

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEETING NOTES

November 4, 1999, 9:00 a.m.-4 p.m.

**NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE OFFICES
PORTLAND, OREGON**

I. Greetings, Introductions and Review of the Agenda.

The November 4, 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 November 4 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. The Corps=Cindy Henriksen reported that the Technical Management Team held an all-day post-season review meeting yesterday; the morning session was devoted to a technical review of last year=s operation, while the afternoon was devoted to process issues for 1999 and beyond. Henriksen distributed a package of the technical information discussed at yesterday=s meeting (Enclosure C) and asked the IT to review it and talk to her about any future presentations they feel may be necessary.

In general, said Henriksen, the 1999 water year was well above-average, which allowed the TMT to avoid having to raise many issues to the IT in 1999. The only issue raised by the TMT in 1999 had to do with the commencement of Dworshak flow augmentation in July, she said. The shape of last year's runoff was also advantageous, from the perspective of avoiding conflict, because much of the water didn't arrive until July and August; air and water temperatures were also lower than average.

With respect to the TMT's discussion of process issues, Henriksen said Billy Connor made a very informative presentation at yesterday's meeting on fish migration issues in the Lower Snake River, comparing 1999 information to data from previous years. Connor suggested a number of issues on which the TMT will be continuing to brainstorm, she said.

One of the things we're talking about is the use of decision criteria, rather than planning dates, to guide operations in the future, Henriksen continued; that would be a new spin on how the TMT approaches the Biological Opinion and its implementation. Nothing was decided, but we did develop a list of eight or nine items for further discussion, she said.

Other items discussed at yesterday's meeting included participation at TMT, Henriksen said; there was growing interest in the TMT in 1999, which was good news. Montana returned to the table and was a regular participant in our discussions, she said; we also had a good deal of participation from CRITFC and the Nez Perce Tribe and the state water quality agencies. Other new wrinkles to the TMT process in 1999 included the fact that we received weekly reports on the Hanford stranding issue, she said.

The next scheduled TMT meeting is December 15, Henriksen continued; we will start that meeting by talking once again about decision criteria, then move on to the TMT Guidelines. The Water Management Plan will be next, but before we really sink our teeth into that document, we would like to see how the decision criteria play out. In short, she said, we've been very busy, but we still have a lot more to do.

Can you give us an example of the type of criteria you're looking at? Jim Ruff asked. Connor suggested that we may want to begin releasing water from Brownlee earlier, using temperature and flow at Hells Canyon as a trigger, Jim Litchfield replied. Connor suggested using 17 degrees C and 30 Kcfs as the triggers to begin drafting from Brownlee, with the goal of covering some percentage of the run, based on his forecasts of smolt out-migration. He also suggested that we begin releasing 8-9 degree C water earlier from Dworshak, using a water temperature of 17 degrees C in the Lower Granite tailrace as the trigger, Litchfield said. Again, the goal would be to release that water when the center of the run -- the majority of the fish -- are present.

Really, all the TMT has done at this point is identify some major issues where decision criteria may be useful, Jim Nielsen said. Frankly, we've struggled with the Dworshak release issue for the last two years, and there is a significant difference of opinion among the TMT

membership even as to what the objective of those Dworshak releases ought to be. In other words, said Silverberg, we have our work cut out for us.

A couple of meetings ago, the TMT talked about the potential that a portion of each week's TMT meeting might be closed to non-technical participants, said Bruce Lovelin. Was that issue discussed at yesterday's meeting? We can't tell you -- the meeting was closed, Litchfield joked. Actually, that issue was discussed at painful length, said Henriksen; those discussions are continuing and, in fact, there is a conference call to address that issue this afternoon. Basically, said Silverberg, the agreement at this point is to let the lawyers for the various TMT members deal with the legal issues involved, while the participating agencies discuss the policy questions inherent in closing a portion of the weekly TMT meeting.

What's the basic issue the TMT is trying to address by closing part of the weekly meeting? Lovelin asked. Essentially, it is the timing of the disclosure of market-sensitive information, Nielsen replied. And BPA is the primary entity bringing this issue forward? Lovelin asked. That's correct, was the reply.

Will the TMT be continuing to discuss its role within the future institutional framework of the Regional Forum? Brown asked. Or are your discussions of the future role of TMT focused primarily on your own guidelines? The TMT Guidelines are certainly a part of that forward-looking discussion, Henriksen replied; we're also discussing our interaction with the Implementation Team, and whether we would like to see some changes to that relationship. The bottom line is, I expect that we will have something to report back to the IT in the context of your discussion of the future structure of the Regional Forum, she said.

Silverberg added that Connor had made the point that 1999 set a new standard for excellence in migration conditions and measured downstream survival; flow, temperature and timing of runoff came together to set a new benchmark against which future out migrations will be measured, which is good news, she said. Just don't expect us to be able to recreate those conditions in future years, Henriksen said.

B. Plan for Analyzing and Testing Hypotheses (PATH). See Agenda Item V, below.

C. Integrated Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB). No ISAB report was presented at today's meeting.

D. Water Quality Team (WQT). NMFS=Mark Schneider reported that there is a Water Quality Team meeting scheduled for Tuesday, November 9. The main thing I wanted to talk about is the Transboundary Gas Group meeting on September 30 in Nelson, B.C., he said; Schneider distributed Enclosure E, a packet of information relating to that meeting, which he characterized as very productive.

The main thing I wanted to touch on today is the series of projects the TGG has identified

as components of a basinwide dissolved gas management plan, Schneider said. The first activity identified by the TGG is a screening tool, the purpose of which is to identify gas hot spots throughout the basin, from the Canadian projects all the way down to Astoria, he explained. The tool will depend on a modeling approach, which will help us identify those gas hot spots. There are at least two existing models which can be used to develop estimates of gas generation at a given project, Schneider said; in developing this screening tool, we will apply these models within a basinwide context, and will also capture all of the monitoring data that currently exists.

One of these models was generated by Marshall Richmond of Battelle, Schneider continued; one of the items in the information packet is an outline which will be used to develop a request for proposals, which Tom Foeller of BPA has agreed to take the lead on.

One of the points I wanted to make to the IT today is the fact that the TGG's progress to date doesn't consist solely of listing projects that need to be done, Schneider said -- there are a number of these projects that are already underway. It is estimated that the screening tool model development and the compilation of the existing data will take three to four months to complete, and will cost roughly \$50,000, he said. Schneider noted that, in 1999, CRIEMP (the Columbia River Integrated Environmental Monitoring Program) conducted monitoring at all of the Canadian projects, then combined that data with information developed by Seattle City Light on the Pend Oreille system. As a result of that effort, Schneider said, we now have monitoring information for Keenleyside, the five Kootenay River projects, and the three projects from Boundary Dam downstream on the Pend Oreille. That information has already been fed into Richmond's model, he added.

Schneider said CRIEMP has put together a scope of work for a project which will overlay the identified TDG hot spots onto a map of the sensitive aquatic resources in the region -- in other words, a tool that combines biological monitoring data with physical monitoring data. They will then conduct some sort of risk analysis, he said. The project is expected to cost about \$65,000 for both the Canadian and U.S. portions of the system, he said.

Once we've identified the TDG hot spots and the aquatic resources at risk, Schneider continued, the next task will be to recommend what should be done about the most crucial hot spots -- an assessment of the structural and operational gas abatement measures that might be employed at those locations. The Corps has already done that work for its projects in the Lower Columbia, Schneider said; now it needs to be extended to projects in the upper part of the basin as well.

The TGG is also exploring the potential for cooperative operational gas abatement efforts, similar to the Corps' spill priority list, Schneider said. We're talking about how that list might be expanded to include the projects above Grand Coulee, he said; at this point, those discussions are just in their initial stages.

At Schneider's request, Dave Zimmer described a Bureau of Reclamation commitment to

provide staff to help develop a scope of work for a framework plan for transboundary gas management (a description of this project is included in Enclosure E). The development of the scope of work is now underway, Zimmer said; we hope to have a draft available for TGG steering committee review by February 1, and a final report by March 31, 2000. The plan will focus on the formulation of gas abatement options for facilities on the mainstem Columbia above Grand Coulee, and on integration with the Upper Columbia facilities, to help abate gas systemwide, Zimmer explained. We will also touch on the institutional issues inherent in trying to develop this plan, he said -- the responsibilities of the owner/operators, and of the various agencies charged with the development and implementation of a plan. Again, we will be coordinating the development of this plan through the TGG steering committee, Zimmer said.

As most of you are aware, said Ruff, up to this point, agencies on both sides of the border have been participating in the TGG on a voluntary basis. Some entities have begun to step up to the plate and actually commit resources so that some of this work can get underway; the CRIEMP monitoring work this summer is one example, and Reclamation's offer to provide staff help so that the scope of work can be developed is another. The first three work items Mark mentioned will ultimately inform the systemwide gas abatement plan, Ruff explained. Some additional funding will be needed to complete that work -- \$50,000 for the screening tool and \$45,000 for the biological effects evaluation. We are developing a funding strategy, to get these projects funded and underway in the next year. It would be very helpful to that effort if the IT could express its support for the Transboundary Gas Group's work, Ruff said; it would also be helpful if you had any suggestions about where to go for funding.

In response to a question from Boyce, Ruff said the Corps has been an active participant in the TGG; in fact, he said, they loaned CRIEMP some of the monitoring equipment they needed to conduct last summer's monitoring effort at the Canadian projects. There are some positive things that have already happened because of the TGG's existence, said Schneider -- that's one of them.

Silverberg asked the other IT participants to consider possible sources of funding for the TGG, and to provide any ideas they may have to Schneider.

E. System Configuration Team (SCT). Hevlin distributed copies of the draft memo to the ISAB regarding The Dalles juvenile survival studies (Enc. D). We would like to get approval of this memo from the IT today, if possible, so that it can be forwarded to the ISAB, Hevlin explained. Essentially, we are requesting that the ISAB review The Dalles juvenile survival studies, said Hevlin; it has already been reviewed at the SCT level. We're recommending that this memo remain in draft form when it is submitted to the ISAB's executive committee, he added, so that they have some flexibility to alter the task or schedule as needed.

You will recall that, last spring, the SCT held several meetings to try to resolve differences of opinion about the best approach to the third year of juvenile survival studies at The Dalles, Hevlin continued. We reached an impasse, and NMFS elected to move forward with a

third year of study under a design similar to the one employed in the previous two years that is, to study relative survival through the spillway at 30% spill and 64% spill. It was agreed, however, that we would ask the ISAB to review the study design and methodology prior to the year-2000 test, and to make some recommendations about what might yield optimum survival at The Dalles. That review was put off until this fall because we wanted the ISAB to have the third-year study results, Hevlin explained.

In this memo, we ask the ISAB to provide the results of its review by February 1, Hevlin continued. Again, the ISAB will have an opportunity to tell us whether or not they feel that is a reasonable date by which to finish this task. The researchers have told us that February 1 is a workable date for them, as long as they can purchase the PIT tags they'll need in 2000 by the end of December.

Hevlin went briefly through the draft memo (please see Enclosure D for details). Again, he said, it would be helpful if the IT could approve this today.

So are you asking for an ISAB review of a specific research proposal, or are you asking for a review of results and their application? Chip McConnaha asked. We're asking the ISAB to look at the results from the first three years of study, and tell us what can be said about those results, Hevlin replied; we're also asking for their thoughts on the year-2000 study design which, as it stands now, is fairly similar to the past studies. My question is whether or not this might be a more appropriate task for the ISRP, which will also be looking at the Corps= 2000 projects some time this spring, McConnaha said. My understanding is that the ISRP will not be doing a detailed review of the projects under the reimbursable program this year, said Jim Ruff. I'm not sure that's entirely clear, at this point, McConnaha replied.

The other concern is the timeliness of any ISRP review, said Ron Boyce -- I don't think that could be completed in time to make a difference for this particular research project. In addition, what is being requested is a more comprehensive review of this kind of juvenile survival study, with implications to other projects besides The Dalles study. If you're looking for a more comprehensive review, said McConnaha, then I would agree that this is probably a task for the ISAB.

Boyce noted that this draft of the memo has changed somewhat from the draft that was approved by the SCT; I'm a little uncomfortable with the language you've added about operational constraints and optimizing passage survival, and frankly, I'm not ready to approve this letter until I can thoroughly review it, he said. I don't believe the intent of the memo has changed at all, Hevlin replied -- for example, the term "optimize survival" replaces the "maximize survival" that was in the original SCT draft. In response to a question from Boyce, Brown said NMFS prefers the word "optimize" to "maximize" because it allows some leeway to consider adult passage as well, rather than gearing the operation solely to the needs of juvenile migrants. If that's the case, perhaps you could be more specific: "maximizing juvenile passage while minimizing impacts on adults," Boyce suggested.

With regard to operational constraints, said Boyce, if you're talking about spill and economic issues, I don't think that should be a part of the ISAB's review -- that needs to be strictly a scientific review. Litchfield observed that Aoperational constraints,@ in the second question to the ISAB, may actually refer to the physical constraints at The Dalles. Actually, I would be happy to simply remove that phrase, Hevlin said.

Witt Anderson suggested that the IT should be able to provide this memo to the ISAB, on the understanding that it is in draft form, and that any differences of opinion about wording specifics can likely be worked out before the ISAB starts work. Frankly, said McConnaha, most of these linguistic subtleties are going to be lost on the ISAB; I think the basic question that needs to be answered is clear. If there is to be any chance at all of meeting the February 1 deadline, he said, the ISAB needs to get working on this.

I also want to make sure it's clear that the results of the ISAB's review need to be applicable to other projects besides The Dalles, said Boyce. The bottom line is that I would like to have a day to look this memo over and provide some specific suggestions about the language; I will provide those to Bill by tomorrow, he said.

In response to a question, McConnaha said the next ISAB meeting is scheduled for November 11. That being the case, said Silverberg, it sounds as though the IT will need to finalize this document no later than November 8.

Jim Yost suggested that the memo be submitted to the ISAB in its current form, with the expectation that the ISAB will then do their own wordsmithing and report back to the IT on exactly how (or, indeed, if) they intend to approach this task. At that point, he said, we can do any additional fine-tuning that may be necessary. After a few minutes of additional discussion, in response to Boyce's concern about the applicability of the review to studies at other projects besides The Dalles, Nielsen suggested that the sentence AAgain, our interest is not just in the specifics of The Dalles studies, but, more broadly, in the application of these types of studies to other projects in the FCRPS@ be added to the end of the third paragraph of the ABackground@ section of the memo. I don't have a problem with that, said Hevlin.

Ultimately, it was agreed to submit this draft memo, with these revisions, to the ISAB, with the expectation that, once the ISAB considers whether and how it will undertake this review, it will communicate that information to the IT. The IT will then have an opportunity to further fine-tune the assignment and the question language before actual work on this task commences. In response to a question from McConnaha, Silverberg said it should be possible to schedule an IT conference call to finalize the memo after next week's ISAB meeting and before the next scheduled meeting of the IT on December 2. She agreed to furnish McConnaha with a revised copy of the memo, reflecting the changes agreed to at today's meeting.

Litchfield suggested that it probably makes more sense to dispense with the Adraft@ designation, and to simply say to the ISAB, these are the questions we would like you to

consider, please review them and the proposed schedule for this assignment and give us your feedback as soon as possible. We will then commit ourselves to review their comments quickly, and get back to them, so that we don't cause any unnecessary delays, he said. It was so agreed; in response to another question, McConnaha said it should be possible for the ISAB to turn its comments around within a week after next Thursday's meeting.

After checking his schedule, McConnaha reported that the ISAB meeting is actually on November 18. He suggested that the IT adhere to the original schedule for the delivery of the memo to the ISAB; that will give Mike Schiewe and I a chance to discuss it with the other ISAB members, he said, so that we can provide our feedback immediately after the November 18 meeting. That way, he said, we can keep to the schedule we've laid out this morning. We'll then try to schedule an IT conference call early the following week, Silverberg said.

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

G. Federal Caucus and Framework Hydro Developments. McConnaha reported the bad news first: we're behind schedule, which probably comes as no surprise to anyone, he said. We had originally hoped to present the results of the analysis by about now, he said, so that we could tie everything up into a package by December 8. However, we ran into a number of problems, particularly, oddly enough, in modeling the hydrology of the basin, especially in the tributaries, he said. The bottom line is that it now looks as though we will not have results until mid- to late December, so, realistically, we aren't likely to publically release those results until early January.

We hope to have the ecological work group begin its technical review of the Framework analysis some time around the end of November, McConnaha continued -- we'll have at least some results to review, and we can then go through those to see whether or not they make any sense. However, I don't anticipate that there will be much opportunity for a regional discussion of those results until around the first of the year, he said.

We will be making a report to the Power Planning Council on December 8, which will summarize where we are, where we're going, and how this will transition into the Council's amendment process, McConnaha continued. The Council will be opening the Fish and Wildlife Program for amendment in December or January; it is anticipated that the new Program will be quite different from the present Program. The new Program will be organized around a Framework, which will provide a high level of guidance, priority and direction to the recovery program, but will likely provide fewer specific directions to Bonneville about which individual programs shall be funded. Those specifics will be developed within sub-basin plans, he said. In other words, McConnaha said, the Framework analysis will not only be the basis for the development of the new Program, but will also be the basis for the sub-basin planning effort and the development of the specific measures within each sub-basin plan.

The only silver lining in this delay is that we are now convinced that this is a good way to go, and that this is an analytical tool which will help the region get into sub-basin planning, and to accomplish the work many of us feel is necessary over the next year or two, McConnaha said. It's also worth noting that the Framework EDT analysis is being closely coordinated with the Federal Caucus CRI analysis, John Palensky observed.

What's the schedule for the sub-basin planning effort, and the identification of the specific measures? Anderson asked. The sub-basin planning will probably start next summer, McConnaha replied -- it depends on when the Council adopts the Program, which will set the whole process in motion. Right now, we're hoping that will occur in June or July, he said.

Boyce noted that CBFWA has discussed initiating pilot sub-basin planning in January, for selected sub-basins or provinces. That's true, said McConnaha; however, I'm a little concerned about putting the cart before the horse, and getting too far into the sub-basin planning effort before we have the framework in place to provide the necessary structure.

With respect to the Federal Caucus, Brown said there really isn't an update to report this month; the discussion of the Four-H paper and when it will be released is ongoing. We were targeting this month for the release, he said, but discussion of the readiness of that document for release are ongoing.

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

Discussion of this agenda item was deferred until the IT's December meeting.

IV. Northwest Power Planning Council Fish and Wildlife Program and Sub-Basin Planning.

The Council's Bob Lohn said he had been asked to brief the IT about the Council's thinking on how fish and wildlife projects will be reviewed in the future, as well as what the Council's amended Fish and Wildlife Program might look like.

Each year that the ISRP has reviewed projects for us, they have commented that one thing that's lacking is a sound basis for the evaluation of these projects, because of the lack of sub-basin plans and objectives, Lohn explained. It's hard for a reviewer to say whether or not a given project is likely to do what it's supposed to do in the absence of a context for that evaluation, he said; that message was particularly clear from this year's review.

There is an obvious need for sub-basin plans in the region, said Lohn; this is hardly a new need, and there are, in fact, a number of sub-basin plans out there. However, the process hasn't really come to full fruition yet, and the Council has been discussing how to bring that about, he said.

So what, exactly, is a sub-basin plan? Lohn asked. First, you need to define and assess the watershed you're evaluating -- that is, you need to do an assessment of historical species and environmental conditions, as well as a description of current species and conditions. Second, you need to develop a summary of current activities in that watershed. Third, you need to develop a plan with a set horizon -- 10 to 15 years -- laying out the objectives, techniques and strategies that may be appropriate for that sub-basin.

The development of sub-basin plans is complicated by the fact that, often, there is disagreement among the various managers about what those objectives, techniques and strategies ought to be, Lohn continued. If, in a given sub-basin, there are states, tribes and federal agencies with jurisdiction and authority, the Council wants to encourage those parties to sit down and reach consensus on a common plan. If that isn't possible, that's OK, said Lohn. There will be a process to describe the areas of agreement and disagreement, for the elevation of issues to a policymaking body, and for the resolution of disputes. The bottom line is that the Council doesn't feel it can logically recommend funding for projects if there is significant disagreement, within a given sub-basin, about what we're trying to achieve, he said.

In terms of the review of direct program projects, said Lohn, following an ISRP site visit, the proposals will be submitted. Those proposals can come from any source, and will be judged against the background of the 10-15-year sub-basin plan developed by the resource managers. It is likely that the projects will have a three-year horizon, because we envision a rolling review process, in which each sub-basin will be reviewed every three years.

The next sequence is for the ISRP to develop its comments on each proposal, Lohn said; the project sponsor will then have an opportunity to respond to those comments. The ISRP will then develop its conclusions, and the managers will make their budget recommendations. The final step in the review process will be the Council's development of its recommendations. Lohn noted that the Council is working with CBFWA to fine-tune the project review process further; it isn't carved in stone at this point, he said, but this is the direction in which we're leaning.

Lohn added that each sub-basin plan will likely include a general vision statement of what the managers are trying to achieve within each basin -- things like satisfying the terms of the ESA, achieving a harvestable surplus, maintaining life-history diversity etc. There will likely be three to five of these elements in each vision statement, he said. Next, we will identify a series of general principals that apply across the board, with respect to things like artificial production, monitoring and evaluation, research, data collection and analysis, sub-basin plan criteria etc. There may also be some mainstem principals and some statements about scientific foundation.

That brings us to the province level, said Lohn. The Columbia Basin will be divided into a series of 10 to 11 provinces, or organizational units, each of which will contain several sub-basins. Those provinces will include the mainstem, the estuary, the Columbia Gorge, the Columbia Plateau etc. Within each province, as I said, there will be several sub-basins, said Lohn; what we are likely to do, within our plan, is to create pigeon-holes for what's going to

come out of each sub-basin, he explained. One of the fundamental questions in this kind of planning is, how much should come from the top down, and how much should come from the bottom up? The emphasis of this planning process is primarily top-down, he said, although we're going to do our best to ensure that that isn't too restrictive.

Lohn spent a few minutes describing in more detail the way the sub-basin plans will be developed. In all likelihood, CBFWA will facilitate the development of the sub-basin plans, gathering together the necessary information, liaising with the managers who will be writing the actual plan, convening the necessary meetings etc. However, said Lohn, in the end, the decisional process will rest with the entities with jurisdiction and authority over a particular sub-basin. In the Grande Ronde Basin, for example, that group would include several tribes, the State of Oregon, NMFS and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

With respect to public involvement in the sub-basin planning process, Lohn said there are several practical matters to consider. First, these discussions will likely be quite technical; not everyone will be interested or equipped to contribute to that type of debate. What we anticipate is that, prior to the funding and implementation of the specific measures in these subbasin plans, there will be a need to seek public support for those measures, because there's little point in trying to implement something the public doesn't support, he said. Obviously there will be a need to seek public input on these sub-basin plans, said Lohn; as a practical matter, we don't know, at this point, what form that public input will take.

So how does all of this fit into the rulemaking process? Lohn said. As the Council launches its rulemaking process, what we expect is that they will put out the outline, initiate some sort of public discussion of what the vision should be, lay out principals, describe the provinces, and create these pigeon-holes. After that, the Council will likely stand back and wait for the sub-basin plans to come in, Lohn said. The development of those plans will be driven by the three-year rolling review process, he added; when the time comes to review your province, and you don't have your sub-basin plan in place, it is going to be difficult for you to argue convincingly for funding if you haven't gotten yourself up to speed. The plan is to choose an easy province first, one for which there is good data available, and in which good progress has already been made toward the achievement of the sub-basin plans, said Lohn; we hope to be doing project reviews in this initial province by about mid-summer, and rolling reviews thereafter.

I take it that the sub-basin plans are broader in scope than simply Bonneville direct-funded measures and actions? Anderson asked. Yes, Lohn replied. If that's the case, then during these rolling reviews, the ISRP would be looking at actions carried out by other entities, as well as those that fall under the Bonneville direct program, Anderson said. That's true, Lohn replied. What ability does the Council have to enforce or direct a program that goes beyond Bonneville's scope of responsibility? Anderson asked. We've thought about that a great deal, Lohn replied -- the short answer is, it is always appropriate, in deciding whether to carry out a particular project, to know what else is happening. The Council's authority may be limited to a recommendation

not to fund Project X, because it conflicts with or duplicates Project Y, which is being conducted by an entity that is not receiving Bonneville funds, he said.

I assume that the sub-basin plans will also be integrated with the TMDL/water quality work that is going on, and with the management plans that are being developed to ensure that these watersheds meet the water quality standards? Mary Lou Soscia asked. That will be addressed in two places, Lohn replied -- first, water quality will be one of the factors included in the baseline assessment of each sub-basin; second, we will be working with the governors of the four Northwest states to ensure that their state agencies come together to provide all relevant input, in a comprehensive way.

One of the difficulties the Council has had in the past is in setting priorities, said Jim Litchfield -- I can see this process providing some of that structure, but because of the fact that you will have these sub-basin plans coming in over a three-year period, how will annual budget priorities be set? Will it be first-come, first-served, or will we keep doing what we're doing until we know better? That's an interesting question, Lohn replied -- one of our hopes is that we will be informed, through this process, where the areas of greatest benefit might be. We have also, in a sense, already established some priorities, because we have big investments in certain areas, he said. What you're likely to see is a baseline budget which, once you've committed to an ongoing project, such as a hatchery, rolls that into the baseline; an annual, variable budget, which, after the reviews are in for a given year, will provide more funds for some projects and less for others; and some sort of a three-year adjustment among those factors.

How much discussion have you had with EPA, the Fish and Wildlife Service and NMFS about this approach? Jim Yost asked. You are actually among the first recipients of this presentation, Lohn replied; we have had some technical discussions with NMFS, as well as some policy-level discussions, but it would be premature to claim full agency buy-in at this point. In general, however, the early responses are encouraging.

Dave Marmorek said he was surprised, in reading through the principals Lohn mentioned earlier, to find no mention of adaptive management or experimental management. I was wondering, first, whether or not that is a principal, and second, how that would apply in the implementation of actions across sub-basins, so as to maximize the amount learned. You're absolutely right, Lohn replied -- that does need to be included in the scientific principals we lay out. Obviously, you need to have a learning and feedback loop -- that's the heart of adaptive management, he said. I also see much of that adaptive management taking place at the sub-basin level, he said; the thing to bear in mind is that what may be true in one sub-basin may not apply equally in another.

In response to a question from Brown, Lohn said there isn't much to report in terms of the Council's discussion of PATH funding. As you're aware, PATH has received conditional approval from the ISRP, he said; the issues, for the Council, are management and accountability of direction. Those are policy questions for the Council members to deal with, he said; I will be

contacting NMFS to discuss where they're heading with PATH, and what assurances they have that they will get there. The bottom line is that the Council is likely to recommend continued funding for PATH, he said

V. IT Comments on the Draft PATH Scoping Report on Experimental Management.

Marmorek said copies of PATH's draft scoping report on experimental management are now available. The intent of this agenda item is to obtain the IT's feedback about which of the candidate experimental management actions contained in the report seem most interesting, he said, which of them raise alarm bells, and which actions are missing.

As I said this morning, I don't really have an update on the Federal Caucus schedule, said Brown; what we've been working toward, over the past several months, is a convergence, during this month and next month, between several key work products: the Corps' EIS, the Four-H paper, and the Biological Assessment to re-initiate consultation on the federal hydrosystem. This winter, all of these items will be the subject of a process that will include the consultation, the EIS process and comments on the Four-H paper, all of which will channel into a decision and a new Biological Opinion this spring, he said.

With that in mind, said Brown, as we look at the 10 options for the four strategic alternatives included in the PATH report, and we consider how to pull those options together into packages, the question I have is how much PATH can get done between now and January or February, so that that information is available in time to inform the decision process. That is a discussion I would like to have today, in the context of this report, he said.

In response to a question from Brown, Marmorek said PATH's current workload includes continued work on spring/summer chinook, comments on the A-Fish Appendix, the ongoing QAR work, and experimental management. The fall chinook work is now substantially complete, and has yielded a draft report that is currently being reviewed by the SRP. There could be some follow-on tasks, depending on the content of those reviews, he said. We have also been working with the CRI people at Montlake to translate metrics, Marmorek added -- that's one other ongoing task.

In response to another question, Marmorek said the PATH experimental management report is also being reviewed by the SRP; that review should be completed within a month.

It is incumbent on us to provide guidance to PATH on how to design a next step, from this report, which will be of optimal value to us, said Brown. I'm concerned that, absent that guidance, where PATH goes from here will be unclear. Having some further information developed about what we might learn through the implementation of various experimental management options would be very helpful, prior to making the decision this spring, he said -- I think we need to be fairly ruthless in narrowing down this list of options on Page 5 of the PATH

report.

There are two key questions I would like to see PATH provide an answer to in the near-term, said Yost. First, we need a better handle on what the AD value actually is, because that, more than anything else, is what is going to tell us which path to go down this spring. Second, said Yost, I would like to know whether there is any likelihood that we can improve habitat conditions enough, on the spawning grounds and in the migration corridor, to bring about a significant improvement in adult returns. In addition, he said, I think PATH is well-suited to review the CRI analysis and the A-Fish Appendix; I think it would be wise to hold the services of PATH in reserve to provide us some assistance in understanding those work products, Yost said.

Do we have agreement that, over the next few months, the IT would like to see PATH go further with the development of experimental management alternatives? Brown asked. By Ago further, I mean continuing along the progression of steps laid out on Page 1 of the report, in which this is Step 3 of 7, he said. Do we want PATH to do Steps 4, 5, 6 and 7, or should we, as Jim suggests, hold PATH in reserve to review some of the work products that are coming out shortly? The two aren't necessarily mutually exclusive, Marmorek replied -- PATH is capable of multi-tasking.

BPA's Jim Geiselman observed that, based on his review of the PATH report, it should be possible to pare down the current list of experimental management options considerably; it contains a number of items that aren't really experimental management actions at all, he said. There may also be some further experimental management options that could be added to the list, he said; BPA and the Corps will be meeting in the next week to develop experimental management options for input into the Four-H process.

Jim Nielsen said that, in his opinion, it would be worthwhile for PATH to move forward with developing experimental management options, and to continue on through the next steps laid out in the report.

Brown said that, in his view, it doesn't make much sense for PATH to spend its time evaluating Options 4 and 5, which focus on drawdown experiments -- we're going to make a decision this spring on whether or not to draw the projects down, he said, and that decision will be based on existing information. He said he would prefer to see PATH to devote its attention to Option 1, the current operation, the transport on/off option, and the hatchery manipulation option. Having PATH create a model to tell us what we might learn from drawdown isn't likely to be much help, from the standpoint of informing the decision this spring, he said. Boyce agreed that further analysis of Options 4 and 5 is unlikely to yield useful information between now and next spring, but suggested that it would not be appropriate to simply strike them from the list of options to be investigated in the future. A number of other IT participants disagreed with Brown's suggested approach, arguing that, at least for now, Options 4 and 5 should be included on the list of experimental management options that will be analyzed further by PATH.

The picture we need to be able to present to the policy-makers by this spring is, if the decision is made not to remove the dams at this time, because of political pressure and other factors, how draconian are the measures that will need to be implemented to answer the remaining key uncertainties, and what risk is involved in deferring a drawdown decision until after that information has been obtained? Brown said.

After a few minutes of additional debate, there was general IT agreement that PATH should continue its evaluation of experimental management actions; it was further agreed that PATH should concentrate its efforts on elucidating what will be required to answer the remaining key uncertainties, if a drawdown decision is deferred, and what risks are inherent in waiting to make a drawdown decision until those key uncertainties can be satisfactorily resolved. The IT recommended that PATH focus its attention, between now and February, on Options 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7 and taking these options through task 4, task 5 and part of task 6, as laid out on Page 1 of the draft report. If time allows, PATH will also take Option 5 through these steps.

Other PATH tasks identified by the IT at today's meeting as potentially appropriate for the near-term included continued work on the Mid-Columbia QAR, review of the A-Fish Appendix, exploration of linkages between PATH and CRI and review of the Federal Caucus Four-H paper.

Geiselman suggested that PATH give priority to its analysis of the anticipated rates of learning associated with each experimental management option, and that PATH explore the possibility of running at least some of the experimental management options through the CRI model, as one way to evaluate risk. No disagreement was raised to these suggestions.

VI. Update on the Interim BiOp and Chum Salmon Operations.

This agenda item was not addressed at today's meeting.

VII. Next IT Meeting date and Agenda Items.

The next meeting of the Implementation Team was set for Thursday, December 2 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at NMFS=Portland offices. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.