

## **IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEETING NOTES**

August 29, 1996, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE OFFICES  
PORTLAND, OREGON

### **I. Greeting and Introductions.**

The August 29 meeting of the Implementation Team, held at the National Marine Fisheries Service offices in Portland, Oregon, was chaired by Brian Brown of NMFS. The agenda for the August 29 meeting and a list of attendees are attached as Enclosures A and B. The following is a summary (not a verbatim transcript) of items discussed at the meeting, together with actions taken on those items.

### **II. Updates.**

**In-Season Management.** Brown said the Libby operation, which had been targeted for elevation to the Implementation Team at yesterday's TMT, was successfully resolved before the IT meeting. COE's Bolyvong Tanovan outlined the post-August system operations agreed to at yesterday's TMT meeting: Dworshak outflow will be reduced from its current 20.5 Kcfs to full powerhouse capacity of about 10 Kcfs on September 1, a rate of discharge that will be maintained until the project reaches elevation 1520 feet, probably on about September 12.

Tanovan said Brownlee is expected to meet its minimum flow requirement during September, but beyond that, little is known about Idaho Power's planned operation of that project. At Libby, the planned operation calls for outflows of 14 Kcfs through at least August 31, and possibly through September 3. After that, Libby outflow will be reduced to 8 Kcfs for the next two to three weeks. Hungry Horse outflow will be reduced to a two-unit operation releasing 5.8 Kcfs beginning today; that rate of discharge will be maintained through September 2. On September 3, Hungry Horse outflow will be reduced further, to just under 3 Kcfs; after that, the project will ramp down as needed to maintain flows of 3.5 Kcfs at Columbia Falls. The project is expected to draft to approximately elevation 3541 feet by mid-September. Grand Coulee will be drafted to elevation 1280 feet by August 31, and will pass inflow after that.

The Libby and Hungry Horse operations, as Bolyvong described them, are acceptable to Montana, said Mark Reller.

BPA has agreed to spill 48% of instantaneous flow at The Dalles Dam on September 1-4, to make up for the spill that was not provided during the August power system emergency operation, Tanovan continued. The TMT also recommended that the three Lower Snake pools, now at Minimum Operating Pool, be refilled at a rate of 2 Ksf per day, beginning tomorrow. The TMT recommended that this operation proceed sequentially, beginning with the refill of Ice Harbor pool, then moving on to Lower Monumental pool, then Little Goose pool. The refill of the three pools is expected to take about 20 days. The timing of the Little Goose refill was not

resolved at yesterday's TMT meeting; it was suggested that it may be more appropriate to refill that pool later in the fall, to make more water available for migrating salmon in September, as long as the adult fishways at Lower Granite are in criteria. The salmon managers will be making a recommendation on this issue following their Tuesday morning conference call, Tanovan said.

The one issue that was elevated from the TMT for IT discussion today was the refill of the Lower Snake pools, said Brown. CRITFC did not agree to refilling any of those pools at yesterday's TMT meeting, said Bob Heinith. As I understand it, the question being elevated is when to begin refill of the Snake River projects from MOP to normal operating range, said Brown. The Biological Opinion requires that these projects return to normal operating range for the purpose of operating adult passage facilities within criteria at the end of the season. The issue at hand is whether to do that now, or, as CRITFC suggests, wait until later; the tradeoff is between a short-term reduction in flows now to get the fishways back into criteria sooner, or higher flows now but fishways that are out of criteria.

Doug Arndt of COE said there is some urgency to accomplish this operation now, before Dworshak reaches elevation 1520 feet and outflows from that project drop sharply from their current 10 Kcfs. Margaret Filardo of the Fish Passage Center added that the salmon managers have discussed this issue; consensus was not reached because CRITFC objected to the proposed pool refill operation. The refill operation outlined by Tanovan will begin tomorrow, unless the IT supports CRITFC's objection; the salmon managers will make a recommendation about when to begin the refill operation at Little Goose on Tuesday of next week.

Heinith provided Enclosure C, a written summary of CRITFC's position on this issue and the commission's arguments for keeping the Snake River pools at MOP through the end of the migration season (see Enclosure C for details).

After a few minutes of discussion, Brown expressed the opinion that this is an issue for the salmon managers to resolve. He asked Filardo to convene the appropriate salmon managers and reach a decision on Lower Snake pool refill by later today; she said she would attempt to do so. If the salmon managers cannot reach consensus, said Brown, let's go with the default, start the above-outlined refill operation tomorrow, and revisit CRITFC's objections again at the salmon managers' meeting September 3.

PATH. No PATH update was presented at the meeting.

Integrated Scientific Review Team. The ISAB is still trying to finish up their previous report, said Brown; they're still wrestling with several issues that have come out of this forum, notably the Montana issue.

Dissolved Gas Team. Mark Schneider of NMFS reported that the DGT has held several meetings since last the IT convened. The DGT has begun the development of a draft MOU; it has also been attempting to finalize the team's draft guidelines. They are not final yet, said Schneider, but I hope to finalize them at the September 5 DGT meeting. A rough draft of the MOU was developed at a subcommittee meeting last week; another meeting is scheduled for this afternoon.

There's a minimum participation level necessary if this MOU is going to be successfully developed, Schneider continued. That's been a bit of a problem to date -- some of the entities

necessary to the MOU's development have not been represented at these meetings. In particular, he said that more active participation from Oregon DEQ and Idaho DEQ would be helpful. Jim Yost of the Idaho Governor's office, Tony Nigro of ODFW and Dick Nason of Chelan PUD said they would follow up on Schneider's request by encouraging the appropriate offices to send representatives to future DGT meetings.

As a condition of its TDG waiver from Oregon DEQ, NMFS will be producing a 1996 annual report, covering such data as estimates of survival associated with spill, survival estimates for transported vs. untransported fish at collector projects, and the incidence of GBD signs in various groups of fish in river, Schneider continued. I'll be contacting the Fish Passage Center and others to seek their participation in this effort. The draft report is scheduled for delivery by December 15; the final report, by January 1. The report will undergo both peer and public review; the peer review component would probably be best served by the ISAB if they have time. I raise this to the IT, said Schneider, because requests to the ISAB generally are made through this forum.

One other item, he continued: we've been discussing the appropriateness of expanding the scope of the DGT to include factors other than dissolved gas -- in particular, water temperature. At this point, I'd just like the IT to be aware that those discussions are ongoing, he said.

Heinith asked whether the other IT members thought that it would be appropriate to expand the scope of the DGT to include temperature. NMFS and EPA will be discussing this issue and making a recommendation to the DGT, replied Schneider; if the DGT feels that this addition to their scope is appropriate, they will bring that to IT as a discrete proposal. In other words, the IT will have an opportunity to discuss this later, once this recommendation is made. Alan Ruger of BPA suggested that the habitat group may be a more appropriate forum than the DGT for the consideration of temperature issues. At this time, I suggest that we let the DGT work with this, and get their recommendation before discussing it further at the IT level, said Brown.

System Configuration Team. SCT chairman Bill Hevlin of NMFS said the main topic covered at the most recent SCT meeting was continued work on the SCT's five-year workplan. Our initial task was to identify areas of consistency and disagreement among the NMFS, Council and Tribal recovery plans; we've also developed a schedule to get our section of the five-year regional workplan done by November, Hevlin said. We intend the system configuration workplan to be a flexible working document that will be subject to revision as we gain more knowledge through research activities.

A second important thing SCT has been working on is the John Day drawdown study justification letter, Hevlin continued -- a new draft is now available (Enclosure D), and we'd like your comments as soon as possible. A little background, added Jim Ruff of the Northwest Power Planning Council staff, co-chairman of the SCT: in past years, the Corps has funded several studies to evaluate the feasibility of John Day drawdown. In the 1996 appropriations bill congressional language was added that said the Corps shall not spend any more money on this effort, unless COE the region can show that it is biologically justified.

The letter NMFS has drafted is intended to provide that biological justification, Ruff continued. It is not a letter that recommends implementation of John Day drawdown -- its intent is to persuade Congress to allow the Corps to continue the necessary work to obtain the information

the region needs to make an informed decision about whether or not to draw down John Day.

This draft of the letter has been reviewed by Oregon, by Jim Ruff and by the Corps, but it has not been presented to the full SCT -- it's on the agenda for the next SCT meeting on September 10, Hevlin said. I suggest that we treat [Enclosure D] as an information copy, said Brown -- once this is finalized through SCT, the Implementation Team will have had a chance to review the letter you're distributing today, and we should be able to give it a quick review. Hevlin expressed a desire to finalize the letter prior to the next IT meeting; Brown suggested that any IT comments be provided to Hevlin by fax within a week after SCT distributes its final draft of the letter. Unless there are major issues to be discussed, it shouldn't be necessary to wait until the next IT meeting to finalize this, Brown said.

One other issue that arose at the last SCT meeting was the Dworshak Hatchery water supply, Hevlin said. Cold water releases from Dworshak for salmon augmentation slow down the growth of the juvenile fish in the hatchery; this issue was brought to SCT, and we weren't sure whether or not it was really an SCT issue, or whether it should more properly be addressed by another group.

It's a long-standing issue, added Ruff; to remedy it, we're going to have to make some changes to the hatchery water supply. Fred Olney of USFWS said it would actually be fairly simple to fix the problem; by warming the water taken into the hatchery from the Clearwater, the hatchery managers can accelerate the growth of its steelhead during incubation and early rearing. The hatchery currently has the ability to warm about half of its nursery water; if it had the capacity to warm all the water needed, it would be a relatively simple matter to meet the minimum size-at-release requirement (200 mm), and the temperature of the water released from Dworshak Reservoir would no longer be of concern. The goal, Olney said, is to produce fish that are functional smolts when released, so they don't residualize and cause problems for listed stocks.

After a few minutes of further discussion, Brown asked Olney to provide a more detailed proposal at the next IT meeting, including cost estimates and a more complete explanation of the modifications needed to allow the hatchery to control the temperature of all of its nursery water - - we'll figure out which group to assign it to at that time, Brown said.

One related issue regarding the refill of the Lower Snake pools, said Heinith -- our inability to meet entrance criteria at the fishways when the projects are at MOP is a function of the fact that those adult passage facilities weren't built low enough on the existing dams. It's possible that we could lower those fishway entrances to keep them in criteria even when the pools are at MOP, thus avoiding conflicts between the various passage measures. We'd like to encourage further discussion at the SCT level of the possibility of lowering those fishway entrances, said Heinith, because this conflict arises every year -- if there is a structural fix that will give us much greater operational flexibility, the region should be giving that serious consideration. Hevlin said he would place this issue on the agenda for the September 10 SCT meeting.

One other item, said Ruff -- as you'll recall, earlier this year, the SCT made a technical recommendation to defer further studies of Lower Snake drawdown to spillway crest. Will Stelle wrote a letter to the chairman of the Power Planning Council, based on the IT's recommendation; I'd like to report back that the Council did not feel that a formal response to Stelle's letter was needed at this time.

### III. The Dalles Emergency Operation.

It was agreed that further discussion of this topic was not necessary at this time; Brown offered to provide explanations or clarification of any issues connected with the power system emergency operation or its aftermath to anyone who requires them. BPA's Greg Delwiche said his agency plans to produce a written summary of the event; this document is not available today, however. The report will include a game plan for dealing with the voltage support issue over the long term; BPA also feels that action plans covering emergency operations should be added to the TMT Guidelines and the Water Management Plan prior to the next migration season. Brown said the Executive Team will be asked to provide guidance on both the definition of an emergency and the definition of an appropriate response to an emergency that prevents the achievement of interim protection levels.

### IV. Draft Rules of Procedure.

The most recent draft of the Implementation Team's "Responsibilities and Procedures" guidelines was distributed before the meeting, [this document is attached as Enclosure E]. After a few minutes of discussion, it was suggested that an IT work session be convened to refine the responsibilities and procedures document prior to the September 20 meeting of the Executive Committee. This work session was set for Wednesday, September 11 from 9 a.m. to noon at NMFS's Portland offices. Brown added that any written comments on the document should be submitted to John Palensky.

### V. Update on Development of the 5-Year Implementation Plan.

Palensky provided a brief description of the background for the development of the 5-Year Implementation Plan, which covers anadromous fish, resident fish and wildlife activities throughout the Columbia Basin. A steering committee has now been formed; it has held two meetings to date, with a third scheduled for September 3. Eight sub-groups are working on the various components of the multi-year plan, addressing the following specific areas: coordination, system configuration, watershed restoration and production, research, monitoring and evaluation, mainstem operations, resident fish, wildlife, and fiscal management. Palensky encouraged anyone with an interest in the multiyear implementation plan development process to attend the upcoming steering committee meeting.

I want to stress that the development of this workplan is not a policy exercise -- it's a technical exercise, Palensky continued. The various work groups have been tasked to identify -- not resolve -- policy issues, so that the appropriate policy bodies can deal with them. He outlined the various work products each subgroup will be expected to provide at the September 3 meeting, and added that minutes from the first two steering committee meetings are available upon request.

It will be a significant effort to develop this multiyear workplan by November, Palensky said. Once it is complete, the Council will circulate it for public review and comment. Additional steering committee meetings have been set for September 17, October 1, October 15, October 29 and November 5. Palensky added that a document explaining the 5-Year Implementation Planning process is now being prepared for public information purposes; it will be reviewed at the September 3 steering committee meeting before being distributed.

## VI. Draft Executive Committee Agenda.

Perhaps this would be the appropriate time to discuss how Upper Snake River augmentation water is purchased, said BPA's Dan Daley. In particular, he referenced a unique situation in which Bonneville had arranged the lease of 20 KAF-30 KAF from a mainstem irrigator on the Oregon side of the Snake River, Skyline Farms. Last spring, after that lease was signed, the Idaho Legislature passed a law which essentially said that all such water acquisitions were part and parcel of the 427 KAF of Upper Snake augmentation water provided by the State of Idaho, Daley explained. As it turns out, under the Idaho law, that also applies to Oregon and Washington projects. The problem, of course, is that this means there is very little incentive for Oregon or Washington to provide any water. In addition, rumor has it that Idaho Sen. Larry Craig is drafting legislation that would essentially preclude the Bureau from drawing on the water banks in the Upper Snake for their portion of the 427 KAF.

I'm bringing this to the IT's attention because I think it has important implications for the region, Daley continued. I want to be sure the region is aware that this is occurring, and it occurred to me that it might be appropriate to put it on the agenda for discussion at the September 20 EC meeting.

It sounds as though this may be an important issue, but unless you can develop it more fully, I'm reluctant to place it on the EC agenda, said Brown. After a few minutes of further discussion, Yost said he would try to obtain more information on the Craig legislation from the senator's staff; Daley said he would continue to pursue this issue with other entities in the region.

Other additions to the EC agenda? asked Brown. There is the question of the broader policy issue that came up as a result of the power system emergency -- you had indicated that you would bring that broader policy issue to the Executive Committee for guidance, but I don't see it captured on the agenda, said Doug Arndt of COE. Probably under "Summary of 1996 Migration Season," Brown replied. We intend to provide both a factual report on what happened in 1996, and a summary of the more controversial issues that arose this year. The expectation is that the EC will then make assignments for further work on those issues prior to next season.

We'd like to be involved in the development of this policy issue for the EC, said Arndt -- the Corps would like to suggest a slightly different spin on the way it's characterized, because we see it as a broader policy issue -- what did the Bi-Op intend in addressing unforeseen events, as well as unusual events that were foreseen, such as power emergencies, flood control and research and monitoring activities?

The difficulty with the August power system emergency was that the Bi-Op is silent on that particular type of emergency, said Brown -- it contains nothing explicit about the cessation of spill during the migration season as a result of a power system emergency. The same is true of the Council's plan, Ruff observed. Where there are changes from Bi Op operations anything the effects interim survival levels has to be analyzed in terms of, have we preserved the no jeopardy/no adverse modification of critical habitat determination that was made in the Bi-Op, as well as whether or not we've minimized incidental take in accordance with the incidental take statement in the Bi-Op, said Brown. I would expect the EC to provide some more specific guidance on this issue this winter, to be placed in the TMT guidelines for 1997.

There's also flood control, said Arndt -- the Bi-Op isn't totally silent on this issue, but operations for flood control, depending on when they occur, can also impact migrating stocks. If that occurs, he said, we'll be struggling with the same type of issues. And as far as the impacts of research and monitoring on the migration, we're in a situation where two pieces of the Bi-Op are often in direct conflict. How do we address that? asked Arndt.

The model we're most likely to use in those cases is the one that was developed for construction projects under RPA 26, Brown replied. Similar questions have arisen when the Bi-Op has directed that a particular project be built -- what do you build, when do you build it, and what effects will that project have on interim survival measures? As part of the RPS process, we developed a framework to deal with these questions.

So as we frame this question for the Executive Committee, said Arndt.... I would anticipate that we would want to develop a framework, an operational counterpart to the one that was put in place on the structural side, said Brown. I doubt that this will be resolved on September 20, he added; however, we will set the process in motion for next season.

Further discussion yielded an IT endorsement of Brown's suggestion that the "Summary of 1996 Migration Season" agenda item be divided into two parts: a factual report on what happened in 1996, and a summary of the more controversial issues that arose this year. It was further agreed that a panel consisting of representatives from COE and the fish managers will present the factual report, while Brown and/or Donna Darm will present the policy issues portion of this agenda item. Montana's Mark Reller and IDFG's Ed Bowles volunteered to present information on the biological impacts of 1996 operations on resident fish; Brown agreed that this would be a logical component to add to the presentation.

Brown asked that Cindy Henriksen of COE organize a meeting of this group to coordinate the 1996 migration season presentation, to ensure that the resident fish and anadromous fish portions of the factual report do not overlap.

In terms of pulling together the policy issues, said Brown, I will take a first cut at that, but I would like to hear from other IT participants on this topic as well. Nigro suggested that the September 11 meeting might provide an opportunity to discuss this topic further. As long as it doesn't overwhelm the guidelines discussion, replied Brown.

Brown continued down through the agenda for the September 20 EC meeting. Bowles suggested that it would be appropriate to include the west coast steelhead issue, and its ramifications for the region, somewhere on the agenda; Brown agreed.

## VII. Other.

Arndt distributed Enclosure F, an information paper on the implementation of Congressional language under which COE and BPA, in consultation with NMFS, were tasked to develop recommendations for improving the system by which fish passage improvements are designed, tested and implemented at the federal projects. Subsequently, said Arndt, Congress told us that we also needed to do an independent review, and ensure that the other regional interests participate in this process. This information paper outlines how COE, BPA and NMFS intend to do this. The reason I bring it up today, said Arndt, is that the agencies have agreed that the best way to ensure full regional participation is to work through the IT forum. Arndt asked the other

IT participants to review the document and provide any comments they might have to him as soon as possible.

Arndt also touched briefly on the Dworshak Dam grouting project, saying that the leaking problem is growing worse. We're working with a contractor to develop a preferred grouting technique, he said; the grouting project could begin as early as the fall of 1997. We'll keep you abreast of this issue at future IT meetings, Arndt said.

#### VIII. Approval of Minutes from Aug. 1 IT Meeting.

Nigro offered one comment on the August 1 meeting minutes; the notes were approved as amended.

#### IX. Next Meeting Date.

The next Implementation Team meeting was set for Thursday, October 3, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at NMFS's Portland, Oregon offices. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.

Final Notes 9-18-96