

Chelan River Fishery Forum Meeting Minutes

Date: August 20, 2014

Time: 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Location: Chelan PUD Headquarters, Wenatchee, WA
Parks Conference Room

Meeting called by: Jeff Osborn, Chelan PUD

Note taker: Debby Bitterman

Attending Chelan River Fishery Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Graham Simon	WDFW	509-662-0503	Graham.Simon@dfw.wa.gov
Travis Maitland	WDFW	509-665-3337	Travis.Maitland@dfw.wa.gov
Pat Irle	Ecology	509-454-7864	Pirle461@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
Steve Hays	Chelan PUD	509-661-4181	steve.hays@chelanpud.org

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

Chelan River Temperature Modeling

Steve Hays reported that Chelan PUD filed a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for Chelan River Temperature Modeling with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to satisfy a Lake Chelan Settlement Agreement requirement.

A revised QAPP is in progress at this time. Chelan PUD and Ecology are working together to address and answer the existing questions and comments on the QAPP. A Chelan PUD and Ecology meeting has been scheduled to discuss the timeline to submit the revised QAPP to FERC.

It was recommended that the CRFF review the Chelan River Temperature Assessment report prepared by Ray Walton, West Consultants. Steve noted that this report recommended the following models:

- HEC-RAS was the most appropriated model to simulate the Chelan River hydraulics.
- QUAL2Kw was the most appropriated model to simulate Chelan River water temperatures.

Jeff reviewed the next steps:

- Complete the QAPP (schedule to be determined at a later meeting today)
- Build the model
- Complete model calibration
- Conduct model simulations

Riparian Feasibility Investigation

Jeff reported after he had received comments from the CRFF he was able to finalize the Riparian Feasibility Investigation Request for Proposal (RFP).

The CRFF discussed potential consultants who could perform the Chelan River Riparian Feasibility Investigation. The CRFF determined that the potential consultant's RFP should contain and would be evaluated by: (1) local and recent experience; (2) design/evaluation; (3) referrals/recommendations from other clients; (4) address questions 1-5 from RFP; (5) brief bio of staff; and (6) responsiveness to the RFP. The following potential consultants were identified for consideration:

- Herrera Environmental Consultants
- Beck Botanical Services
- McMillen, LLC
- Cardno-Entrix
- Natural Systems Designs
- North Fork Native Plants/Intermountain Aquatics, Inc.
- HDR, Inc.

The following scheduled was recommended:

- Week of 25 August 2014: Chelan River Riparian Feasibility Investigation Request for Proposal to the potential consultants
- 1 October 2014: potential consultant's proposal due to Chelan PUD
- 6 October 2014: Chelan PUD will forward proposals to the CRFF
- 17 October 2014: CRFF review/comments due to Chelan PUD
- Week of 20 October 2014: CRFF conference call (2 hour) to discuss evaluation of proposals and select the consultant.

Jeff stated that two weeks after the selection of the consultant (roughly November) he plans to have a signed contract in place. Consultant's final report will be due February/March 2015.

Action Item:

- Jeff will draft an evaluation sheet to help with the evaluation process of consultants, will send the draft out to the CRFF for comments, and will finalized the evaluation before 6 October 2014.

Habitat Channel Gravel Augmentation/Tailrace Gravel Removal

Jeff noted that Habitat Channel gravel placement and tailrace gravel removal activities were occurring August 21-22 and extended an invitation to others to observe. It was confirmed that gravel placement and removal were covered by a "general maintenance permit".

Habitat Channel 4-pump Operation

Chelan PUD implemented a 4- pump, versus 5-pump, operation for the October 15 through November 30, 2013 Chinook salmon spawning period, per recommendation of the CRFF. Chelan PUD submitted to FERC the study proposal to test 4 pump operation for Chinook salmon and steelhead spawning.

The Chinook salmon redd survey maps showed that the location of redds surveyed during the 2012 spawning period under a 5-pump operation compared to the location of redds surveyed during the 2013 spawning period under a 4-pump operation were almost identical.

It was noted that the lack of steelhead spawning in the Habitat Channel in 2014 was probably related to a Columbia River-wide incidence of low steelhead returns. The CRFF speculated and agreed that the lack of steelhead may be due to the Wanapum crack issue delaying steelhead migration. Jim proposed that a conference call take place to discuss steelhead operation for spring 2015.

Jeff proposed a 4-pump operation for the 2014 Chinook spawning period. After discussion, the CRFF supported the 4-pump operation during the 2014 fall Chinook salmon spawning period, Oct 15 – Nov 30.

Jim Pacheco, Ecology, would like to schedule a site visit during October to conduct instream flow transect surveys. He also requested/welcomed anyone else that would like to participate in the survey.

Action Items;

- Jeff will draft a 2013 fall 4-pump operation report
- Jeff will include in the Chinook report the proportion of redds per location that are observed.
- Jim will send Jeff his transect survey schedule.
- Jeff will look into the availability of Chelan PUD staff to help with the transect survey.
- Jeff will send potential dates (week of January 12, 2015) to the CRFF for the steelhead operation conference call.
- Jim will provide new transect data profiles to Debby Bitterman on January 7th or 8th so the profiles can be posted on web.

Ramping Rate Investigation

The data collected during the pump station shut-downs showed that water levels in the Chelan River Habitat channel drop between 4 to 6 inches after each pump was shut down, which is a violation of the current 2 inches/hour ramping rate. Most operational violations of license requirements require a report to FERC that include an explanation of the violation and corrective actions to be taken to avoid future violations. Chelan PUD proposed to conduct a Ramping Rate Study in 2014 to investigate whether juvenile fish, principally Chinook salmon juveniles, are stranded during pump station shut down and, if not, whether a new ramping rate can be instituted for future pump station shut-down operations at the end of the steelhead spawning season.

The Ramping Rate Investigation was conducted on May 14, 2014, when Chinook salmon fry were abundant in the Habitat Channel per the Chelan River Fishery Forum Chelan River Habitat Channel Ramping Rate Investigation (see August 14, 2013 CRFF meeting). Water surface elevations were measured during pump reduction operations. Very few stranded Chinook fry were observed; only one occasion near the hydraulic control structure between two large boulders. A report documenting observations during the ramping rate investigation is being prepared for CRFF review.

Once CRFF has reviewed the study and recommends the change, Chelan PUD will file a letter to FERC requesting approval for new ramping rates for pump station operation.

Chelan River Westslope Cutthroat Trout Stocking Proposal

Snorkel surveys conducted in years 1-5 have documented that cutthroat are present in the Chelan River, although most cutthroat observed have been large (> 6 inches). After discussion, the CRFF supported option 3: stocking cutthroat trout fry in the fall of 2014 as a “pilot” program. Snorkel surveys in Reaches 1-3 scheduled for March, August, and November in 2015 will provide preliminary information to be considered for stocking in 2015 and 2016.

Chelan River Recreational Fishing Regulations

Travis Maitland, Washington State Dept of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), provided a brief overview regarding WDFW’s progress in updating their fishing stream regulations pamphlet. If fishing is not listed in the “special rules” section of the pamphlet, then fishing in those waters would be closed. Travis asked CRFF for comments and recommendations regarding fishing in the Chelan River.

After discussion, Travis was leaning towards recommending that the Chelan River not be listed in the pamphlet, therefore, the Chelan River would be close to fishing.

Tailrace Egg/Fry Survival Investigation

Steve Hays gave a brief overview regarding the Egg/Fry survival investigation conducted in 2013-14. Steve stated that there was good Chinook salmon egg survival rate in the Reach 4 habitat channel where

flowing water rate occurs, using egg tubes, but had poor results in the tailrace, likely due to lower water velocities in the tailrace than the Habitat Channel. However, the survival rate of eggs/alevins/fry observed from excavated redds was very high. The results provide several indications: 1) protection level flows from the Project provided conditions that resulted in high Chinook egg/alevin incubation survival in the tailrace; and 2) the egg tube methodology is not an effective tool for measuring egg/alevin survival in the tailrace. Steve stated that the study would be repeated in 2014-15 but without using egg tubes.

Steve will draft a report, which contains years 1-3 oxygen/egg studies data, and submit to the CRFF for their review. Steve will take his findings and CRFF's recommendations to help determine whether Chelan PUD has met the Chinook egg to fry biological objective requirement.

Benthic Macroinvertebrate Sampling

Chelan PUD is under staffed and will need to contract out the benthic sampling activities. Steve suggested that sampling should occur in spring, end of spill, and again, in the fall. Steve and Jeff will investigate further with Ecology staff and consultants a sampling methodology and prepare a proposal for CRFF review.

Jeff gave a brief update regarding the dead Chinook salmon event in the Habitat Channel email notification dated August 4, 2014. After further investigation, Chelan PUD determined that the dead fish event was related to high water temperature in the Chelan River. Chelan PUD turned on one pump to cool the water in the Habitat Channel attempting to prevent any more dead fish.

Action Item:

- Steve will send to the CRFF for review/comment a list of three potential contractors to execute benthic sampling activities.