

WATER QUALITY TEAM

March 11, 2003

Facilitator Summary Notes

Facilitator: Robin Harkless

The following are summary notes of the discussion from the last Water Quality Team meeting. They are meant to serve only as a reminder of issues discussed and actions to be taken prior to the next meeting. They are NOT meant to serve as a formal record of the conversation. Questions concerning these notes may be raised at the next meeting.

Water Quality Plan:

Dave Wills, USFWS, reported on efforts of the Mainstem Water Quality Plan Work Group (MWQP). The group has developed draft Temperature and TDG chapters of the MWQP, which is intended to be a planning document for water quality efforts on the Mainstem. At the last WQP Work Group meeting, the group identified a list of potential “next steps” for the Plan and the process. Issues/actions include:

- Finalize the temperature chapter;
- Prioritize actions;
- Integrate the WQP with implementation of TMDL’s;
- Turn the document over to the states;
- Address funding issues;
- Identify overlap of different processes;
- Set up a check-in and evaluation of the WQP;
- Continue coordination, integration and balance; and
- Report to the IT.

These issues will be discussed at the next MWQP Work Group meeting, Friday March 14. While there is a possibility that the WQT may be asked to be involved in “next steps” for the Plan, the COE expressed concern for this. The WQT was established to address ESA projects, not CWA projects. The MWQP includes both. It was also pointed out that the Biological Opinion states that the Plan will be reviewed and approved by the WQT. Most WQT members expressed an interest in at least reviewing the document once it is finalized by the MWQP Work Group. The group did not feel comfortable with the notion of the Plan turning into a regulatory document, as the framework for implementation of TMDL’s. Rather, it should remain a planning document.

ACTION: A representative from the WQT will pose the following comments and questions to the MWQP Work Group at their next meeting, Friday March 14: What is the view of the policy group’s opinion on integrating CWA and ESA issues? Should the WQT be involved with this process, and if so, how? A diagram that shows the overlap between ESA and CWA

projects should be included in the document.

While some WQT members felt that they could take on the role of examining the projects listed in the WQP, the COE needs further discussion with the states if CWA projects would be reviewed by this group.

Guidelines:

The group reviewed the WQT Guidelines and made suggestions for changes. They agreed that the meetings should be reserved as a placeholder for the second Tuesday of every month, but that the group will only meet as necessary. Language will be changed to clarify this. There was some discussion that the website is not updated with WQT information. John Piccininni, BPA, offered to look into posting information on the BPA website. **NOTE:** The website listed in the Guidelines was maintained by the Corps until two years ago and is now out of date. NOAA Fisheries has added a WQT site to the NOAA Northwest Region Hydropower Division website. The NOAA website address follows and will be added to the WQT Guidelines to replace the old site: <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/1hydrop/hydroweb/rif.htm>.

Dick Cassidy, COE, offered changes to the Guidelines. Mainly, the scope of the WQT should be limited to ESA water quality issues and there should be a separate forum for TMDL implementation efforts if EPA is not a co-chair of the WQT. As a policy issue, the group thought this might best be answered by the IT. However, the question was not formulated during today's meeting.

Mike Herold, WA DOE, offered suggestions for ways the WQT could be involved with implementation of the temperature TMDL's. The WQT could develop a formula for determining compliance with load allocations, flesh out different options for operational and structural measures within the temperature management plan, develop criteria for benefits to temperature, and evaluate projects. Considering the previous discussion on these issues, the group agreed to wait to discuss them, but keep the issues on the radar screen and raise them again during the finalization of the temperature TMDL's, around June.

The Guidelines will be further discussed and possibly finalized at the next WQT meeting.

Chief Joseph/Grand Coulee Spill/Generation Swap:

Mark Schneider (NOAA), Kathy Frizell (COE), Kent Easthouse (COE) and Mike Schneider (COE) reported on the work of the Chief Joe/ Grand Coulee sub-group to answer "Are there conditions under which a shift of power generation and spill between Grand Coulee and Chief Joseph would lower TDG in the upper Columbia River." Mark Schneider provided a handout of recommendations and supporting information from the sub-group. The sub-group requested approval from the WQT before sending the recommendation to the TMT and IT. A suggestion was made to include the question in the introduction of the recommendation when submitting it to the IT. The WQT agreed with the recommendation, which will be presented to the IT at the next IT meeting, April 3. It was noted that the recommendation is not intended for implementation during this year's spill season, but rather to be used as an additional tool for

managing spill, if accepted by IT. Anyone interested in reading reports from Mike Schneider or Kathy Frizell on this should contact Mark Schneider.

Douglas County PUD Water Temperature Modeling:

Rick Klinge, Douglas County PUD, presented temperature modeling information for the areas between Well's Dam and Chief Joseph. The PUD's made improvements to the configuration so that data for 2003 will be more accurate than previous years. Mike Herold noted that this is a great example of the kinds of tools the WQT could provide feedback on, such as discussing what the data means and how the data fits with other temperature modeling, etc.

WQT Work Plan:

Mark Schneider, NOAA, distributed a draft document work plan for each of the teams within the Regional Forum. Dick Cassidy, COE, offered suggestions for a few scheduling changes to the WQT work plan. Changes or additions to the document should be sent to Mark Schneider. A revised document will be available at the next WQT meeting.

Next WQT Meeting, April 8:

NOTE: The group agreed to meet in April if the IT has responded to the elevated question from the WQT. If not, the group will meet on May 12. Mark Schneider will try to give the group a week's notice whether there will be a meeting in April.

Agenda:

- Report from WQP Work Group
- Report from IT
- Role of WQT in WQP
- Continue/Finalize Guidelines
- Other