

Implementation Team Meeting Notes

August 4, 2005

1. Greetings and Introductions.

Facilitator Donna Silverberg welcomed everyone to today's meeting, which was chaired by Jim Ruff. The following is a summary (not a verbatim transcript) of the topics discussed and decisions made at this meeting. Anyone with questions or comments about these notes should contact Kathy Ceballos at 503/230-5420.

2. Updates.

A. In-Season Management (TMT). Cathy Hlebechuk said Libby is at 2450.7 feet, with 9.5 Kcfs inflow and 18.8 Kcfs outflow. Grand Coulee is at 1285.1 feet, with inflows of 121 Kcfs and outflows of 108 Kcfs yesterday. Dworshak is at 1566.8 feet, with inflows of 1.4 Kcfs yesterday and outflows of 12 Kcfs. Hungry Horse is at 3550.5 feet, with inflows of 1.3 Kcfs and outflows of 5.3 Kcfs.

At Libby, the plan is to follow the BiOp and draft to elevation 2439 by August 31, said Hlebechuk. This week's model shows us staying at 18.8 Kcfs outflow until the middle of August, after which the project will be ramped gradually down, to 16 Kcfs, then 12.5 Kcfs, then to minimum bull trout flows (7 Kcfs) in September. At Grand Coulee, the plan is to draft to elevation 1278 by the end of August; inflows are starting to drop at that project. There are 27f ksf of storage at the project, above inflow. At Dworshak, the salmon managers submitted a request yesterday to increase outflow temperature to 45-47 degrees F, from their current range of 43-45 degrees F., in order to conserve cold water for later in August and help steelhead growth at Dworshak national Fish Hatchery downstream of the dam. I thought heaters had been solved at the Dworshak Hatchery, so that we didn't have to worry about Dworshak release temperature anymore? said Ruff. The heaters – the recirculation system – is turned on once all the fish have left the nursery, replied Dave Wills. There are still steelhead in the nursery; if they turned the system on right now, there would be too much of a chance that diseases would be introduced and fostered in the hatchery. They have to wait until all of the fish have been ponded and acclimated outside before they can turn the system on, essentially, Wills explained, probably some time in October.

In the Lower Columbia, flows are very low, currently, and we're having a bit of trouble maintaining the 8-foot tailwater at John Day, said Hlebechuk. The 8-foot

tailwater is required to keep the adult ladder in criteria. At McNary, we got a call from the mosquito control people, because there are a lot of mosquitoes in McNary pool; usually they get rid of them after Tri-Cities boat races in the last weekend of July. However, McNary pool is drafting, which is drying things out, and they're out there trying to gather up the larvae. We're trying to hold McNary pool at a steady elevation to help them get rid of the mosquitoes, Hlebechuk explained.

At Libby, the Corps has been coordinating the rampdown with the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho and with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Hlebechuk said. We're still looking at when we're going to change the pendants at The Dalles, she said; we've tentatively scheduled that for Monday, but we're keeping an eye on the forecasts in order to do our best to maintain 40% spill at that project. Once flows are in the 150 Kcfs-160 Kcfs range at The Dalles, we'll be able to make that switch. Current flows at Lower Granite are about 29 Kcfs; at McNary, they were 139 Kcfs yesterday, down from 167 Kcfs on the previous day.

B. System Configuration Team (SCT). See Agenda Item 5, below.

C. Water Quality Team (WQT). Gary Fredricks distributed a summary of the recent activities of the ad hoc WQT subgroup working on the development of a dissolved gas monitoring program for the Columbia below Bonneville. The group has met three times; we have discussed the geographic scope of the monitoring program, as well as the areas of concern – shallow water habitat areas from Bonneville down to Kalama, and known chum spawning areas below Bonneville, such as the Ives Island complex, the Multnomah Creek area and the I-205 bridge area. We had some experts who had done monitoring in these areas attend the second subgroup meeting, and the upshot of what they presented was that there really was not a concern about gas bubble disease or trauma in the shallow water habitats below Bonneville Dam, said Fredricks, at least under the managed spill levels we're currently using.

The outcome of the meeting was that the Corps agreed to synopsise the data on which that assertion is based, and present them to the full Water Quality Team at their next meeting, Fredricks said. The chum spawning areas, on the other hand, are a particular concern; there is an ongoing study, conducted by Dr. David Geist and funded by BPA, to look at chum spawning areas below Bonneville Dam. The researchers were not looking at TDG levels at those sites, however, so we have added that as a task, said Fredricks. Funding is a concern; there may be a need for some joint Corps funding. The work will be initiated this fall, he added. The researchers will be monitoring both TDG levels in the redds and in the water over the redds. We'll provide a further update to the IT this winter, probably in December, Fredricks said.

In response to a question from Hlebechuk, Fredricks said NMFS has determined that the Camas/Washougal monitoring site is inadequate. Ruff noted that WDOE has recommended that the Camas/Washougal station be removed from the TMDL and waiver requirement, but that recommendation must be approved by EPA. It's caught up

in the approval of all of the other standards. Oregon still has Camas/Washougal in its waiver, he added. If this issue comes back to us through the Water Quality Team this fall, and we all agree, we can write supporting letters to the Oregon DEQ Commission supporting the removal of the Camas/Washougal station, and adopt a different monitoring strategy, Ruff said. We're pushing to make that change in time for the 2006 monitoring season, Fredricks added.

D. IT Homework – Interest in Regional Executive Committee. If you'll recall, I asked all of you to check with the policy representatives at your agencies about the level of interest in a reconstituted Regional Executive Committee, said Silverberg – I wanted to check in and hear your responses at today's meeting.

I discussed it briefly with the Governor's office, but couldn't do a very good job of expressing what the issue is, said Bill Tweit of Washington. Their interest was not high, largely because they are so preoccupied with all of the other stuff going on right now, Tweit said. Ron Boyce said he still needs to talk to the Oregon Governor's office; he asked whether there is something in writing that might help him explain the issue. Ruff suggested that the IT meeting minutes, the IT's guidelines and procedures document, and the written proposal in the Council's Mainstem Amendments would be the best sources of such a written explanation. It would be useful to have a brief written proposal for us to present to our policy folks, so that we're all asking the same question, Boyce suggested. Silverberg said she and Doug Marker will draft a series of talking points for presentation to agency executives.

Tony Norris said the executive committee concept has been discussed within Reclamation, but he has not heard the outcome of those discussions. Rock Peters said the Corps executives are willing to participate in an executive committee, but agreed with Tweit that there is a lot going on in the region, currently. The timing might be better this fall, he said. Suzanne Cooper said BPA's perspective is similar to the Corps'; we need to better understand the distinction between what the IT does and what the Executive Committee would do, she said. Ruff said he needs the "talking points" document before he can provide NMFS' response. I think we're interested, he said, but I would echo the Corps' position. After September, we should have a better idea of at least what's happening with the remanded BiOp, he said. Dave Wills said the Fish and Wildlife Service echoes NMFS' comments. I'll put this on the agenda for the October IT meeting, Silverberg said.

The other homework item was for NMFS to check on a website to post schedules, meeting notes and other information on the Regional Forum meetings, Silverberg said. We're in the process of re-vamping and updating our Northwest Regional website, Ruff replied; By the middle of September, it will be completed and ready to go. As soon as that's done, we'll make sure all of the links to the Regional Forum teams' websites are updated, he said. We're shooting to have all of it linked up by mid-September, but realistically, it may be the end of September before that happens.

3. RM&E Issues – Snake River Fall Chinook Transport and Study Plans, Fall RSW Operations.

Peters distributed two handouts on these topics. There was a fall chinook subgroup meeting on July 25 to discuss technical and policy questions, to identify potential subgroup members, and to talk about next steps and schedule. The bad news is that we didn't cover any of those agenda items on the 25th, he said. The good news is that we made some progress on steps forward. We backtracked a little bit to ways to move forward; that's where we spent most of our time, he said.

What was requested at the meeting was for the Corps to hold two workshops, Peters said – one on policy issues, and one on technical matters. Some of the key areas we identified for the policy workshop included key management questions and objectives, and key information needs for the management of fall chinook, he said. We also decided that we need to identify an overall framework for the program – technical and policy rules, how disputes will be resolved, and the time-frame for the program, in terms of developing and initiating studies and in terms of getting answers to the questions we pose.

At the policy workshop, we would also hope to define the critical elements – the sideboards under which we'll be working, Peters said. We would also like to define the level of uncertainty. We need to clearly identify what we mean by "collaborative effort." It was further agreed that we need to identify a facilitator who will work both the policy and the technical workshops, he continued; we asked Kim Fodrea and Tony Nigro to assist in identifying potential facilitators. Dave Marmorek was suggested, but he is likely not available, Peters added.

Key issues identified for the technical workshop include the current state of information on fall chinook, questions from the policy meeting, and the formulation of actual research plans, Peters said. The target dates for the policy workshop are somewhere between August 19 and September 14; a tentative date is September 8. We would hope to involve primarily IT-level participants in the policy workshop, he added. There would also need to be a feedback loop to higher-level policy representatives, to be sure that there is buy-in at that higher level, Cooper added.

The Corps' intent is to continue to work all of the issues we identify through the IT, Peters said. BPA supports that concept, said Cooper, although there was not unanimous agreement that IT is the right forum to make decisions – certainly there was agreement that the IT needs to receive regular updates. Peters noted that the funding for this process will likely be through the CRFM and SCT.

Peters went through some of the key management questions addressed at the July 25 meeting. The ad hoc group identified a number of ideas and issues and key management concepts that need to be delineated. We have also laid out some key

guiding principals, he said. The Corps has developed a strawman list of key concepts, to stimulate thinking on this issue. The main issue, to us, is what is your purpose, and what question you're trying to answer, said Bruce Suzumoto.

Paul Ocker and Kim Fodrea developed some meeting minutes following the July 25 meeting, which include a potential agenda for the policy workshop, Peters said. I would ask you to take a look at this and provide any feedback you may have to me as soon as possible. We will likely need to have another subgroup meeting just to set up the agenda for the policy workshop, he added.

The key thing is for us to get a facilitator on board, and reach agreement on how the process will move forward, Peters said. Bob Heinith said CRITFC, the Fish and Wildlife Service and Oregon agree that Dave Marmorek would be the best choice for facilitator – he has a lot of experience in the basin and a demonstrated track record in facilitating these types of technical discussions. Cooper reiterated that it wasn't likely feasible to do this through the ESSA contract. We'll get an update on this topic at the September IT meeting, said Silverberg.

4. Passage Model Development Report.

As you'll recall, said Silverberg, at our last meeting, we asked the IT participants to check on who their representatives will be on the passage model development subcommittee.

Bill Tweit said Kris Ryding will be Washington's representative. Boyce said Rick Kruger will be Oregon's representative. Wills said he does not know who the USFWS representative will be, but will check. Reclamation said Steve Grabowski will be their participant. Kim Fodrea will represent Bonneville. Peters said Paul Ocker will be the Corps' oversight reviewer, but until a scope of work is developed, the Corps cannot designate a technical representative. Ruff said that scope of work will be developed at a meeting this afternoon. Peters requested that all documents related to the development of the model be given to Mike Langeslay and Marvin Shuttles, as well as Ocker. Ruff said he, Chris Toole and Gary Fredricks will handle this task for NMFS. In response to a question from Tweit, Ruff added that Charlie Petrosky has been mentioned as a possible Idaho representative.

What about a tribal participant? asked Boyce. I'll have to check, said Heinith – it may be Earl Weber. We haven't had a chance to chat about that internally, he added.

5. SCT Criteria for FY'06 CRFM Prioritization Process.

Bill Hevlin noted that copies of the current SCT criteria were attached to today's agenda. We are working to prioritize the FY'06 CRFM program, he said; there are about 60 items proposed for funding in FY'06. Generally, we go through this process in August and September each year. This year, we went back to our old criteria to help guide us

through this process. As we looked at them, people realized that, with slight modifications – taking out any reference to the 2000 BiOp, for example – that they liked those criteria pretty well, Hevlin said. I've provided copies of those criteria today, he added.

Hevlin went briefly through these criteria, noting that each agency – federal, state and tribal – will be provided an opportunity to rank each line-item on a priority scale of 1-5. The IT offered a few questions and comments. For example, said Doug Marker, given the pressures coming out of the most recent rate case, those responsible for the CRFM program need to be able to explain what it has accomplished. There is going to be a higher level of scrutiny in FY'06 and in future years, he said. Hevlin replied that it may not be possible to quantify the benefits of, for example, surface bypass – you can't necessarily add up all of the benefits of reducing delay at each of the Lower Snake projects. How does that translate into a quantifiable survival benefit for juveniles? he asked – I think you can only go so far with the numbers. Peters asked that the IT look at the Corps' RSW strategy paper; he said that he will provide it to Ruff for distribution to the full IT membership.

Hevlin said he would revise the SCT criteria to reflect the suggestions presented at today's meeting, and will bring them back to the SCT at the group's August 18 meeting. The SCT will then revisit and finalize the criteria, and I'll provide a further update at the September IT meeting, Hevlin said.

6. Long-Term IT Planning Update.

John Palensky distributed the most recent version of the IT Issue Tracking and Schedule worksheet. After a few minutes of discussion, the IT suggested the following changes:

- Discussion of Libby/Hungry Horse summer operations will begin in October to ensure that this issue is thoroughly vetted prior to the 2006 in-season management season. It was agreed to include a briefing from Oregon and Idaho on Lake Pend Oreille operations as a component of this discussion.
- It was agreed to move the RSW installation criteria/strategy issue to the IT's September agenda for discussion, with a decision to be made in October.
- It was agreed to discuss Regional Forum process issues at the November IT meeting.
- It was agreed to address the Camas/Washougal fixed monitoring station issue at the IT's November meeting.
- 2006 Spring Creek spill operations will be discussed at the September IT meeting.
- The IT will receive a briefing on the system flood control issue in October.
- The IT will receive a briefing on chum and Hanford Reach operations at its October meeting.
- It was noted that the action agencies' implementation plan is a three-year plan,

- not an annual plan.
- With respect to the status of the FCRPS litigation, it was noted that the appeals court upheld Judge Redden's decision, and the next hearing in this matter is scheduled for September 14. It was agreed to provide regular updates on this topic at future IT meetings.
- It was agreed that kelts will be discussed at the October IT meeting. Kelt presenters need to be identified by the tribes, BPA, COE and NMFS.
- It was agreed that the November 2005-July 2006 IT schedule will be completed in October, after the September court hearing. Any input the IT participants may have on the schedule should be provided to Donna Silverberg or John Palensky.
- Tom Iverson, chair of the Lamprey Work Group, will update the IT on the lamprey passage work plan at the group's September meeting.
- At its September or October meetings, the IT will receive an update on the ISAB's load following proposals and the letter from NMFS and the Council.

7. Next IT Meeting Date.

The next Implementation Team meeting was set for Thursday, September 1. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.