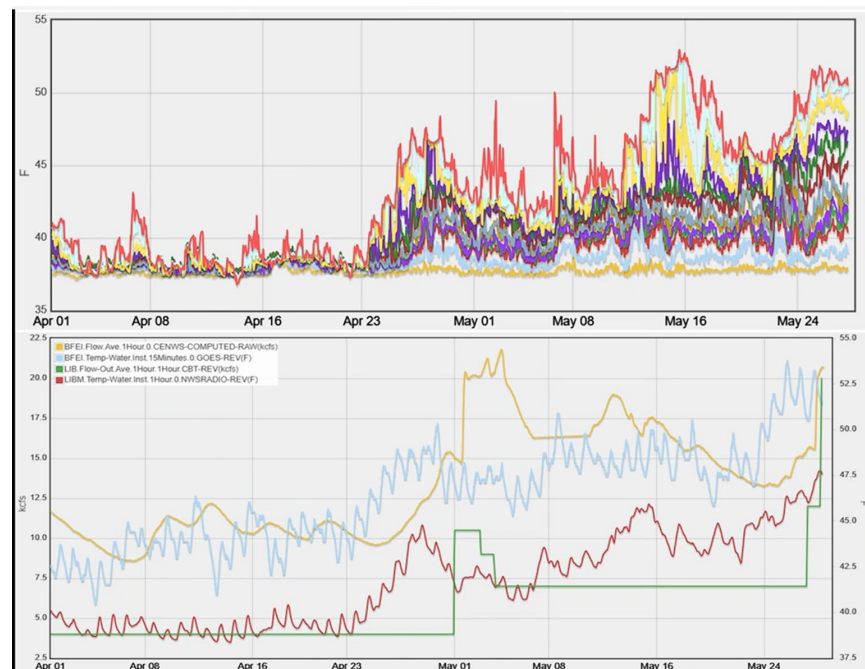
- Libby May Runoff Forecast
 - April – August forecast: 81% of average
 - April – August volume: 4.94 maf
 - Sturgeon Op Threshold: 4.8 maf
 - Tier 2 Water Year.
 - Working with the minimal amount of water for sturgeon – 0.8 maf
 - Minimum Flow (Bull Trout): 7 ft³/second
 - End of September: 2446.73

- Probability Charts



- Libby Dam Outflow (Upper Left)
 - Ramping flows today (May 27)
 - May 28 flows: 20 kcfs
 - Plan to hold the high flows for 18 days and then come back down to bull trout minimums of 7 kcfs.
- Koocanusa Reservoir (Upper Right)
 - Maximum Elevation: 2454 feet (Mid-July)
 - End of Season Target: 2446.73 feet
- Bonners Ferry Flow
 - High flows of 30 kcfs and above has been an ecological objective to encourage sturgeon to move upstream into the appropriate habitats. Not going to get very close this year.

- Bonners Ferry Stage
 - Preferred: 1760 – 1762 feet
 - Actual: 1755 feet
 - Preference by FPIP to target as high of water as possible but in dry years it is not a possibility.
 - Rather than trying to peak FPIP went to 20 kcfs instead of full powerhouse (25 kcfs) and spread out the flows a little bit.
- Temperature Management
 - Current through yesterday

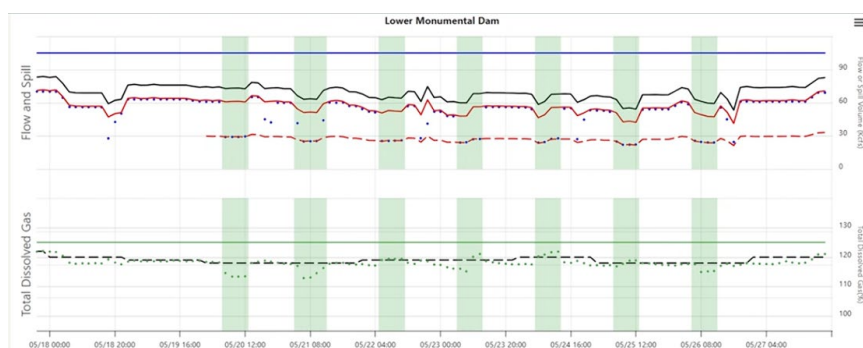


- Upper panel shows what is occurring in the forebay right now.
- Temperatures developed early, late April we started seeing pretty warm surface temperatures, so Hoffman had Libby Dam crane operators pull some gates out for several days before placing more gates yesterday. Now we are starting to warm up.
- Selective Withdrawal System is managed to provide 50°F in spawning habitat.

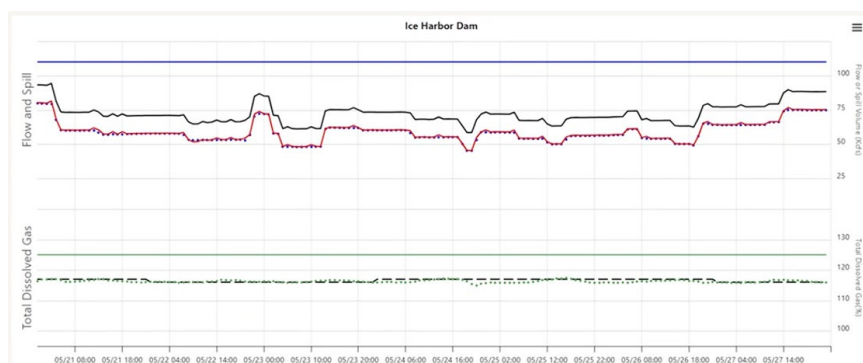
3. LMN Operations for Transport Update – Erick Van Dyke, OR/FPAC Chair

a. FPC Spill to FOP Graphs

- Lower Monumental (LMN)

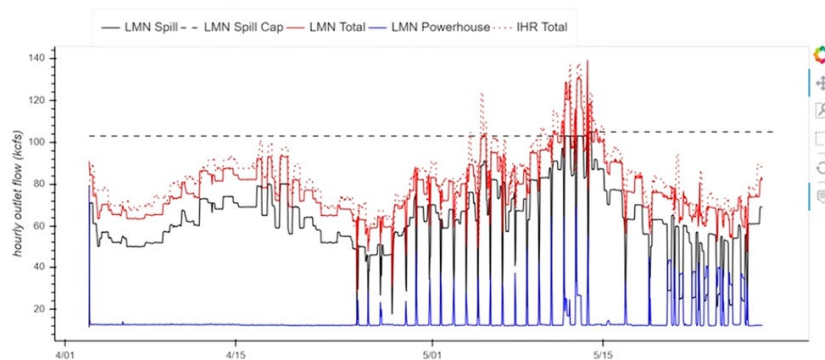


- Spill was reduced due to meeting adult delay criteria in the FOP.
 - When adult conversion from IHR to LMN is less than 50% in a three-day period.
- Blue dots are continuing to be less than what was planned for spill to accommodate for loading of fish at LMN.
- Ice Harbor (IHR)



- The Fish Managers (FM) noticed that operation at LMN had some influence at IHR in that the black line continues to have decreases around the time that the barges operation is changing spill.

b. LMN, IHR Flow & Elevation Timeseries



- Shows within day flow fluctuations continued to occur.

Jonathan Ebel, ID, mentioned in terms of the limited sample sizes this is the first time that the adult passage delay was not resolved in the three-day period. He asked if anyone had a hypothesis as to why. He asked if anyone had any thoughts because he had not come up with a hypothesis himself yet.

Chris Peery, Corps, said that they were looking at it. He said that there are still data coming in and part of the thing that they have to look at is the timing of when decisions are made based on the PIT tags. There is a couple day delay before we can know the data that comes in from DART on the PIT tag fish. Then they make changes and there will still be a bit of a delay. The data are based on fish as they are leaving IHR and they would typically show up at LMN a day or two later. He said that this makes it tricky to try to assess reactions to operational changes to the fish behavior. He said that they are looking at fish counts as well as flows and temperature conditions that the fish are experiencing for this versus what was happening last year. He said that they are still looking at it. He said that there are other potentially confounding factors – potentially some fishing going on in the tailrace at LMN that the Corps had seen occurring there. This could also have been affecting some of the fish behavior.

Ebel asked what fishing was going on below LMN, presumably pikeminnow.

Peery said that it was not really clear. He said that there definitely was a group of folks in the tailrace fishing from the shore and probably a little bit more than what is typical. He said that he did not want any conclusions out there right now because they really do not know. He said that he had been working out at the Project over the weekends and there definitely were some folks in the tailrace, a pretty good number, that were fishing off the shore.

Ebel said that these were all important things to keep track of because if we are going to attribute passage delays to spill and then we reduce spill and we do not get the response that we had seen in the past as we did. It is a high priority to figure out and the FM are here to help everyone think about it as well.

Morrill said that he was just starting to look at the PIT data and looking at relative contributions of stock. Whether we have fish that move slower, fish that move faster, some of that is related to the distance of the migration if they go through. He said that he thought that this may be a variable that is another element of the question.

Tom Lorz, Umatilla/CRITFC, asked if the Corps also looked at temperature differentials. He said that they had noted over the weekend that we saw temperature differentials not normally seen at this time of year and that could be playing a factor into some of the slowdown.

Peery had not registered that and appreciated Lorz bringing it up.

Lorz said with some of the confounding factors he thought we might want to revisit the adult delay criteria. He said that we might be starting to factor in some of the other issues

and not maybe spill alone is the issue because we did not know there was fishing going on below. With the additional factors it seems like we need to start thinking about strategies or other metrics to look at before we go straight to spill, if it is other factors like if it is temperature, pressure, and fishing you could change the spill all you want but it is not going to change that. He said that we need to do some thinking about that, and it is something to maybe talk about this fall.

Stranz asked for clarity about if that would be at TMT or if there was a different forum that would suit that conversation better.

Lorz said that last year they did a subgroup of FPOM, and he knew that Trevor Conder was just dying to reinstate that subgroup. He said that he believed that an FPOM subgroup would take care of that.

Emi Melton, NMFS, said that she could not speak for Trevor but she would raise this with Trevor. She said that she would like to get his input before NOAA officially weighs in on it.

Van Dyke said that he wanted to make sure and verify that the 40% spill operation according to the FOP for passage delay had terminated.

Peery said that yes, the last day was May 26.

4. Treaty Flow Augmentation

- Regarding the FM recommendations as we are moving into June it is possible the Treaty flow would increase as a function of stream flows.
- Curious if the FM would like to modify the recommendation because it would be an opportunity to reduce the flow augmentation release to save some for July.

Van Dyke said that the FMs had not talked about this at this level and he did not remember talking about it pre-meeting either. He said that at this time there still remains some concern about spring flows following a shape that is not great for fish passage and fish issues. He said enhancing spring flow is in the FM overall consciousness of an operation that is best for fish right now. There may be questions about how flows coming off after Spring that the FM are interested in learning more about to recognize even how we are achieving the goal of enhancing Spring flow. He said at this time he did not think there would be an alteration to what they had asked for. He said that he would let his colleagues weigh in and as FPAC chair that is what he would have indicated for this topic.

Lorz said looking at current flows it is the bottom of the barrel, and this is the time of year where we have subyearlings starting to come out in large numbers. We still have Steelhead and Spring Chinook. We have probably the largest volume of fish and have closer to historical lows than historical averages. He said that he would not recommend looking at reducing flows. If we start seeing a change we could talk in the future but right now, he said that he saw no reason to move off of the current recommendation.

Morrill said that he would echo what Van Dyke and Lorz said, more water in the Spring at this point in time is a real concern for Washington as well as his colleagues representing the Tring in the States. He said that it is disappointing that we have not been able to do more but that is the way it played out.

Stranz said that TMT would keep this on the agenda for the future meetings.

5. Set agenda for next meeting – June 4, 2025

Meeting Location: Microsoft Teams

- a. Treaty Flow Augmentation
- b. LMN Operations for Transportation
- c. Operations Review

Today's Attendees:

Agency	TMT Representative(s)
NOAA Fisheries	Trevor Conder
Oregon	Erick Van Dyke
Washington	Charles Morrill
Kootenai Tribe	
Confederated Tribes of Colville Reservation	Dennis Moore
Umatilla Tribe (CRITFC)	Pete McHugh, Tom Lorz
Yakama Nation	Keely Murdoch, Tom Iverson
Bureau of Reclamation	Chris Runyan
Army Corps of Engineers	Doug Baus (Chair), Aaron Marshall, Lisa Wright
US Fish & Wildlife Service	Dave Swank
Idaho	Jonathan Ebel
Montana	
Spokane Tribe	
Nez Perce Tribe	Jay Hesse
Warm Springs Tribe	
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes	Tom McDonald
Bonneville Power Administration	Tony Norris, Ben Hausmann

Other Attendees (non-TMT members):

COE – Patricia Madson, Tiffany Stoeckig-Dixon, Nicholas Bertrand, Leah Hamilton, Christopher Peery, Gregory Hoffman, Oscar Espinoza, Alexis Mills, Dan Turner, Richard Hilt, Elizabeth Holdren

NMFS – Emi Melton

Oregon DEQ – Dave Gruen

Washington Ecology – Thomas Starkey

DS Consulting – Emily Stranz (Facilitator), Colby Mills

CorSource – Andrea Ausmus (BPA note taker, Contractor)

TMT – May 28, 2025

EKI – Eve James

Clearing Up – K.C. Mehaffey

AVA – Mike Dillon, Patrick Maher

NPCC – Kate Self

Columbia Basin Bulletin – Mike O'Bryant

Chelan PUD – Lance Beyer, Jay Fintz, Carl Bertilson

FPC – Erin Cooper, Noah Campbell

PGE – Phil DeVol

Energy EPS – Joshua Rasmussen

PSE – John Chandler

Snohomish PUD – Scott Richards

Unaffiliated – Shea Frantz, Kenneth Curtis