

Rocky Reach Fish Forum

Wednesday, 1 April 2015

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Chelan PUD Second Floor Conference Room

Wenatchee, WA



Meeting called by Steve Hemstrom

Chairperson, Tracy Hillman

Notes taken by Teneille Hatmaker

Attending Representatives:

Hemstrom, Steve	Chelan PUD	(509) 661-4281	steven.hemstrom@chelanpud.org
Verhey, Patrick	WDFW	(509) 754-4624	patrick.verhey@dfw.wa.gov

Attending Participants:

Hatmaker, Teneille	Chelan PUD	(509) 661-4758	teneille.hatmaker@chelanpud.org
Hillman, Tracy	BioAnalysts	(208) 321-0363	tracy.hillman@bioanalysts.net
Keller, Lance	Chelan PUD	(509) 661-4299	lance.keller@chelanpud.org
McLellan, Jason (phone)	CCT	(509) 263-1082	jasonMcLellan@colvilletribes.com
Miller, Donella (phone)	YN	(509) 945-0132	mild@yakamafish-nsn.gov
Nelle, RD	USFWS	(509) 548-7573	RD_Nelle@fws.gov
Skiles, Tom (phone)	CRITFC	(208) 731-1289	skit@critfc.org
Underwood, Alene	Chelan PUD	(509) 661-5192	alene.underwood@chelanpud.org

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome and Introductions

Tracy Hillman welcomed everyone to the Rocky Reach Fish Forum (RRFF) meeting. Participants introduced themselves.

II. Review of Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

III. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the March RRF meeting were approved and made final.

IV. Review of March Action Items

- Tracy Hillman will send the updated USFWS Diagnostics/Pathways and Indicators matrix to the RRF. **Complete**
- Lance Keller will get juvenile sturgeon growth data from the Chelan Hatchery. **Ongoing**
- Tracy Hillman will contact Bob Rose to obtain his vote on the juvenile sturgeon release strategy SOA. **Ongoing**
- The RRF will review the Rocky Reach Sturgeon Indexing and Monitoring Report and the White Sturgeon Adult Monitoring Report and submit their comments to Lance Keller by 1 April 2015. **Complete**
- Steve Hemstrom will review Wells Dam fyke net data to determine juvenile lamprey migration timing. **Complete**
- RD Nelle will check data from the Entiat Trap to determine juvenile lamprey movement. **Ongoing**
- All comments on the artificial propagation proposal need to be submitted to Bob Rose by 13 March 2015. Bob and the principle investigators will address the comments and submit a revised proposal to the RRF by the April meeting. **Ongoing; Chelan PUD will send their comments to Bob today.**
- RD Nelle will send the Rapid Assessment Team a Doodle poll to schedule a conference call on the Tumwater Dam fishway rapid assessment. **Complete**
- Steve Hemstrom will send Rod O'Connor the Rocky Reach adult lamprey PIT tag data. **Ongoing**
- Tracy Hillman will keep the bull trout issue on the agenda as a placeholder for Section 10 consultation. **Ongoing**

The Forum discussed voting representatives and alternates, and the importance of participants remaining current with the Forum. Anyone can attend RRF meetings, but only signatories can vote on decision items. All signatories have identified their representatives, but most have not identified their alternates. Tracy will check with each party to identify alternates.

Action Item:

- **Tracy Hillman will verify alternates for each voting party.**

V. Pacific Lamprey

Rocky Reach Project Effects: Biannual Turbine-Screen Impingement Monitoring

During the last RRFF meeting, Chelan PUD was asked to identify the juvenile lamprey migration timeframe within which most juveniles would be passing the project. Steve Hemstrom said that he would evaluate the fyke net data at Wells Dam. He did this and provided those results to the Forum (see email from Tracy Hillman dated 3/18/2015). Steve confirmed that May and June are the periods when most juvenile lamprey migrate past Wells dam. He added that although they do migrate at other times, the May-June period is a good time to view and monitor the likely bulk of the migrating juveniles at Rocky Reach Dam.

RD Nelle was previously asked to check the data from the Entiat Trap to determine juvenile lamprey movement. He reported that April through June appears to be the best time period to capture juvenile lamprey movement.

The RRFF approved the monitoring of juvenile impingement on screens in Units one and two at Rocky Reach Dam during the period 15 May through 15 June. This timeframe is also consistent with impingement sampling that has occurred in the past. Steve Hemstrom reminded the RRFF parties that no impingement has been observed thus far on Rocky Reach turbine screens.

Rocky Reach Project Effects: No Net Impact

Steve Hemstrom and Tracy Hillman provided an update on progress made by the Pacific Lamprey Subgroup on addressing NNI for Pacific lamprey. Steve explained that the Subgroup is working on developing a set of proposed draft recommendations. If the Subgroup can come to an agreement, then the proposal would be brought to the Forum for review and approval. Tracy Hillman summarized the issues identified during the Subgroup meeting and described Chelan PUD's proposed draft NNI recommendations:

- Chelan PUD would set up a Pacific Lamprey NNI Account and provide contributions to the account annually. The amount of money to go into the account annually is unknown; however, the PUD would consider front-loading the account during the initial years.
- The proposed NNI agreement would be for the life of the license (for the remaining 38 years).
- There would be 10-year check-ins. The factors to be evaluated during the 10-year check-ins are yet to be decided.
- There would be no juvenile survival studies at Rocky Reach Dam during the life of the License (over the next 38 years) as long as the Agreement is in place.
- Only Sections 4.2.3 and 4.4 would be modified. All other sections of the PLMP would stay the same and will be implemented as described in the PLMP.

The Subgroup has plans to meet again to further discuss the funding amounts and modifications to the Pacific Lamprey Management Plan. They tentatively arranged to meet on Tuesday, 14 April.

Artificial Propagation Update

Tracy Hillman reported that Bob Rose has not received any comments on the artificial propagation proposal. Tracy said that Bob intends to set up a conference call with Chelan PUD and the three entities doing the work. Steve Hemstrom stated that Chelan PUD has comments on the proposal and they will provide those to Bob and the RRFF today. Steve stated that although there are several comments, he does not believe they will interfere with the progress of the proposal. There are, however, some important changes that need to be made to the proposal. That is, the proposal needs to make clear the intent of propagation as it relates to Section 4.2.3 of the Pacific Lamprey Management Plan.

Action Item:

- **Steve Hemstrom will send comments to Bob Rose and the RRFF today, 1 April 2015.**

Lamprey Passage at Tumwater Dam (Rapid Assessment)

RD Nelle reported that Steve Rainey prepared a document using the detailed notes prepared by Barb Kelly-Ringel. This document was sent to the assessment team for review and comments. It was requested that all comments be submitted to RD Nelle by 10 April 2015. The plan is to review these comments and prepare a presentation and report for the Forum by June or July.

Patrick Verhey commented that he felt the document prepared by Steve Rainey was missing fundamental information. The report highlighted many areas of need or concern, but it did not provide recommendations for fixes. Steve Hemstrom noted that Chelan PUD has some biological concerns and explained that it is necessary for the group to determine what caused the initial loss of lamprey upstream of Tumwater. Chelan PUD will be submitting comments to the draft document. In addition, he shared with the Forum that Chelan PUD has discovered data in their vaults that included some historical Tumwater fish counts that identified adult lamprey passing upstream through the fishway in 1995. Steve plans to share these data with the Forum and will include this information in the comments they make to the document.

RD said he will continue to provide updates to the Forum on the Tumwater Dam Rapid Assessment.

Wanapum Response: Rock Island Lamprey Passage Structures

Lance Keller reported that beginning 16 March, Grant PUD began refilling the reservoir behind Wanapum Dam. The reservoir is now full and the denils are completely underwater. The elevation of Wanapum Reservoir is 570.1 feet. The tailrace elevation at Rock Island Dam is 573 feet and the forebay elevation is 612.9 feet. Lance stated that there are no indications that leaving the denils in place have impaired passage. The denils will remain in place until December 2015 or early 2016. Fishway counts will

begin on 15 April 2015.

Rocky Reach HDX-PIT Tagged Lamprey Monitoring

Steve Hemstrom reported that Chelan PUD intends to continue running all antennas in the Rocky Reach fishway for at least two additional months in order to detect any adult lamprey tagged and released by Chelan PUD in 2014 that may move past the dam this spring. Chelan PUD is waiting to calculate the final passage rates until any overwintering fish have been given the opportunity to continue their migration upstream. Rod O'Connor with Blue Leaf Environmental has the data from Rock Island, but Steve Hemstrom will not send him the Rocky Reach data until monitoring is complete.

Action Item:

- **Steve Hemstrom will send Rod O'Connor the adult lamprey PIT-tag data from Rocky Reach Dam after the adult spring migration is complete.**

VI. Bull Trout

No updates provided.

VII. White Sturgeon

Rearing Update

Lance Keller reported that last week Chelan PUD crews were at Columbia Basin Hatchery scute marking and PIT tagging juvenile sturgeon. He indicated that the fish are healthy and in good numbers. The crews are currently tagging juvenile sturgeon at Chelan Hatchery. He reported that the fish there are also healthy and that there is a surplus of fish. Lance will contact WDFW to discuss what to do with the surplus fish.

Lance indicated that he and Corey Wright with Blue Leaf will begin preparing for adult brood collection in order to provide the hatcheries with as much time as possible to prepare their facilities. The expected date for releasing juvenile sturgeon is the end of April or beginning of May. He has not had a chance to review the data from Columbia Basin Hatchery and is unaware of the fish weights. However, many of the fish are around 300 mm in length. He reiterated that none of the 6,500 fish to be released in the project area in 2015 will be acoustic tagged.

Comments on Annual Monitoring Reports

Tracy Hillman reported that comments on the two annual sturgeon monitoring reports were due today (1 April 2015). Lance Keller said that he received comments only from Jason McLellan. Jason briefly

described his comments and suggested that set lines (not the number of hook hours per set line) should be the experimental unit for calculating catch per unit effort (CPUE). In his opinion, hook hours complicate things and he strongly recommends set lines as the experimental unit. Calculating CPUE based on set lines means that sampling should be standardized. Lance said that he and Blue Leaf will address all of Jason's comments.

Decision: Approve Juvenile Release Strategy for 2016

Bob Rose was unable to attend the meeting, but he informed Tracy Hillman before the meeting that the Yakama Nation is not prepared to provide an official vote as they are still discussing the issue internally. Bob told Tracy that the Yakama Nation believes the Forum is placing too much emphasis on genetics. As a result, the Yakama Nation is leaning toward a "No" vote. Tracy has received votes from all other members, all of which have voted in favor of the SOA.

The Forum discussed voting protocols and questioned if more emphasis should be put on following the protocols approved in the Settlement Agreement. Section 3.1.4 in the Agreement states, "*When a forum member is unable to have either its designated representative or alternate at a meeting, or needs additional time to determine its organization's position on a proposed decision or recommendation, the chair may reschedule final action, one time for each member, on any such decision or recommendation.*" It was pointed out that the same SOA has come before the Forum on three different occasions over the last three months, and each time the Yakama Nation was not prepared to provide an official vote. Members discussed the issue of a party delaying the Forum from proceeding and indicated that the Forum must have a plan for setting times on decision making. The Forum acknowledged that no party should be rushed or pressured to vote, but standards should be in place for the purpose of being efficient. The Forum agreed that it was unnecessary at this time to take alternative action on this matter; however, they directed Tracy Hillman to contact Bob Rose to encourage a response from the Yakama Nation as soon as possible.

Action Item:

- **Tracy Hillman will contact Bob Rose to obtain an official vote from the Yakama Nation.**

Phase 2 Sturgeon Conservation Program – Ecopath with Ecosim Model

Lance Keller reported that Corey Wright with Blue Leaf reached out to modeling firms, including Noble Hendrix with QEDA Consulting in Seattle, to seek recommendations on how to estimate carrying capacities for sturgeon. Lance said that Noble Hendrix believes that a model would be an appropriate way to move forward, but recommended a species-specific model instead of an ecosystem approach. According to Noble, the ecosystem-based models give equal weight to all parts of the ecosystem and it may prove difficult to tease out optimal stocking levels for one species when working with ecosystem-wide inputs. Lance added that Noble suggested that a species-specific model could be used with

sturgeon, and lamprey could be incorporated into the model at a later time.

Lance indicated that Russ Perry and John Plum with USGS were also contacted. Their recommendations were in line with Noble's. There are a few additional people that Lance hopes to contact. Ideally, the Forum would like to find someone who can review the plan and provide a path forward using a specific model.

Tracy Hillman indicated that he contacted Villy Christensen at the University of British Columbia about the use of Ecopath with Ecosim (EwE) in modeling white sturgeon. Villy indicated that of the roughly 500 published EwE models, none of them modeled white sturgeon. Nevertheless, Villy told Tracy that Steve McAdam and Bret van Poorten from the British Columbia Environmental Ministry are discussing a project that has sturgeon as the key species to be modeled. They are interested in examining what effects about 100,000 hatchery sturgeon in the trans-boundary area of the Columbia River will have on the ecosystem once those hatchery fish become piscivorous. The work is likely to proceed and be conducted by Patricia Woodruff, a joint Ph.D. student shared by Steve and Bret. Villy thought it might be possible to expand Patricia's work to include the Rocky Reach and Priest Rapids Project Areas. It would be cost effective and would provide options for comparisons. Jason McLellan indicated that he will be attending the Upper Columbia Sturgeon meeting at the end of April and he will discuss with Steve McAdam the possibility of an expansion of Patricia's study into the project areas.

Lance said that Noble Hendrix is willing to review the management plan and prepare a document to present to the Forum, but this would need to be funded and approved. Lance noted that there is a possibility of a cost share with Grant PUD by doing a parallel path. Species-specific models ultimately will be the outcome, but the foundations will be similar. If the Forum agrees to this, Tracy Hillman would schedule a time when both Forums will be available to meet with Noble Hendrix at the same time. The RRFF agreed that an evaluation from Noble Hendrix would be beneficial. Steve Hemstrom clarified that the RRFF must be in consensus that they will use the information before choosing to move forward with developing a model.

Jason McLellan emphasized that it is not the stocking rates that must be looked at, but rather the calculation of biomass carrying capacity that needs to be derived. Based on estimates of carrying capacity, stocking rates can be tweaked or adjusted.

Action Items:

- **Lance Keller will work with Chris Mott to coordinate costs and scheduling with Noble Hendrix.**
- **Jason McLellan will speak to Steve McAdam about expanding Ecopath with Ecosim and will report back to the Forum during the May meeting.**

VIII. Next Steps

The next regular meeting of the RRFF will be Wednesday, 6 May 2015 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. in the Chelan PUD Second Floor Conference Room.