

Final Notes September 16, 1999
Corrections made 10/4/99

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEETING NOTES

September 2, 1999, 9:00 a.m.-4 p.m.

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE OFFICES
PORTLAND, OREGON

I. Greetings, Introductions and Review of the Agenda.

The September 2, 1999 meeting of the Implementation Team, held at the National Marine Fisheries Service's offices in Portland, Oregon, was chaired by Brian Brown of NMFS and facilitated by Donna Silverberg. The agenda for the September 2 meeting and a list of attendees are attached as Enclosures A and B.

The following is a distillation (not a verbatim transcript) of items discussed at the meeting, 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.

Brown and Silverberg welcomed everyone to the meeting, led a round of introductions and a review of the agenda.

II. Updates.

A. In-Season Management. TMT chair Cindy Henriksen reported that the 1999 in-season management period is now at an end; the TMT held its last weekly management meeting on August 25. She distributed the final TMT spreadsheet for 1999, which showed a final summer (June 21-August 31) seasonal average flow of 57 Kcfs at Lower Granite and 233 Kcfs at McNary. The TMT agreed to try to maintain 200 kcfs on a week average basis at McNary throughout the summer period in 1999, Henriksen said; That was achieved except for the week ending August 29, when the average flow at McNary was 198.5 Kcfs.

Henriksen said the summer seasonal average flow of 233 Kcfs at McNary was one of the largest on record, second only to the 237 Kcfs averaged during the summer of 1997. However, in 1997, the water supply was 150% of normal; in 1999, it was only 116% of normal. In 1996, when the water supply was 130% of average, the summer average flow at McNary was only 212 Kcfs. In 1999, snowmelt came very late, and the runoff was heavily skewed into the July-August period, Henriksen said. She added that August inflow to the Libby and Mica projects in 1999 was the

second- and third-highest on record.

Henriksen said that, despite the fact that the group did not meet this week, the TMT did receive a new System Operational Request – SOR 99-27, requesting refill of the Lower Snake projects above minimum operating pool (MOP) to benefit adult passage. We have begun to implement that requested operation, she said; Ice Harbor is beginning to fill today, and should be at its normal operating range by later today. Lower Monumental refill will likely begin tomorrow; Little Goose refill should be completed by Sunday or Monday, September 6.

How will this operation help improve adult passage conditions? asked Jim Ruff of the Council staff. Mainly, it will help keep the fish ladders in criteria, Henriksen replied. In response to another question from Ruff, Henriksen said the Dworshak release temperature has been increased from 47 degrees F. to 50-51 degrees F. Jim Nielsen of WDFW noted that, as of 7 o'clock this morning, water temperatures in the Lower Granite forebay and tailwater were 68 degrees; at Ice Harbor, the forebay temperature reading was 67.8 degrees, the tailwater reading 67.6 degrees.

Henriksen said the next TMT meeting, to begin the 1999 post-season review process, is scheduled for Wednesday, September 29.

Jim Yost of the Idaho Governor's office asked whether the Corps had completed its studies to evaluate the Brownlee flood control operations in recent years; Henriksen replied in the affirmative - we're in the process of calibrating the 1996 and 1997 operations, then we'll look at the Brownlee flood control operation to see whether, in hindsight, we could have changed anything, she said. The basic idea is that Idaho would like to coordinate the last flood control releases from Brownlee so that they coincide with the first part of the juvenile salmon migration season rather than finishing the flood control releases in April, then being asked to provide additional flow augmentation volumes a week or two later, when the reservoir is empty, Yost explained. Henriksen added that the Corps will meet with the state of Idaho to discuss the study results. After that we will decide how to proceed with our findings.

Ruff noted that 1996 and 1997 are good years to study, because in below-average water years, system flood control may be shifted to Grand Coulee, and the problems Yost referenced do not occur because more water is left in the Idaho reservoirs.

Michelle DeHart said that, on the fish movement front, sampling has been halted at Lower Monumental Dam due to an outbreak of columnaris. Daily transport, in salt water to suppress the spread of the disease, is in effect at that project. The adult migration is proceeding about as expected; DeHart said it is still too early to say whether or not the 1999 run will, as predicted, be larger than the 1998 run.

B. Plan for Analyzing and Testing Hypotheses (PATH). Dave Marmorek reported that, since the last IT meeting, PATH has been concentrating its efforts on six main tasks: fall chinook, spring/summer chinook, reviewing the A-Fish Appendix and the NMFS matrix framework, experimental management, the Mid-Columbia QAR and the effects of John Day drawdown on the Snake River stocks.

On the fall chinook front, said Marmorek, PATH is very close to being able to present the results of its analysis to the IT; the report and executive summary are now in near-final form. He said PATH would like to present its fall chinook results at the October 7 IT meeting.

With respect to the spring/summer chinook analysis and the review of the A-Fish Appendix, Marmorek said PATH has been looking closely at the “D” values, and has also been evaluating various hypotheses about climate and ocean conditions. If, in fact, ocean conditions have gotten worse since 1977, and are continuing to worsen, that would represent a condition that is worse than the current worst-case scenario PATH is currently analyzing, he said. We want to take a look at that, to see what effect it has on our results. Both the additional spring/summer chinook analysis and PATH’s review of the A-Fish Appendix are expected to be complete by the end of September, when an update report on these topics, plus experimental management, will be completed.

On the experimental management front, Marmorek said PATH has now completed the third draft of a report called “Scoping of Candidate Experimental Management Actions to Resolve Key Uncertainties.” As we have discussed previously, he said, the intent of this report is to scope out a range of actions, then get feedback from the IT, the Power Planning Council and from hatchery, habitat and harvest managers on the feasibility of these alternative actions. Marmorek said PATH would like to place a briefing on experimental management on the October IT agenda as well, warning that the experimental management and fall chinook reports could occupy half a day.

Moving on to PATH’s work on the Mid-Columbia QAR, Marmorek said this effort is now well underway; the QAR work group has made good progress on the biological requirements and data organization fronts, as well as developing analytical tools. With respect to the effects of John Day drawdown on the Snake River stocks, Marmorek said PATH recently received the analysis Jim Anderson did on this topic for the Corps, and will be reviewing it and providing comments over the next two weeks. We are also talking about reserving a week for further modeling of John Day drawdown, he added, but that will depend on its relative importance within the broader PATH workload.

Marmorek said different PATH work groups have been assigned to each of these tasks, and are making steady progress on all of them.

Brown added that, on the Mid-Columbia QAR front, there is now a report available on that group’s analysis of Upper Columbia steelhead. He suggested that anyone interested in obtaining a copy call Tom Cooney directly at 503/231-6888.

C. Integrated Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB). No ISAB report was presented at today’s meeting, although Bill Hevlin of NMFS noted that the SCT has asked the ISAB to review the 1998 and 1999 results from The Dalles survival study. We would like to get that on the ISAB’s agenda as soon as possible, he said, so that we can have the results of their review in hand before we prioritize the 2000 survival study at The Dalles. It would probably be a good idea for the SCT to frame a letter, laying out exactly what the ISAB is being asked to do, suggested NMFS’ John Palensky. It was requested that the SCT draft this letter in time for review at the IT’s October meeting.

D. Water Quality Team (WQT). This update was addressed under Agenda Item III, below.

E. System Configuration Team (SCT). Hevlin said the SCT is now entering the most intensive phase of its FY’00 CRFM prioritization process; the amount of the FY’00 CRFM appropriation

will soon be finalized, and at that point, serious discussion of the FY'00 CRFM priorities will begin. As noted previously, said Hevlin, we've split the SCT into three caucuses – federal, state and tribal – to do our initial scoring and prioritizations. We will then integrate those three prioritized lists of projects, to develop a final SCT list of project priorities. Hevlin said the tribal caucus' list has not yet been received, but is expected within a day or so.

There are two reasons for optimism, from the standpoint of the FY'00 CRFM budget, Hevlin said. First, the final cost of a number of projects is less than originally thought; one of those projects is the extended-length screen installation at John Day, which has encountered prototype problems and will be subjected to additional laboratory hydraulic testing before the screens are installed. Other big-ticket projects which will cost less in FY'00 than originally expected include the surface collection evaluation at Lower Granite, the John Day drawdown study and the trash boom at Little Goose.

In addition, said Hevlin, the Corps has developed an approach to the FY'00 CRFM budget which appears to offer some additional flexibility. The Corps' Witt Anderson explained that his agency is working with headquarters to get some FY'99 CRFM funding reprogrammed into FY'00; it appears that up to \$14 million in reprogrammed funds may be available. Currently, the House has recommended \$65 million in FY'00 CRFM funding, while the Senate has recommended \$70 million. If we get \$65 million, with savings and slippage, we will still have \$70 million to \$75 million to work with if the FY'99 funds can be reprogrammed, Anderson said. We should know whether or not the reprogramming will be possible by the end of September, he added; all signs are positive at this point. Given the fact that we currently have approximately \$78 million in CRFM projects in FY'00, said Ruff, if Congress approves \$70 million in FY'00 CRFM funding, we should be in pretty good shape.

A couple of additional items, Hevlin said; at the last SCT meeting, we gave preliminary approval to several FY'00 projects to allow work to get underway. These projects include the work on John Day extended-length screens, to look at gatewell hydraulics and the redesign of the VBS system; the Lower Granite surface bypass evaluation, and the Little Goose trash boom.

Hevlin noted that the language of both the House and Senate CRFM appropriations bills prohibit further study of drawdown at John Day; despite this fact, he said, there is still a need to develop a multi-year action plan for improving juvenile survival at John Day. We need to talk about how to integrate extended-length screen development with the development of surface collection capabilities and spillway improvements, he said; to that end, an SCT subcommittee has been created to address these issues.

F. Quantitative Analytical Report (QAR). No QAR update was presented at today's meeting.

G. Federal Caucus and Framework Hydro Developments. Ruff distributed Enclosure C, a handout showing the status and specifications of the seven alternatives the Council is considering in its Framework analysis. This is the latest and greatest version of this document, he explained; bear in mind that this was developed through the Framework/Federal Hydro Caucus work group, and that these strategies relate only to mainstem hydro options – they do not deal with the other Hs.

To refresh your memory, said Ruff, the seven alternatives cover a full spectrum of possible

future strategies, from Alternative 1, which would operate the system primarily to benefit fish and wildlife, to Alternative 7, which would operate the system primarily to benefit power, irrigation and navigation users. The other five alternatives fall somewhere in between Alternatives 1 and 7. Ruff noted that Alternative 2, which, it is hoped, will become the tribal Framework alternative, is blank, except for the fact that it would include a normative hydrograph. It is hoped that the Tribal Caucus will fill in the rest of the blanks soon.

Ruff said the Federal Hydro Caucus is currently looking at three alternatives, including one which represents the current operation. We continue to try to dovetail those three alternatives so that they are reflected somewhere in the seven Framework alternatives, he explained. Framework Alternative 4-Near Term is as close as we've been able to get to the current operation, with planned system improvements, Ruff said. Framework Alternative 5 addresses non-breaching Four-H actions, said Anderson, although again, only the hydro part of this alternative is reflected in this document. Framework Alternative 3 reflects the four Lower Snake projects drawn down to natural river, with other improvements at other projects, added Ruff.

The bottom line is that the middle three Framework alternatives are where we have attempted to integrate the Framework and Federal Hydro Caucus alternatives, Ruff continued. We are now in the process of attempting to model some of these alternatives, he said, to try to get a handle on their hydro cost as well as estimated survival levels resulting from each alternative. The initial runs have been completed on Alternative 6; the next alternative to be modeled is Alternative 1. BPA is also doing the hydroregulation model runs for Alternatives 3, 4 and 5, he added. Dan Daley noted that it will not be possible to model the transmission system impacts of Alternative 1, under which six of the eight federal hydro projects would be removed; essentially, if those six projects are removed, the transmission system would cease to exist. However, the estimated hydro impacts of removing the four Lower Snake dams will be available.

In response to a question from Dennis Rohr, Anderson said the Four-H paper is still expected to be available in draft form some time in late October.

III. A. Approval of Water Quality Team Guidelines

WQT co-chair Mark Schneider distributed Enclosure D, the most recent draft of the Water Quality Team guidelines. He said a few additional comments, received at the last WQT meeting, have been incorporated in this draft of the document. The guidelines are now ready for IT approval, he said.

John Palensky noted that there was some confusion about whether or not the WQT guidelines had been approved at the August IT meeting, because some of the Water Quality Team members in attendance at the IT meeting said they had not yet reviewed that version of the guidelines. The IT spent a few minutes reviewing the current draft of the guidelines, noting one or two additional minor editorial changes; at the conclusion of this discussion, Brown asked whether there were any IT objections to the Water Quality Team guidelines as written. Ruff moved that they be approved; motion passed unanimously, with the caveat that Silverberg will check with Oregon to be sure that they approve.

III. B. Consideration of the Lower Snake River Water Temperature Monitoring Proposal.

Schneider said that a WQT work group has been designated to address the concerns raised by

the IT about the Snake River water temperature monitoring framework presented at the last meeting of this group. The WQT work group had a very productive meeting last Friday, Schneider said; he distributed Enclosure E, the most recent draft of the WQT's Snake River temperature monitoring program briefing paper, which was approved by the WQT yesterday.

Schneider explained that this paper summarizes the WQT's response to the three questions and tasks posed by the IT: 1) what is the intended application of the new water temperature monitoring data that would be obtained through this new effort? 2) conduct a fast-track review of the existing temperature monitoring data and 3) develop a revised water temperature monitoring framework taking this information into account.

In terms of the intended application, said Schneider, the work group developed the following goal: "...to help the region accurately determine the causal mechanisms of temperature regimes in the Corps' reservoirs. Only when enough data has been gathered may regional managers make appropriate and reasoned management decisions and be able to predict changes that will assist overall management of the system."

The basic idea behind this goal is that there is a threshold of information about the causal mechanisms of these temperature regimes that it is necessary to obtain before reasoned, effective management decisions can be made, Schneider said. Implicit in this concept is the fact that that informational threshold has not yet been achieved. The WQT believes that the proposed Lower Snake water temperature monitoring program will provide managers with the comprehensive, real-time information needed to support their decisions.

Ruff distributed a series of charts, showing temperature monitoring data from the existing monitoring system at Lower Granite, comparing temperature readings at the Corps monitoring sites (forebay and powerhouse) and at the tri-level monitors at the project. What I'm trying to show here, said Ruff, is what temperature monitoring information is currently being gathered in the Lower Snake River. He noted that temperature information is being gathered at all of the TDG monitoring stations throughout the system, generally at a depth of about 15 feet. Ruff distributed a map showing the locations of all of the dissolved gas monitoring stations in the system, some 60 in all, from Wauna Mill at the mouth of the Columbia to Boundary, Hungry Horse and the Hells Canyon Complex high up in the system.

Some of these stations gather data year-'round, Ruff explained; others operate only seasonally. As you can see from the graphs, he said, what this information currently tells us is that there is generally a significant difference – 2-5 degrees F. – between the readings taken near the surface by the TDG monitoring station and the readings recorded in the scroll case, near the bottom of Lower Granite pool. He added that the readings at the mid-depth thermograph station generally follow the scroll case readings, while the readings from the bottom tri-level instrument are consistently cooler than those recorded at any of the other station. In my view, said Ruff, this points out very clearly that there is a lot more information to be gained through the monitoring of various depths in all of the Lower Snake pools. As you can see from this graph, he said, in mid-August 1998, temperatures in the Lower Granite pool ranged from 75 degrees near the surface down to 66 degrees near the bottom – obviously, there is significant stratification in this pool.

Daley observed that, while additional information would be useful, there is some danger in presenting point estimates only, which do not provide a full picture of the temperature regime in the reservoir. True, Ruff agreed – it would be misleading to characterize this as the temperature

regime in the entire reservoir. It is simply a slice of the Lower Snake River above Lower Granite, intended to show what additional information might be available.

Again, said Schneider, we are presenting this to show you what information is currently available. However, it would not be adequate to meet the goal and objectives outlined in the briefing paper, because it would not allow the managers to manipulate temperature with any degree of sensitivity.

Getting back to one of the IT's original questions, Schneider continued, there are at least three areas where the additional temperature monitoring information might be applied. One is the in-season management arena, another is in our ability to predict the effects of the cool-water releases from Dworshak, so that Dworshak storage can be used with optimum effectiveness, and the third is in the area of ongoing research.

At its meeting last Friday, the WQT work group posed a series of questions, Schneider said; answering these questions will require further information. Question one is, what are the temperature conditions at Dworshak and Brownlee? Question two is, what are the optimum conditions for fish? Question three is, how can these conditions be achieved? Question four is, how can we manage the system to meet water quality standards? These are the kinds of questions to which the Water Quality Team believes this additional water temperature monitoring information could be applied, Schneider said.

The IT also asked the WQT to plan a fast-track review of the existing data, Schneider continued. Our conclusion was that the first step in the fast track process is a review of the existing data; the way to do that would be to ask a single contractor, with the capability to do information synthesis, to undertake this task. The sources of information listed at the bottom of Page 2 of the briefing paper give you some idea of how much information is currently available, and why we believe hiring someone with information synthesis capabilities is the way to go, Schneider said. The paper includes a potential approach to developing the scope of work for this contract, he said, and poses a series of questions that need to be answered in the course of the data review.

In terms of the time-frame for the fast-track review of the existing data, Schneider said, our feeling is that we need to get that underway as soon as possible. The review itself is expected to take two to three months to complete, requiring a total of approximately one man-month of contractor effort costing approximately \$20,000.

Daley warned that obtaining the detailed, real-time temperature information needed to make operational decisions in the system will be a very expensive proposition. Ruff agreed, adding that one of the things it is hoped the fast-track review will do is enable the region to focus the monitoring efforts on the specific areas where key data gaps exist, so that funds can be spent as efficiently as possible.

Is the WQT proposing that we move ahead with the development of the monitoring program before the fast-track data review is completed? Anderson asked. I believe we could move forward, because there are certain key data, such as the inflow temperatures to the Lower Snake reservoirs, that we already know are missing, BPA's Tom Morris replied. However, it is also important to do the analysis of the existing data, so that the monitoring program can be focused

with maximum efficiency.

Anderson suggested that the IT ask the WQT to look very carefully at the proposed scope of work for the fast-track data review, to be sure that it is the right scope of work. He said Bolyvong Tanovan of the Corps had provided some additional comments on the proposed scope of work; Schneider replied that most of Tanovan's suggestions have been incorporated in this draft of the briefing paper. Yost observed that, in support of the FERC relicensing process, Idaho is conducting some very extensive temperature monitoring work in the Lower Snake; he noted that the data list on Page 2 of this draft of the briefing paper does not include this information. It should, he said, because there is no sense in paying for the same information twice. It was agreed that coordination with Idaho should be a very important aspect of the data review and the design of the monitoring program. Yost further observed that the availability of cool-water refugia, where fish can rest on their way upstream and downstream, may be more important, from a management perspective, than numerical temperature information measured at various points in the system.

In the interest of keeping the water temperature monitoring project moving forward, Silverberg asked whether there are any additional points the IT feels the scope of work for the fast-track data review must address. I would suggest that, if the IT agrees with the general approach laid out in the briefing paper, that we say so, and assign the WQT to develop a more detailed scope of work, Brown said. Is everyone on board with the proposed fast-track data review approach described in the briefing paper, so that the WQT can begin developing the detailed scope of work? Silverberg asked. Yes, was the reply – BPA, the Corps, Reclamation, EPA, NMFS, CRITFC, Idaho and Washington all supported proceeding with Phase I of the water temperature monitoring framework. Schneider said he will check to be sure Oregon and the Fish and Wildlife Service also support the proposed fast-track data review. It was also agreed that the WQT will be tasked to develop a more detailed scope of work for the fast-track data review contract.

With respect to funding for the fast-track review, Mary Lou Soscia said EPA may be able to do this work in-house; she said she will look into the availability of the necessary personnel. She added the caveat, however, that EPA has no funds available to pay an outside contractor. Ruff asked whether any of the IT's participating agencies may have year-end money available if an outside contractor is needed; Michael Newsom said there may be some Reclamation funding available for this work. In response to a question from Brown, Daley said that, if Reclamation funds are made available, it should be possible for BPA to conclude the contracting process for the data review within the available time-frame. I'm pretty sure we could work that out, he said, but I would need to check. He agreed to do so, and Newsom and Soscia said they will check with their respective agencies about the availability of funding and manpower for this task.

IV. Dworshak National Fish Hatchery Water Supply.

Palensky reminded the group that this topic was discussed at the last IT meeting; we decided, at that time, that funding for the modifications to the water supply at Dworshak National Fish Hatchery should be pursued by looking at the MOA, he said. The next MOA work group meeting is scheduled for September 14, and this topic will be on the agenda. We will report back on that discussion at the October IT meeting, he said.

V. PATH and the Collaborative Analytical Team (CAT).

Brown distributed Enclosure F, the draft letter, discussed at the last IT meeting, from him to NWPPC Fish and Wildlife Director Bob Lohn, regarding the future scope of, and FY'00 funding for, PATH. If anyone has comments on the draft letter, said Brown, please provide them now; otherwise, I would like to seek IT approval of the letter so that it can be sent.

Hearing no comments or objections, Brown said the letter is provisionally approved, with the caveat that he will provide a full copy to Jim Nielsen as well as copies to Oregon, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the tribes to be sure they have no comments or objections before the letter is sent.

VI. Discussion of the Scope of the Regional Forum in Post-2000.

A. Willamette Operations. Anderson distributed Enclosure G, a Corps analysis of the pros and cons of three alternative avenues for dealing with Willamette operations in the Regional Forum: 1) Willamette operations NOT included in a broader Regional Forum, 2) Willamette operations PARTIALLY included in a broader Regional Forum and 3) Willamette Operations FULLY included in a broader Regional Forum. He thanked Cindy Henriksen for taking the lead in putting this document together, then spent a few minutes going through its contents (please see Enclosure G for details of Anderson's presentation).

There are three fundamental points to consider in the Willamette, said Anderson. First, the hydrology of the Willamette system is fundamentally different than the hydrology in the Columbia system. Second, activities in the Willamette – operations and studies – already have existing coordination bodies which probably involve the right state and tribal entities. Third, said Anderson, the Willamette is different than other Columbia tributaries like the Yakima or the Snake because it enters the Columbia low in the system – it doesn't have much of an effect on the operation of the Columbia River hydrosystem.

Henriksen noted that the agencies which coordinate on Willamette operations include ODFW, Oregon Water Resources, ODEQ, NMFS, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Forest Service, BLM and, of course, the Corps. Each spring, these entities cooperate in the development of an April Augmentation Plan, the original goal of which was the enhancement of water quality in the mainstem Willamette. We put together a proposal laying out how we expect the Willamette projects to operate, she explained, with the objective of meeting flow targets for water quality purposes at Albany and Salem, primarily in June, July and August.

In 1998 and 1999, we have also received requests that we meet specific target flows for fish during April and May, Henriksen continued; we have been able to incorporate these into the overall plan. So far, we have been successful in finalizing the operations plan each May, she said.

Typically, the flows required at Albany and Salem in July and August by Oregon DEQ are in the 6.5 Kcfs range, Henriksen said. When you think about that in terms of the typical Columbia River flow at Bonneville this time of year – around 150 Kcfs – the Willamette's flow contribution is actually fairly small. In lesser water years, of course, that contribution is even smaller, she said.

ODEQ's Russell Harding observed that, while Anderson's statement that the Willamette's flow impact on the Columbia system is relatively low is correct, the Bi-State Study, sponsored by Oregon and Washington in the early '90s, identified the Willamette as the single greatest point-source discharge of pollutants into the Lower Columbia – it certainly has a significant water quality impact on the lower river, he said, which may be important if the scope of the Regional Forum expands to include the estuary.

Reading between the lines of this paper, said Brown, it appears to me that the Corps' recommendation is that Willamette operations should be left to existing mechanisms, and outside the scope of the Regional Forum. To cut to the chase, Anderson said, that would be the Corps' recommendation. It wasn't our intent to make that kind of a recommendation in this paper; our objective was simply to lay out the pros and cons associated with each of these alternative approaches as objectively as possible and let the other IT members weigh in. The only real difference between the IT and the existing forums that deal with Willamette issues is that the IT includes the perspectives of the other states – Washington, Idaho and, to a certain extent, Montana. Our feeling is that the right entities are probably engaged in the current management of the Willamette system, Anderson said.

My suggestion, in attempting to characterize the Corps' recommendation, is not that we won't be looking at how Willamette operations may affect listed fish, said Brown – I was simply trying to suggest that we would not attempt to manage those operations through the Regional Forum, given the fact that there is already an ongoing process for consultation with NMFS on Willamette operations.

Silverberg went to the board and wrote the following questions:

How efficient would it be to get involved?

How much more complex would this make everyone's life?

Nielsen said WDFW would agree with an approach that would allow Willamette operational issues to continue to be made within the existing Willamette management structure, with regular information transfers between this group and the IT. We would not, however, support expanding the scope of the Regional Forum to make it responsible for the management of the Willamette system, Nielsen said.

In response to a question, Brown said it would probably be appropriate for the IT to receive updates from the Corps or NMFS as significant milestones in the operation of the Willamette, such as the approval of the annual operating plan, are achieved. Daley asked that the meeting notes reflect that there needs to be a firm commitment, on the part of the parties involved, to bring Willamette issues to the IT, and to keep the IT informed about any issues that may affect operations for listed species in the Columbia system. Anderson asked that a decision on Daley's suggestion be deferred until the other topics under this agenda item have been discussed.

B. Upper Snake Operations. Yost said Idaho appreciates the way the Regional Forum is currently handling Upper Snake issues. We may disagree on particular issues, he said, but we do support the process in general. Idaho's feeling is that issues relating to the Snake River above the Hells Canyon complex are best dealt with within Idaho, said Yost; we feel that the Upper Snake flow augmentation issue can be handled through the spigot of the Hells Canyon Complex,

and that there is no need for the Regional Forum to expand its scope to include the micro-management of the Upper Snake system.

If there is a desire to address Upper Snake habitat and temperature issues, said Yost, we are willing to address those in the Regional Forum, although we have processes underway in Idaho to address those concerns. We have no problem with providing the Regional Forum with updates on how the system is being operated; when there are significant things going on in the Upper Snake, we do try to keep you informed, Yost said. The bottom line is that the operational system in the Upper Snake is somewhat unique, in that the projects are operated from November to April by the Bureau of Reclamation, and from April to November by the irrigation districts. That means that, during the spring and summer periods, Reclamation has to apply to the managers of those facilities for water releases in exactly the same way the irrigators apply for the release of water, Yost explained; the water is then delivered as requested.

Yost noted that there are a couple of other items worthy of mention, with respect to Upper Snake operations. First, he said, under the Snake River Basin adjudication, there is a settlement agreement being negotiated. Second, there is the ongoing FERC relicensing process for many of the Idaho Power projects above the Hells Canyon Complex. Third, there are a number of Idaho codes and laws which will need to be modified in the near future to provide some additional flexibility in terms of what we can do hydrologically and biologically. Those processes are underway, said Yost, and we'll know more on all of these fronts in another month or so.

Fundamentally, said Yost, Idaho's position is that we are happy with the current process, and are willing to provide more data and information to the Regional Forum on issues related to the system above and below the Hells Canyon Complex.

Silverberg wrote the following on the board:

Issues above Hells Canyon should be handled by Idaho
Discussion of temperature, hydro and habitat is OK at the Regional Forum
Requests for Idaho water from TMT is OK; Idaho is comfortable with the current Forum.

It sounds, then, from what Jim has said, as though, with respect to the inclusion of Upper Snake issues within the Regional Forum discussions, Idaho feels that the current system is adequate, Brown said. Does anyone disagree, and feel that this group needs to be more actively involved in project operations above Hells Canyon? No disagreements were raised to Brown's characterization at today's meeting.

The only request I would make is that Idaho provide regular updates on some of the ongoing processes affecting Upper Snake operations, such as FERC relicensing and the Snake River Basin adjudication, said Michael Newsom. Certainly to the extent that these processes may affect the ability to provide the 427 KAF in Upper Snake flow augmentation water, or whatever volume is in the next BiOp, it would be useful for the IT to have as much advance notice as possible, Ruff said.

C. Clean Water Act Issues. Soscia said that, in general, EPA would like to see the Regional Forum become more inclusive, the Nez Perce's 1999 Dworshak operational issue being a case in point. In the view of many in the region, and without any intention to engage in a debate as to the merits of those views, the Regional Forum needs to make a more intensive effort to be more

inclusive, and to bring people into this forum with the idea that their views will be given serious consideration, said Soscia.

Soscia went on to describe the following five categories of water quality issues which, in EPA's view, are of relevance to the Regional Forum process:

A. Science: provide better understanding of temperature and water quality

- Temperature model/tools
- Gas model
- Coordinated information sharing workshops
- Coordination on biological data

B. In-Season Management

- Gas waivers
- Dworshak releases
- McNary operations, other

C. Coordination Between State, Federal, Tribal Water Quality Programs

- Mainstem and tributaries
- Water quality standards review
- FERC relicensing

D. Future Implementation Decisions

- Development of a water quality plan
- Fast track gas
- Long-term gas
- Operational decisions (use tools: biological, economic feasibility)

E. Coordination With Canada Through Transboundary Gas Group

- Development and implementation of systemwide gas plans
- Coordination with PUDs
- Canadian Treaty issues

Harding said that, from ODEQ's perspective, the question that arose from this agenda item is whether or not water quality ought to be a part of the Regional Forum of the year 2000. Certainly, from the State of Oregon's perspective, the answer is a resounding yes, he said. Obviously we have areas in common, said Harding; there are also other areas where, unless we work at them, there is going to be some friction. Litigation has certainly spurred on the states' zeal in the water quality arena, he said, but even before litigation occurred, there was a commitment, on the part of the states, to address water quality problems. To effectively address those concerns, and to avoid friction, it would certainly be helpful if they were included within the future scope of the Regional Forum, said Harding.

I agree that water quality needs to be addressed within the Regional Forum, said Daley, but the question is, are we already addressing those concerns through the Water Quality Team, the TMT and SCT, or do we need a change in scope to address the states' concerns?

I would agree that the Regional Forum is more receptive to water quality issues than it has been in the past, Harding replied. If it continues in that vein, then obviously, we're headed in the right direction. In other words, the necessary structures are now in place? Silverberg asked. I think the structures are there, Harding agreed; I don't think, at this point, that further restructuring is needed – it's more a question of awareness.

When you define water quality, are you talking primarily about dissolved gas and temperature? Anderson asked. Clearly for the state water quality agencies, the definition is far broader, Harding replied. For the purposes of the Regional Forum, it seems to me that you want to define it as those water quality parameters that potentially could impact fish. For that reason, the definition could be broadened to include other pollutants, including pH and copper. However, for the purposes of the Forum, the parameters would probably be limited to those which affect fish, said Harding.

Nielsen said he had a request to make of the federal agencies, especially EPA and NMFS. The Regional Forum exists to implement the Biological Opinion, he said. At some time in the next year, we will have a new Biological Opinion, which will be much broader in scope than the 1995 BiOp. With respect to Dworshak operations, said Nielsen, my hope is that this new Biological Opinion will include a means to avoid open conflict between the implementation of the existing BiOp and the desire, on the part of some parties in the region, to implement operations to satisfy the Clean Water Act.

With the departure of several key IT participants, it was agreed to defer further discussion of this agenda item until the October IT meeting. Brown suggested that the October discussion commence with a summary of today's dialogue; based on what I have heard, he said, I would characterize the outcome of our discussion by saying that the Willamette should not be included in the future scope of the Regional Forum, that Upper Snake operations should be left as is, and that, while Clean Water Act issues need to be addressed within the Regional Forum and that more inclusivity, emphasis and outreach may be needed, no structural changes are necessary to address them at this time.

With respect to Dan Daley's earlier point, said Anderson, I would suggest that each participating entity needs to commit to inform the Regional Forum of any activities they are involved in, in these other arenas, which may impact the Regional Forum's activities – in other words, to the transfer of information, not to issue resolution. Anderson suggested that the IT membership think about this issue, and come to the October meeting prepared to discuss it.

D. Estuary Discussion. This item was deferred until the IT's October meeting.

E. Hanford Discussion. This item was deferred until the IT's October meeting.

F. Non-Hydro Hs. This item was deferred until the IT's October meeting.

G. Kerr Drought Management Plan. This item was also deferred.

VII. Next IT Meeting Date and Agenda Items.

The next meeting of the Implementation Team was set for Thursday, October 7, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at NMFS' Portland offices. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.