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The "Congestion Management Content Group" met this week:

Many questions were asked but few answers were generated. For example, people wanted to know what type of jurisdiction RTO West will have over generation facilities; what will happen to a customer's FTRs if the customer decides to make a contract switch; and what method could be used to "remove" the transmission required to schedule non-converted rights from the ATC (Available Transmission Capacity) if the group chooses this option. It was clear that the RTO mechanisms set up to answer such questions are under-developed.

A regional map displaying transmission paths in the Pacific Northwest was distributed, along with a table of potential RTO West flowpaths and a partial list of existing transmission contracts. [Ed. note: I may be reading this regional map wrong; if not, I count at least 47 "zones" within WA, OR, ID, MT, WY, UT, NEV, Northern CA and CO. Talk about the possibilities for pancaking . . .talk about complicated . . .]

After reviewing these documents, a few people expressed concern that, with the size of the system, things could quickly become complicated and messy. The group seemed to agree that RTO West should not be more complicated than the system some would like it to replace.

Five small groups were formed to tackle the following tasks:

1. Determine flow distribution factors and identify flowpaths. Develop criteria for establishing and eliminating flow paths and zones. Test for system coherency. Consider possible issues that might arise with flowpaths at the seams of RTO West.
2. Develop a methodology for the initial allocation of FTRs.
3. Construct a basic commercial congestion management model. [Ed. note: How can a valid model be built that shows how any proposed congestion management structure would really work, given the fact that human behavior would have to be modelled-- an impossible task?] Determine how residual congestion costs are going to be distributed. [Ed. note: I have no idea what "residual congestion costs" are -- fudge factors? -- I don't find a definition in the Glossary.] Determine how often the model is going to be updated and what the effect of modeling updates would be. Consider possible congestion management issues that might arise at the seams of RTO west.
4. Develop FTR Design "Term Sheet". Define the FTR "product".
5. Develop a model of the commercial market that can be tested. Answer questions such as, are we creating adverse incentives that will hamper competition and, if so, what can we do to avoid this? [Ed. note: Is anyone asking whether the chief purpose of the RTO is to let transmission owners spread their costs to non-transmission owners? Or whether, in light of experience elsewhere, a "competitive market" in electricity, facilitated by this RTO, is desirable?]