

WATER QUALITY TEAM MEETING NOTES

February 19, 2002

National Marine Fisheries Service Offices

Portland, Oregon

Introductions and Review of the Agenda.

Mark Schneider of NMFS and Mary Lou Soscia of EPA, WQT co-chairs, welcomed everyone to the meeting, held February 19 at the National Marine Fisheries Service offices in Portland, Oregon. The meeting was facilitated by Richard Forester. The meeting agenda and a list of attendees are attached as Enclosures A and B. Please note that some of the enclosures referenced in these meeting notes may be too lengthy to routinely attach to the minutes; please contact Kathy Ceballos (503/230-5420) to obtain copies.

2. Report from Fixed Monitoring Station Subgroup (RPA 132).

Schneider distributed a handout titled “Total Dissolved Gas Fixed Monitoring Station System – Report from the Water Quality Team Subgroup;” this document is Enclosure C. This is primarily FYI, said Schneider; this report is intended to bring this work item to closure. Schneider spent a few minutes going through the contents of his handout; please refer to this document for details of Schneider’s presentation.

The key recommendations of the fixed monitoring station subgroup included the following:

Camas/Washougal: Station will continue to be used in spill management decisions

Corbett: Station will be added in this vicinity, a data logger serviced every two weeks.

Skamania: Station will be terminated; current pattern in area affects data.

Warrendale: Station will continue in service.

Bonneville Forebay: Station will continue in service.

The Dalles Tailrace: Station will continue in service.

The Dalles Forebay: Station at east end of the powerhouse will continue to be used in spill management decisions. A new station will be added at the west end of the powerhouse (a data logger serviced every two weeks).

John Day Tailrace: Station will continue in service.

John Day Forebay: Station exhibits problems associated with warming and vertical density gradients. Still, the existing station will continue in service and will be used in

spill management in 2002. In addition, the test of the proposed solution discussed below will be explored.

McNary Tailrace: Station will continue in service.

McNary Forebay: Both existing forebay stations (at the north and south ends of the powerhouse) exhibit problems associated with warming and vertical density gradients. Still, the existing stations will continue in service and will be used in spill management in 2002. There has been some discussion of corrective action; studies will be pursued.

Ice Harbor Tailrace: Station will continue in service.

Ice Harbor Forebay: Station exhibits problems associated with warming and vertical density gradients. Still, the existing station will continue in service and will be used in spill management decisions in 2002. In addition, the test of the proposed solution discussed below will be explored.

Lower Monumental Tailrace: Station will continue in service.

Lower Monumental Forebay: Station exhibits problems associated with warming and vertical density gradients. Still, the existing station will continue in service and will be used in spill management decisions in 2002. In addition, the test of the proposed solution discussed below will be explored.

Little Goose Tailrace: Station will remain in service.

Little Goose Forebay: Station exhibits problems associated with warming and vertical density gradients. Still, the existing station will continue in service and will be used in spill management decisions in 2002. In addition, the test of the proposed solution discussed below will be explored.

Lower Granite Tailrace: Station will continue in service.

Lower Granite Forebay: Station exhibits problems associated with warming and vertical density gradients. Still, the existing station will continue in service and will be used in spill management decisions in 2002. In addition, the test of the proposed solution discussed below will be explored.

Dworshak Tailrace: Station will continue in service; required by IDEQ.

Peck: Station will continue in service; required by IDEQ.

Lewiston: Station will continue in service; required by IDEQ.

Anatone: Station will continue in service; required by IDEQ.

The “proposed solution” referenced above is the relocation of the monitoring probe to a position free from surface warming due to solar input and summer air temperatures, Schneider said -- likely the scroll case.

Schneider noted that all of these recommendations will take effect in 2002. The group devoted a few minutes of discussion to these subgroup recommendations, asking a variety of clarifying questions. We’ll keep you posted as the 2002 monitoring season gets underway, Schneider said.

3. Water Temperature Modeling (RPA 143).

Schneider drew the group's attention to the questions regarding Reasonable and Prudent Alternative 143 attached to today's agenda, noting that the Corps is seeking the WQT's technical input on issues associated with this RPA. The Corps' Rick Emmert said his role at today's meeting would be to take notes so that he can begin scoping the activities associated with this measure, particularly with respect to the Snake River water temperature model itself and the data collection questions associated with this RPA.

Schneider said he had spoken to others at NMFS about what the model's capabilities should be; the answer is essentially that the model should be useful in making management decisions that will protect fish in the Snake River. The geographic domain would be the Snake River down to McNary? Emmert asked. From Dworshak and Hells Canyon down to the confluence with the Columbia, that's correct, Schneider replied. And would the modeling include Dworshak and Brownlee pools? Emmert asked. The model would need to be able to factor in water temperatures leaving Dworshak and the Hells Canyon complex, but probably would not include the Dworshak and Brownlee pools, Schneider replied.

One thing we need to decide is whether this model is to be a study tool or an operational tool, Emmert observed – if it's going to be used in operational decision-making, it will need to be less detailed, with a quicker turnaround time. Russell Harding said that, in his view, the more detailed the model, the better – “DTEMP,” if possible. Another participant suggested that a series of models, rather than a single model, may be the most effective option.

Mary Lou Soscia noted that there have been a lot of high-level policy discussions on this issue between EPA and the Corps, specifically, about how to work together on this modeling effort. We weren't very comfortable when the Corps hired Battelle to basically take care of this problem and to interface with EPA, she said; we would prefer to work directly with the Corps on issues like improving the monitoring and data collection systems. Our preference would be for EPA and the Corps to sit down and formulate a strategy, then bring that strategy back to this group, Soscia said – to date, we haven't been able to have that dialogue. I would propose that the Corps and EPA get the key people together on this issue, then come back to this group with a proposal, she said. And it's our intent that today's discussion is the first step in that process of bringing the appropriate technical personnel to bear, said Dick Cassidy.

It sounds, then, as though what we need is an RPA 143 subgroup, to include representatives from the Corps, EPA, NMFS and the state water quality agencies, Schneider said. There was general agreement that this would be a useful addition to the WQT framework. The subgroup membership will include Rick Emmert, Rick Parkin, Mark Schneider, Paul Pickett, Dick Cassidy, Russell Harding, Jim Irish, Stuart McKenzie, and possibly Bob Baumgartner and Matt Boyd.

The discussion then returned to general technical input on this RPA, with the group working their way through Emmert's list of questions (attached to today's agenda); the group offered a variety of comments and suggestions, among others, that the model needs to be flexible enough to allow other parameters to be added later.

4. Fish Ladder Water Temperature Study.

Emmert distributed copies of a presentation he gave recently to the Fish Facilities Design Review Work Group, titled “Adult Fish Ladder Temperature Evaluation – BiOp Measure 114” (Enclosure D). Emmert spent a few minutes going through this presentation; please refer to Enclosure D for specific details of the proposed study. The main elements of Emmert’s presentation included the following:

- The specific language in BiOp Measure 114
- The geographic scope of the study
- Study elements
- Study element status
- Proposed next steps

The group offered a few minor comments on the proposed study, after which Emmert said he will provide further updates as more information becomes available.

5. Status of Biological Opinion Water Quality RPAs.

NMFS policy analyst, Eric Ostrovsky, briefed the WQT on the status of the NMFS findings letter on 2001 BiOp Implementation. He distributed a flow chart titled “General Approach to Evaluating RPA Action Status in NMFS Findings Letter” (Enclosure E); he noted that the action agencies have now completed both their FY’02 annual implementation plan and their FY’02-’06 five-year implementation plan. Ostrovsky added that the public and technical comments period is still open on the five-year implementation plan; comments can be submitted via the <http://www.salmonrecovery.gov> website.

NMFS has 45 days, once the action agencies’ annual progress reports are received, to issue its findings letter regarding the plan’s adequacy, Ostrovsky said. With respect to how NMFS will approach that findings letter, he said, we’re looking for RPA actions with defined schedules and deliverables, as laid out in the 2000 Biological Opinion. Ostrovsky asked anyone with questions about the findings letter to contact him directly.

In response to a question from Soscia, Ken Barnhart said the action agencies anticipate submission of the annual progress report to NMFS in early March. Once we receive all of the information, said Ostrovsky, the clock will start running on the 45-day findings letter production period.

6. Status of Overall TMDL Efforts.

Soscia distributed copies of the schedule for upcoming workshops on the development of mainstem TMDL load allocations (Enclosure F); those workshops are scheduled for March 25 in Vancouver and March 28 in Toppenish, Washington. She said copies of the workshop schedule

have been mailed to the entire TMDL mailing list.

Russell Harding noted that the draft Lower Columbia dissolved gas TMDL is now out for public review and comment; that public comment period will run through mid-April. The TMDL is also available via CD-ROM and through the ODEQ website. A series of public comment meetings have also been scheduled around the states of Oregon and Washington; in general, said Harding. Harding noted that there are no big surprises here; two previous drafts should have acquainted the region with the major contents of this TMDL.

We're also working on the Lake Roosevelt TDG TMDL with the Colville and Spokane Tribes, as well as working closely with the State of Washington on the Mid-Columbia and Lower Snake TDG TMDL, Soscia said. Our monthly coordination meetings continue; again, there will be a series of workshops in March. Anyone who would like to have more substantive discussion of the load allocations is invited to call me directly, Soscia said; we're available.

7. Mainstem/Systemwide Province Water Quality Program Summary.

Schneider reported that he had recently helped complete the mainstem/systemwide province water quality program summary; this document is now available via the Northwest Power Planning Council website. He provided a brief explanation of the background for this undertaking, which is intended to provide the technical basis for the ISRP's decisions about water quality projects in the mainstem/systemwide province. Soscia said EPA would still like to offer comments on the water quality program summary; Schneider said he is unsure of the exact deadline for comments on that document, but that there may still be time to submit comments to CBFWA. Soscia said she will contact Tom Iverson to see whether this opportunity still exists.

8. Next WQT Meeting Date.

The next meeting of the Water Quality Team was set for Tuesday, March 12. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.