IMPLEMENTATION TEAM CONFERENCE CALL NOTES

June 28, 2001, 3 p.m.-5 p.m.

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE OFFICES
PORTLAND, OREGON

I. Greetings, Introductions and Review of the Agenda.

The June 28, 2001 Implementation Team conference call, held at the National Marine Fisheries Service's offices in Portland, Oregon, was convened to resolve an issue raised during yesterday's Technical Management Team meeting. The conference call was chaired by Jim Ruff of NMFS and facilitated by Richard Forester.

The following is a distillation (not a verbatim transcript) of items discussed during the call, together with actions taken on those items. Please note that some enclosures referenced in the body of the text may be too lengthy to attach; all enclosures referenced are available upon request from NMFS's Kathy Ceballos at 503/230-5420 or via email at kathy.ceballos@noaa.gov.

2. Dworshak Operations Issue Raised from TMT.

Ruff said an issue arose during yesterday's TMT meeting regarding when to begin summer flow augmentation from Dworshak reservoir. Prior to the meeting, the salmon managers submitted SOR 2001-7, supported by ODFW, WDFW, NMFS and the Fish and Wildlife Service. This SOR requests the following specific operations:

- Beginning July 2, operate Dworshak at the following discharge levels: July 2, 3 and 4, release 5 Kcfs; July 5 and 6, release 7 Kcfs, July 7 and 8, release 10 Kcfs. Maintain the same temperature regulation as implemented this week (between 48-52 degrees F).

Various TMT parties, notably the State of Idaho, CRITFC and the Nez Perce Tribe, objected to this proposed operation, arguing that flow augmentation from Dworshak should not begin until the following Sunday, July 8. The other salmon managers objected to this delay; Idaho and the tribes chose to elevate this issue to IT, framing the issue as follows:

> **"Due to biological concerns regarding fall chinook subyearlings in the Lower Clearwater River, and recreational concerns during the Fourth of July holiday, should the proposed SOR be delayed a week?"**
> Greg Haller explained that the most recent data collection showed that there are still wild

juvenile fall chinook present in the Clearwater River; those fish are not yet up to size, and need some additional thermal units before they will be ready to outmigrate. We also believe that delaying the Dworshak releases until a week later would provide benefits later in the summer for both juvenile and adult migrants, Haller said. Jim Yost added that beginning the Dworshak draft on July 2 would detrimentally impact recreation on Dworshak Reservoir during the Fourth of July holiday, so Idaho would prefer to delay the draft of Dworshak until the evening of Sunday, July 8.

The Clearwater portion of the ESU is somewhere between a quarter and a third of the listed ESU fall chinook population, Ruff noted – it sounds as though the tribe is concerned that these fish are still rearing, and need additional thermal units before they will outmigrate. Correct, Haller replied – we have identified July 15 as the date by which the majority of those fish will likely reach the target size of 85 mm.

Do you have any idea what percentage of the fall chinook year-class is still below size? Jim Nielsen asked. Also, if we were to implement the SOR as written, maintaining the Dworshak release temperature at its current level of 49-52 degrees, wouldn't that achieve the tribes' goal of maintaining the current thermal regime in the Clearwater? To answer the first part of the question, Haller replied, I don't have that information in front of me. To answer the second part, if we bump up the volume of 49-52 degree water, we don't think that will help provide the additional thermal units those fish need. Every day helps, Haller said; the closer we can get to July 15, the better, but from our perspective, July 8 would be an acceptable compromise.

The group devoted a few minutes of discussion to the value of retaining some portion of the Dworshak storage for use in September; Ruff noted that, based on the most recent information he has seen, somewhere in the neighborhood of 40% of the wild Clearwater juveniles outmigrate in September. That's a significant portion of the population, Haller observed.

In response to a question, Paul Wagner said the current water temperature in Lower Granite forebay is 66.8 degrees, the same as it was yesterday. He noted that the forecast is for above-average air temperatures in the Lewiston area next week; they are expected to be near 100 degrees by the Fourth of July. Kyle Martin said the weather is expected to cool later in the week, however; based on his forecast, the summer of 2001 will not be as severe, in terms of weather, as the 1998 meteorology assumed in EPA's model runs. Wagner added that the temperature modeling shows that, when flows are as low as they are currently, the lag time between the release of cool water from Dworshak and its arrival at Lower Granite is significantly longer. A 14 Kcfs release from Dworshak is projected to take 8 days to provide temperature relief at Lower Granite, a 10 Kcfs release, 11 days. John Yearsley noted that it is the combined flow from both Dworshak and Brownlee that determines how long it will take before the temperature impact of the Dworshak release is felt at Lower Granite.

It sounds, then, as though the weather is expected to warm up in Lewiston next week, said Ruff. I would agree with that, said Martin. It also sounds as though the Lower Granite water

temperature is already nearly 67 degrees, Ruff said. Correct, Wagner replied.

In response to a question from Howard Schaller, Haller said that, while he doesn't have the exact figures in front of him, he believes the size range of the Clearwater fall chinook is now 40-60 mm. However, you are tagging some fish, so there must be some larger juveniles as well, Nielsen observed. That's true, Haller replied. It would be helpful if you could give us some information about what percentage of this year-class has already reached size and moved out, vs. the percentage that has not yet reached size and are still rearing in the Clearwater, Ruff said.

Chris Ross observed that, according to his calculations, once it mixes with the ambient 66-degree water in the Clearwater, a Dworshak release of 5 Kcfs at between 48 and 52 degrees would yield a temperature in the mixed portion of the river of 59 degrees. That is close to optimal for juvenile fall chinook rearing and growth, Ross said, noting data presented by Groot and Margolis in *Physiological Ecology of Pacific Salmon*.

Ruff noted that, if Dworshak outflow is ramped up to 10 Kcfs by July 7 as requested in this SOR, and that release volume is maintained through the end of summer, Dworshak would reach elevation 1520 on or around August 31.

In response to a question from Haller, Ruff said the federal agencies have been discussing various measures to offset a reduction in summer spill this year; one of those potential offsetting measures is a deeper draft at Dworshak. That issue was discussed at yesterday's NW Power Planning Council meeting, said Ruff; however, no recommendation was received from the Council and no decision was made at that time.

In response to a question from Haller, Ruff said NMFS' goal, with respect to this year's Dworshak operation, is to provide the maximum benefit for the greatest number of listed fish. Subyearling fall chinook migrants have already begun arriving at Lower Granite in large numbers, he said, despite the fact that Lower Granite flows are only about half of what they would normally be this time of year. They're even worse at night, one participant observed – nighttime flows at Ice Harbor have been as low as 10 Kcfs over the past few days. In response to a question from Jim Yost, Ruff said the goal of starting flow augmentation from Dworshak at this time would be to help move the juvenile fall chinook through the Lower Granite reservoir to the collection facility at Lower Granite. Ross added that Billy Connor is now predicting that the peak of subyearling fall chinook passage at Lower Granite will occur on July 16.

The group spent a few minutes debating Connor's analysis of the effects of temperature reductions and flow augmentation on survival to Lower Granite Dam, as well as what conditions will yield the maximum biological benefit in this particular water year.

Bob Heinith said that, in his view, there is also an energy component to this decision; I would hate to lose the opportunity for summer spill later in the summer because this water is let down the stream now, when power prices are relatively low, he said. Ruff replied that NMFS is not taking power into account in this decision. Bill Maslen and Doug Arndt said BPA and the

Corps have no preference as to how this issue is decided. So this won't have any effect on summer spill? Heinith asked. No, it will not, Maslen replied – Dworshak will be drafted to elevation 1520 this year, and it's just a question of how you want that draft to occur. Maslen added that, given the most recent volume forecast of 53.9 MAF, January-July, at The Dalles, it is problematic for BPA to discuss spill at this point anyway.

Forester then called for the question, asking who supports delaying the implementation of this SOR by one week. The results were as follows:

YES (delay SOR)		**NO (do not delay SOR)**
Montana (Litchfield)		USFWS (Schaller)
CRITFC (Heinith)		WDFW (Nielsen)
Nez Perce (Haller)		ODFW (Nigro)
	EPA (Soscia)	
		Corps (Arndt)
		NMFS (Ruff)

In explaining NMFS' recommendation, Ruff noted that this Dworshak operational issue arises every year about this time. We have heard the state and tribal concerns, and understand them, he said; we also recognize that flows are at an unprecedented low level for this time of year in the Snake River. That, and the climbing water temperatures at Lower Granite, cause NMFS a great deal of concern. We are concerned that, with the warm weather forecast in the next week, we will easily exceed the 68-degree standard at Lower Granite, Ruff said. Also, if we wait another week, that will result in another week of rising temperatures at Lower Granite, and we will be even farther behind the curve, with farther to go to reduce water temperatures to below the 68-degree threshold. For all of these reasons, and because subyearling fall chinook are arriving in numbers at Lower Granite, NMFS does not support delaying the release of cool water from Dworshak, Ruff said.

Arndt asked that the NMFS biological rationale for this decision be made available to the TMT; it was so agreed. Soscia added that while EPA supports NMFS' position, EPA will monitor and analyze the results of this decision in its post-season review, just as it did last year. Soscia noted that, last year, the Dworshak releases started on July 1, at a higher rate than that called for in SOR 2001-7; post-season review and analysis later concluded that was the best possible decision, last year, in terms of limiting the number of days when Lower Granite forebay temperatures exceeded 68 degrees F.

The IT's decision, then, was not to delay the implementation of SOR 2001-7. Conference call notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.

Participant List:

NMFS: Jim Ruff, John Palensky, Paul Wagner, Chris Ross, Kathy Ceballos
Facilitation Team: Richard Forester, Robin Harkless
Fish Passage Center: Margaret Filardo
Nez Perce Tribe: Greg Haller
COE: Doug Arndt, Cindy Henriksen
BPA: Bill Maslen
WA: Jim Nielsen
OR: Tony Nigro
ID: Jim Yost, Jim Kempton
MT: Jim Litchfield
USFWS: Howard Schaller
EPA: Mary Lou Soscia, John Yearsley
CRITFC: Bob Heinith, Kyle Martin