

## **White Sturgeon Subcommittee**

### **October 5 Meeting Synopsis**

\*These notes reflect the information discussed at the White Sturgeon Subcommittee Meeting for the purposes of consideration by the Rocky Reach Fish Forum (RRFF). Any information reported herein will not constitute an official “decision” until evaluation and voting by the RRFF according to the forum’s policies and procedures.

This synopsis is primarily intended to report information distributed and discussed by subcommittee members.

### **Meeting participants:**

- Bob Rose –YN                      Teleconference
- Brad James –WDFW              Teleconference
- Tony Eldred –WDFW              Wenatchee CPUD office
- Pat Irle –Ecology                  Teleconference
- Ben Lenz -Grant PUD              Teleconference
- Joe Miller-CPUD                  Wenatchee CPUD office

### **Synopsis**

The primary goal of the meeting was to discuss potential brood stock options for white sturgeon production. The meeting began with Joe Miller introducing the agenda and meeting documents. Joe presented the District’s recommended approach based on the options described in the White Sturgeon Management Plan. Following the District’s recommendation, the group discussed the pros and cons of the District’s proposal and recommended some other options.

In general there was agreement that planting fish in 2011 (license year 3) is reasonable, but there were differences in opinion as to how to proceed. There was also agreement that Wanapum Reservoir and Lake Roosevelt are suitable choices for obtaining broodstock/juveniles, but WDFW and YN proposed expanded sampling to include other potential options. Brad James indicated that there is some uncertainty with choosing brood stock options prior to conducting Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities. He also suggested that McNary Reservoir should be considered for brood stocking purposes. Ultimately, it would be important to achieve a minimum number of family groups to maintain diversity in the program and help refine the number of brood stock needed (and the number of reservoirs sampled). Brad indicated that planting a large number of fish that are immediately entrained (i.e., flushed out of Rocky Reach) could be undesirable if the brood stock source was not appropriate for the final destination of the entrained individuals. Brad also relayed some concerns about choosing the size of fish to be released prior to knowing how they would behave (e.g., small fish may be flushed out while larger fish may not). Bob Rose indicated a desire to expand the consideration of brood stock/juvenile fish sources to a more comprehensive view including Rocky Reach and sturgeon currently held at YN

facilities. Bob and Brad advocated early implementation of M&E work using different sized fish to examine size based movement patterns with active tags. (Recommendations are summarized below).

Brad, Joe and Bob agreed that it would be a good idea to consider short-term and long-term brood stock plans in individual plan documents: the former dealing with immediate defined production levels and the latter dealing with a comprehensive, adaptive approach to refine production levels over time and development of a hierarchical brood stock selection matrix.

Bob Rose requested additional coordination between the PUDs and asked how to make this happen in a regional context. Joe responded that Chelan and Grant are working together and making efforts to engage regional participants, but it is unlikely that different plans would be implemented identically. Ben Lenz (GCPUD) indicated that coordination would be improved with regular attendance by all members, specifically mentioned was Bob Rose, at the Priest Rapids Fish Forum meetings.

At the end of the meeting there was no agreement on an approach to obtain brood stock/juvenile fish for License Year 3. The subcommittee will set up another meeting in the coming month to further develop a proposal for the RRFF to consider.

## **Summary Recommendations (by Advocate)**

1. Use Wanapum Reservoir to collect brood stock and, potentially, fish obtained through the Lake Roosevelt program to supply production of up to 6,500 yearling sturgeon during the first License years of defined production levels (Joe Miller-CPUD)
2. Develop a short-term brood stock plan to address the initial production phase while developing a larger more comprehensive brood stock plan to cover long term production and adaptive management (Brad James-WDFW, Bob Rose-YN, Joe Miller-CPUD)
3. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of spawner availability for brood-stocking in Rocky Reach Reservoir, McNary Reservoir, Wanapum Reservoir (Bob Rose-YN)
4. Obtain brood stock or juvenile fish from numerous sources in the first years of production including the following sources: Wanapum Reservoir, Rocky Reach Reservoir, McNary Reservoir, Lake Roosevelt, and YN/Pelfree[?](Bob Rose YN)
5. Utilize a smaller production goal initially (e.g., less than 6,500) until questions surrounding entrainment are resolved and the preferred long-term brood stock source is identified (Brad James WDFW).
6. The number of family groups desired (for planting) should be a primary consideration in choosing the number of broodstock collected (Brad James WDFW)
7. Early implementation of active tagging to monitor stocked sturgeon movements (Brad James WDFW, Bob Rose YN)

8. Early implementation of releases of various sized sturgeon to examine the potential relationship between fish size and entrainment/and migratory behavior (Brad James-WDFW, Bob Rose-YN).