



FISH PASSAGE CENTER

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MEMORANDUM

To: Fish Passage Advisory Committee (FPAC)

From: FPC Staff

Date: January 12, 2018

Subject: Action Notes from November 21, 2017, FPAC meeting

On November 21, 2017, FPAC met via conference call for its weekly meeting. The following people participated in the meeting:

Paul Wagner (FPAC Co-Chair NOAA)
Tom Lorz (FPAC Co-Chair CRITFC)
Alex Saint (FPC)
Brandon Chockley (FPC)
Charlie Morrill (WDFW)
Dave Benner (FPC)
Dave Swank (USFWS)

Erick Van Dyke (ODFW)
Erin Cooper (FPC)
Gabe Scheer (FPC)
Jay Hesse (Nez Perce Tribe)
Russ Kiefer (IDFG)
Trevor Conder (NOAA)
Steve Hall (COE)

AGENDA ITEMS

Dworshak Operation (00:00:00)

- Paul Wagner (NOAA) noted that Tom and Russ have made it clear that priorities at DWOR are just that and priority #3 is the third priority. COE needs to hear that from everybody. Without clear guidance, they will operate as normal, do nothing until January 1st (first Flood Control reading) and take it from there.
 - Tom Lorz (CRITFC) noted that this is not flood control, that's them taking the hands of the wheel. While good from a refill standpoint, not so good from FC standpoint.

- Paul noted that current STP has FC forecast of 1,558'.
- Tom noted that this is even more confusing given that ahead of snowpack from last year and shouldn't be any concern over refill. Appears we are doing same as last year, which is concerning given that we had two units in January and this year (2018) we will be limited to only one unit in Jan.
- Paul noted that STP has end of December elevation of 1,558' and end of November elevation of 1,568.9'. If FPAC wants something different, we have to say what we want in unison.
- Tom Lorz (CRITFC) asked whether COE wanted SOR or TMT call to communicate FPAC's request. Tom believes that, unless we think this year will be worse than 2001 and we draft well below 1,520', there is virtually no chance of missing refill.
- Paul noted that Steve Hall (COE) believes that if we had done what he wanted, last year would have been fine. Would have been some gas but not what we saw. Tom noted that this is the confusion, we are trying to do something similar to what he wanted last year.
- Dave Swank (USFWS) suggested revisiting the priority list. USFWS would generally agree with the priorities proposed by IDFG except the hard 110% tailrace TDG. Vacuum degassers at hatchery work and tailrace TDG of ~115% would not be a problem. Fish could handle 120% for short time period but certainly not long period. Jay Hesse (Nez Perce) reminded FPAC that there is an additional concern for fall Chinook spawning downstream.
- Jay Hesse (Nez Perce) would like to have a series of statements for the priorities.
 - First priority would still be to meet refill but asked if there would be support among FPAC to lower accepted probability of refill from 95% to 90%. 90% probability is closer to the example provided by COE last week. Also noted that, as he read through the example, it appears that keeping an elevation of 1,520' to the end of Dec. was how that one played out but there was some refinement there and some suggestions made on identifying target elevations for the end of Dec.
 - Second priority would be to keep TDG in hatchery at manageable level and ~115% tailrace TDG seems ok. However, should be a sub-bullet under this about keeping TDG for in-river fish at safe level. 100% tailrace TDG is a target but not an absolute must. FPAC can provide timeframes when TDG above 100% is less risky.
 - Third part is to realize that we're going to be maxed out a 5 Kcfs through turbines and 10 Kcfs total. Seems we should take spring flow augmentation portion off the table for 2018, as it muddies discussion. Doesn't see anyone pushing for more flow than that given that we are limited by turbine capacity. Only time that would benefit juveniles would be an extremely low flow year, which doesn't seem in the cards this year.
- FPAC worked Jay's statements to see if could reach consensus on recommendation. Providing specification of probability of refill seems to be complicating things.

- After much discussion, FPAC decided to focus on short term recommendation. Short term recommendation would be to targeting end of December elevation of 1,520', pass inflows up to maximum powerhouse with now spill.
 - Erick Van Dyke (ODFW) noted that recommendation for December would address concerns for later in season and that's the point for this effort. Erick also noted that this conversation is potentially incomplete until Idaho is represented in the conversation.
 - Paul noted that keeping recommendation to simple list would allow Idaho to state agreement or disagreement at TMT without having to consider revision to priorities.
 - Dave Swank (USFWS) like idea of short term recommendation but should continue to work on long term priorities.
- FPAC brought Russ Kiefer (IDFG) into conference call to get his input on this recommendation.
 - Paul provided summary to Russ of FPAC recommendation for DWOR operations in December.
 - Russ would like to talk to Steve Hall (COE) first. The elevation is just the water in the reservoir and does not account amount of water on the hill (i.e., snowpack).
 - Concerned with current and expected warm temperatures, may equate to less snow in hills and more water in reservoir. Paul noted that current RFC forecast has filling to 1,529' by Dec. 1 (expecting inflows to get as high as 10-13 Kcfs between now and Nov. 25).
 - IDFG is averse to telling COE how to do their jobs. Prefers to direct desired outcome and let them decide how to achieve outcome.
 - Jay Hesse (Nez Perce) asked Russ about his thoughts on editing priorities, particularly reducing probability of refill from 95% to 90%, right now (through end of December). Reducing probability of refill is contrary to the priority that state of Idaho laid out last year, which is assumed same priority this year. IDFG management feels that high TDG last year didn't seem to affect fish survival. Therefore, would like to maintain 95% probability of refill.
 - Russ reiterated concerned that warm wet weather is driving increased inflows and likely will reduce snowpack. If we target 1,520' elevation for the end of December, don't have much snowpack, and then things turn dry, may be in world of hurt. Tom Lorz (CRITFC) stated that this is unlikely. If look at 2001, were at 1,516' in January and still drafted some in January. While did not make refill in 2001 but if had not continued to draft in January, would have made refill just fine.
- FPAC brought Steve Hall (COE) into conference call to discuss recommendation for December operation.
 - Paul summarized FPAC discussion for Steve. Would COE be agreeable for a proposal to target 1,520' as end of December operation for DWOR?
 - Steve noted that, as long as can get consensus, ok with doing it. Coming off of minimum powerhouse discharge for any reason other than for flood control or power emergency is different from the BiOp. Therefore, would need consensus

agreement from everyone. Steve suggested that would need to recognize that there is a slight change that this operation might impact refill.

- Russ shared concern of losing low elevation snow, high inflow might be result of rain on snow, thus reducing snowpack. Steve pointed out that low elevation typically comes and goes and COE doesn't normally build low elevation snow and have it persist throughout winter. Don't think this will impact spring runoff at this point. It's early in the season and most snowpack is deposited in January-March. Concern is if get into Dec., Jan., or Feb. and "spigot" turns off but that is looking unlikely.
- Steve noted that fairly safe operation to hold elevation in December, especially if not draft deeply.
- IDFG stated will not object to operation, as proposed by FPAC
- Steve asked whether idea is to this at TMT this week or wait until Dec. 6th? Steve suggested an SOR, signed by everyone. This might prevent need for special TMT meeting before implementing. Suggested including acknowledgement that operation may have impact to refill.
- Jay asked Steve whether current TDG levels (~106%) are correct and whether they might be affected by current low powerhouse discharge? Steve noted that increasing powerhouse discharge should help reduce TDG below project.
- FPAC drafted and finalized SOR 2017-1 during meeting and submitted to COE later in the afternoon (see attached).

Discussion of McNary Planned Operations (01:28:50)

- Trevor Conder (NOAA) explained issue with John Day River steelhead overshooting, passing MCN, and not having good way to get back down. Have been working for a while now on trying to get some spill outside of the spill season to aid with getting adult steelhead overshoots back down through McNary. Test was done in 2012 where TSW was open and saw positive response, more fish passing MCN with TSW open. Concern is that substantial portion of JDA river fish are coming back through MCN through turbines, due to lack of other routes of passage.
 - Had special SRWG to discuss this issue.
 - BPA concerned that providing spill through TSW could increase fallback of B-run steelhead.
 - Two avenues for progress: 1) continue identifying testing operation for winter 2018-2019 and work on that through SRWG and/or 2) FPAC proposes as operation for this spring, with justification. To accomplish #2, would need to have analyses to show benefit to John Day overshoots while having low impact on Snake River B-run steelhead.
- FPC will consider the need for analyses a data request:
 - Estimate impact of winter steelhead on Snake River B-run steelhead
 - Estimate potential benefits on Mid-Columbia steelhead (particularly John Day River steelhead).
 - Review kelt survival studies for route specific survival information.

- FPAC would like analyses to inform potential test of operation in February or March of 2018.
- Proposal would be for 1 TSW operating in October-November and February-March. Operation of TSW would be either continuous or 4-days on or 4-days off.
- Erin Cooper (FPC) noted that what's in the one-pager (4-days on and 4-days off) cannot be evaluated as a block study. Would have to be evaluated as TSW on half the time either improved return of steelhead overshoots or not. Trevor noted that one-pager added one objective to understand distribution of fish passing through TSW during 4-day on and 4-day off periods (either through PIT-detector or hydro-acoustics).

Treaty Operations Update (01:44:00)

- Paul Wagner (NOAA) provided overview of Treaty Operations call. Highlight was that operation for Chum in 2017 is different from other years. That difference was due to changes at Arrow.
 - Micah now has 6 units available.
 - Arrow usually drafted well below flood control, last spring operated right at flood control. Proposed to continue this operation, good for fisheries and recreation.
 - Canadians not crazy about VERQ. Causes problems with lake levels, has potential flooding risk. Still trying to work through issues with Libby VERQ and treaty operations.
- Charlie Morrill (WDFW) asked how all this impacts chum operations in long term. Unclear to Paul. Need clarification from Pam (BPA). Pam will make effort to keep FPAC up-to-date. Charlie suggested we put this on the agenda for late winter/early spring.



FPAC Agenda for Tuesday, November 21, 2017
Meeting time:9:00 AM

1. Dworshak operation planning and discussion regarding operation priorities
2. Discussion of McNary planned operations for steelhead

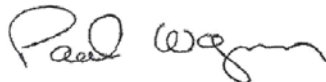
SYSTEM OPERATIONAL REQUEST: #2017-1

WALLA WALLA DISTRICT

The following State, Federal, and Tribal Salmon Managers have participated in the preparation and support this SOR: National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Nez Perce Tribe, and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

TO:	Brig. Gen. Scott Spellmon	COE-NWD Commander
	Lt. Col. Timothy R. Vail	COE-NWW Commander
	David Combs	COE-NWD-PDD Chief
	Steven Barton	COE-NWD-PDW Chief
	Rock Peters	COE-NWD-PDD
	Julie Ammann	COE-NWD-PDW-RC
	Doug Baus	COE-NWD-PDW-RC
	Karl Kanbergs	COE-NWD-PDW-RC
	Steve Hall	COE-NWW-EC
	Ann Setter	COE-NWW-OD
	Lorri Lee	USBR-PN Regional Director
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	Mary Mellema	USBR-PN-6204
	Elliot Mainzer	BPA Administrator
	Kieran Connolly	BPA-PG-5
	Lorri Bodi	BPA-KE-4
	Jason Sweet	BPA-PGB
	Eve James	BPA-PGPO
	Tony Norris	BPA-PGPO-5
	Scott Bettin	BPA-KEWR-4
	Paul Cloutier	COE-NWD Tribal Liaison
	Donna Turnipseed	COE-NWW Tribal Liaison

FROM: Paul Wagner, FPAC Chairperson



DATE: November 21, 2017

SUBJECT: Recommendation for Dworshak Operations (November-December 2017)

SPECIFICATIONS

Target end of December elevation of 1520'. Limit outflows up to powerhouse maximum with no spill.

We recognize that this has the slight potential to impact June refill. However, with current forecasts, the probability of impacting June refill is extremely low.

JUSTIFICATION

Due to extended outage of Unit 3 and planned Unit 1 outage in January, we are concerned that reservoir volume may be such that spill in excess of 110% TDG may be necessary for flood risk management. In order to minimize the risk of this, we are recommending precautionary measures be taken in advance. Current predictions for La Niña water year increases the likelihood that 2018 will be above average.