

Chelan River Fishery Forum Meeting Minutes

Date: August 14, 2013
Time: 8:00 am – 12:00 noon
Location: Chelan PUD Headquarters, Wenatchee, WA
Second Floor Conference Room

Meeting called by: Jeff Osborn, Chelan PUD

Note taker: Debby Bitterman (just the note taker!)

Attendees

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Graham Simon	WDFW	509-662-0503	Graham.Simon@dfw.wa.gov
Catherine Willard-phone	USDA-FS	509-784-1511 x520	cwillard@fs.fed.us
Steve Lewis	USFWS	509-665-3508 x14	Stephen.Lewis@fws.gov
Charlie McKinney-phone	Ecology	509-457-7107	cmck461@ecy.wa.gov
Pat Irle	Ecology	509-454-7864	Pirle461@ecy.wa.gov
Brad Caldwell	Ecology	360-407-6639	brca461@ecy.wa.gov
Jim Pacheco	Ecology	360-407-7458	jpac461@ecy.wa.gov
Phil Archibald	LCSA	509-784-2471	kim.l.lohse@gmail.com
Jeff Osborn	Chelan PUD	509-661-4176	jeff.osborn@chelanpud.org

Meeting Purpose: Meeting of the Chelan River Fishery Forum to continue Lake Chelan license Implementation

Minutes

Jeff Osborn welcomed everyone to the Chelan River Fishery Forum (CRFF) meeting and made known that voice recording of the meeting was initiated for note-taking purposes.

Habitat Channel Suitability Index Data Review

Jim Pacheco, Department of Ecology (Ecology), gave a brief summary of the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) data for steelhead. After good conservation, the HSI data for transects 3 and 8 rated having the most quality rearing habitat for juvenile steelhead of the 16 total transects. The Habitat Channel provided approximately 81% of peak juvenile steelhead rearing habitat at the 80 cfs minimum flow averaged over the entire channel. It was observed that, in general, the higher the flow the more rearing habitat is available.

Habitat Channel Gravel Removal/Supplementation Project

Jeff Osborn, Chelan PUD, reported that all permits necessary for Plan A (gravel removal above Noah's Ark and placement below Noah's Ark) were received. Unfortunately, the use of a suction dredge was discovered to be prohibitively expensive. After a lengthy discussion considering pros and cons of all other options of gravel supplementation and flow reduction, the CRFF agreed that Chelan PUD should execute Plan B, flow reduction in the habitat channel, 4-pump operation in fall 2013 and spring 2014 and then Plan A, gravel removal/supplementation, in fall 2014. Jim acknowledged that widening the Chelan River habitat channel could be an option to discuss in the future, if necessary. The CRFF confirmed, again, to change, and collect data, on one variable at a time. This methodology will provide for more accurate measuring results.

Habitat Channel Ramping Rate Investigation

Jeff clarified the Ramping Rate Investigation process, which is scheduled for 2014 May, is dropping one pump per hour, in stages from 5 pumps to 2 pumps while maintaining the 80 cfs minimum flow from the low level outlet. This investigation is different from the Flow Reduction Investigation proposed for the Habitat Channel. The Ramping Rate Investigation is just for pump station operation data and flow changes in the Habitat Channel, not for flow changes in Reaches 1-3 of the Chelan River.

Chelan River Temperature Modeling

Pat Irle, Ecology, reported that Chelan PUD has contracted with Ray Walton, West Consultants, to draft an evaluation regarding what temperature model would be appropriate to use for the Chelan River to meet goals and objectives. A site visit with Ray, Pat, Paul Pickett (Ecology), Steve Hays, and Jeff Osborn is planned for 27 September 2013 to discuss the data needs and other potential model considerations for the Chelan River.

Riparian Feasibility Investigation

Jeff and Steve Hays, Chelan PUD, are still contacting local entities to inquire about riparian feasibility studies they may have been conducted, and the elements contained in those investigations. Jeff and Steve will compile the initial potential consultant list and will provide this list to the CRFF for their review and investigation elements to be discussed at the next CRFF meeting.

Chelan River Westslope Cutthroat Trout Stocking Proposal

Jeff reported that he and Alene Underwood, Chelan PUD, met with Cory Morrison, Chelan Hatchery staff, and Travis Maitland, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), to discuss possible ways to rear healthier, more, and larger westslope cutthroat trout. After discussion with Cory, it was concluded the best option to rear westslope cutthroat to greater size with higher survival was in a round pond. There are a couple of round ponds available to use at the Eastbank Hatchery. The goal is to satisfy the Settlement Agreement stocking requirement, Article 404(b), 33,000 pounds of catchable-size salmonids in Lake Chelan, which was developed to maintain the recreational sport fishery and promote the recovery of native westslope cutthroat trout in Lake Chelan, and also have excess fish to stock in the tributaries and Chelan River.

It was recommended that a PIT-tag array, two antennas, be installed in the Chelan River at the bottom end of Reach 1 and PIT-tag the Chelan River stocked fish as a means of monitoring in addition to snorkel surveys. The PIT-tag array could be installed spring 2014. Chelan PUD is considering this option as a means to gather additional data on cutthroat presence in the Chelan River. WDFW staff is developing a cost estimate for constructing and installing the PIT-tag array.

Phil Archibald, Lake Chelan Sportsman Association, suggested that Chelan PUD consider using surrogate fish, rainbow trout, for westslope cutthroat to monitor fish presence in Reach 1 of the Chelan River. After discussion, it was concluded that since the Settlement Agreement requirement is to stock westslope cutthroat the CRFF agreed not to use surrogate fish at this time. Jeff noted that Chelan PUD, with consultation of the CRFF, does have an option to submit to FERC a stocking modification for consideration.

Graham Simon, WDFW, reported that Travis Maitland, WDFW, said that stocking activates in Company Creek and Blackberry resulted in excellent survival of westslope cutthroat fry.

Action Items

- Steve Hays will provide a Chelan River Temperature modeling update at the next meeting.
- Jeff and Steve Hays will compile a list of potential consultants that would be qualified to conduct a Riparian Feasibility Investigation.
- Jim Pacheco will do a T6 survey and depth and velocity investigation between T5, T6 and T7 to provide data for supplementing gravel placement in 2014.
- Jeff will verify the dates for the low level outlet maintenance.
- Jeff will ask the snorkel crew to note locations of steelhead parr observations.
- Jeff will send an email to the CRFF notifying them whether the Flow Reduction Investigation takes place if gravel cannot be moved prior to September 21, 2013.

Next Meeting

The CRFF agreed at this time to the proposed date 15 October 2013 conference call 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.