11.8 APPLIED PROJECT: HYDRO-TURBINE OPTIMIZATION

This project can be completed anytime after you have studied Section 11.8 in the textbook.

The Great Northern Paper Company in Millinocket, Maine, operates a hydroelectric generating station on the Penobscot River. Water is piped from a dam to the power station. The rate at which the water flows through the pipe varies, depending on external conditions.

The power station has three different hydroelectric turbines, each with a known (and unique) power function that gives the amount of electric power generated as a function of the water flow arriving at the turbine. The incoming water can be apportioned in different volumes to each turbine, so the goal is to determine how to distribute water among the turbines to give the maximum total energy production for any rate of flow.

Using experimental evidence and *Bernoulli's equation*, the following quadratic models were determined for the power output of each turbine, along with the allowable flows of operation:

$$KW_1 = (-18.89 + 0.1277Q_1 - 4.08 \cdot 10^{-5}Q_1^2)(170 - 1.6 \cdot 10^{-6}Q_T^2)$$
$$KW_2 = (-24.51 + 0.1358Q_2 - 4.69 \cdot 10^{-5}Q_2^2)(170 - 1.6 \cdot 10^{-6}Q_T^2)$$
$$KW_3 = (-27.02 + 0.1380Q_3 - 3.84 \cdot 10^{-5}Q_3^2)(170 - 1.6 \cdot 10^{-6}Q_T^2)$$

$$250 \leqslant Q_1 \leqslant 1110, \quad 250 \leqslant Q_2 \leqslant 1110, \quad 250 \leqslant Q_3 \leqslant 1225$$

where

Q_i = flow through turbine i in cubic feet per second

KW_i = power generated by turbine i in kilowatts

Q_T = total flow through the station in cubic feet per second

1. If all three turbines are being used, we wish to determine the flow Q_i to each turbine that will give the maximum total energy production. Our limitations are that the flows must sum to the total incoming flow and the given domain restrictions must be observed. Consequently, use Lagrange multipliers to find the values for the individual flows (as functions of Q_T) that maximize the total energy production $KW_1 + KW_2 + KW_3$ subject to the constraints $Q_1 + Q_2 + Q_3 = Q_T$ and the domain restrictions on each Q_i.
2. For which values of Q_T is your result valid?
3. For an incoming flow of 2500 ft^3/s, determine the distribution to the turbines and verify (by trying some nearby distributions) that your result is indeed a maximum.
4. Until now we assumed that all three turbines are operating; is it possible in some situations that more power could be produced by using only one turbine? Make a graph of the three power functions and use it to help decide if an incoming flow of 1000 ft^3/s should be distributed to all three turbines or routed to just one. (If you determine that only one turbine should be used, which one?) What if the flow is only 600 ft^3/s?
5. Perhaps for some flow levels it would be advantageous to use two turbines. If the incoming flow is 1500 ft^3/s, which two turbines would you recommend using? Use Lagrange multipliers to determine how the flow should be distributed between the two turbines to maximize the energy produced. For this flow, is using two turbines more efficient than using all three?
6. If the incoming flow is 3400 ft^3/s, what would you recommend to the company?