

# Rocky Reach Meeting Minutes

**To:** Distribution List  
**From:** Gregg Carrington  
**Date:** February 24, 2000  
**Subject:** Full Relicensing Meeting  
**Attendees:** Refer to Sign-Up Sheet  
**Location:** Chelan PUD Auditorium, Wenatchee, WA

## Purpose

- 1) To provide updates from the working groups
- 2) To get updated on current studies and study plan proposals
- 3) Discuss comments on NEPA Scoping Document No. 1

## Habitat Conservation Plan

Jeff explained that the environmental impact statement for the HCP is being prepared by Parametrix for NMFS. Gregg added that in this case NMFS chose a consultant to prepare the EIS and, as the licensee, the PUD does not have control over the process. Gregg encouraged everyone to review the white paper and provide written comments within 30 days (March 24, 2000).

## Update of Current Studies (see PowerPoint Presentation)

### Water Quality Monitoring

Bill Humm, facilitator, pointed out that the following studies are baseline studies. Jeff (PUD) continued saying that these studies were initiated to satisfy basic NEPA requirements. The issue identification process identified additional studies that need to be conducted to address the interests of the working group.

The report was prepared by Parametrix and reflects the first quarter of sampling. The primary issues for Rocky Reach were identified as temperature and total dissolved gas. Jeff stated that at the next working group meeting he will present a simplified set of water quality results.

### Aquatic Habitat Survey

The survey was conducted in August and September 1999. Forty transects were surveyed on the Rocky Reach reservoir to document substrate type, river profile and water velocities. The data will be used in the Fish Presence Habitat Use Survey to determine preferred fish habitat. The initial analysis indicates that smaller/softer substrates are in the stream margins and fairly uniform and large in the main stem, which are not surprising results. Additional information regarding velocities are still being analyzed and will be presented at the March working group meeting.

### Fish Presence and Habitat Use Survey

This study is used to determine fish presence, all species that inhabit the reservoir and what type of habitat they prefer. Fall sampling occurred from October 18, 1999, through October 30, 1999. Jeff (PUD) explained that the use of set lines, mainly for sturgeon, is being discussed by NMFS and USFWS. He stated that gillnets will also be used

in the year 2000 sampling as more active gear rather than just the passive gear, which was used initially, in order to give a better representation of the inhabitants of the reservoir. Spring sampling will begin in April 2000.

### **Creel Survey**

The study was initiated in August 1999 to determine what type of fish is being caught in the reservoir. The primary angler preference was bass and walleye prior to opening of salmon season. The study was primarily designed to survey the reservoir; however, working group members recommended including the tailrace in year 2000 surveys because of the significant fishing effort in that area.

### **Benthic Analysis**

This study was conducted in fall because it is generally the time when there is the highest stock of "critters" in the sediment. Artificial substrates were used in collecting the samples. The taxonomist is currently analyzing the samples. The initial observations show there are relatively low densities, but the inhabitants in the sediments were as expected. Jeff pointed out that he was surprised that clams colonized in the rock baskets and they were able to get a good sample for identification.

### **RTE Plants**

Jeff (PUD) stated that Calypso Consulting conducted the survey as well as the survey for the 1990 pool raise application, which provides good baseline data. One-half of the reservoir was surveyed in 1999 and the other half will be surveyed in 2000. Nine populations of *Epipactis gigantea* (giant helleborine) were identified in 1990 and were re-identified in great amounts in 1999. Three additional species were also identified: porcupine sedge, blue-eyed grass and little bluestem. Flowering for the species occur in May and July and the survey will reconvene then. In addition to the RTE plant list, the consultant is also preparing a complete species list of everything that is observed.

### **RTE Wildlife and Cover-type Mapping**

The mapping was done to identify and quantify the cover-types. The initial surveys were conducted in September 1999 and more intensive work will begin in May 2000.

### **Mule Deer Mortality**

Currently WDFW is conducting the winter mortality study in North Central Washington and the PUD thought it would be advantageous to fund a portion of the study to include the Rocky Reach mitigation lands. This study is being coordinated with WDFW to use mule deer as an indicator species to determine the health of the habitat on the mitigation lands. The goal of the PUD is to assess whether the lands are providing or not providing for wildlife and determine if the management of the lands needs to change or not.

### **Recreation Use Assessment**

Michelle Smith (PUD) explained that 2000 field season will begin in April. The preliminary summer and fall monitoring results were presented at the November 18, 1999, full team meeting and those results are posted on the Web site. The study area includes area from Rocky Reach Dam to Wells Dam, which includes all public sites and any dispersed activities, if any. The 2000 fieldwork will include the Entiat Park survey, which will be used to determine if there is any relationship between the Entiat Park and the Entiat Valley Forest Service sites. The PUD will be working in coordination with the City of Entiat in conducting the survey and Debby Howe, Howe Consulting, will interpret the results. The Recreation Use Assessment draft report is due in July and final report targeted for September. It was added that information from the creel survey would be included in the Recreation Use Assessment to include the fishing activity. Phil Archibald (USFS) asked if any surveys would be done to capture waterfowl hunting. Michelle responded by saying that the group had not identified that, but she would discuss at the next working group meeting.

### **Cultural Resources**

Gregg (PUD) explained that the working group discussed and agreed on the steps that would be required for Section 106 process. He explained the 13 steps, highlighting on the need to establish policy-level consultation with FERC. He continued saying that Section 106 consultation requires government-to-government relations when a federal agency in conducting cultural resource investigations. FERC claims that in the alternative relicensing process they do not have the ability to establish those relations. In turn, the PUD asked FERC to write a letter passing the

responsibility to Chelan PUD. Gregg added that one very important component of the process is to complete a background overview. Robin Bruce (Western Historical Services) has been hired as the consultant/advisor and she is reviewing the overview that was done in 1983 to determine if that report is adequate for relicensing. Scott concluded that the priorities for cultural resources are to complete the background overview and begin developing TCP and field survey study plans.

## **Working Group Updates**

### **Water Quality, Fisheries, Wildlife & Riparian (Natural Resources)**

Jeff explained that it has been several months since the working group met because of the focus on Lake Chelan; however, there is a meeting scheduled for March 9, 2000. Total dissolved gas, gas abatement, DOE's expectations and what the PUD will do in order to meet the standards will be a main focus at the March 9 meeting. The group will also discuss the bull trout 2000 study plan and finalize the sturgeon study plan.

The PUD received a letter from WDFW dated January 4, 2000 (available on the Web site) regarding bull trout. Richard Smith (USFWS) explained that the effects on bull trout have not been addressed in FERC licensing. He continued saying that bull trout are evident in the Rocky Reach pool and using the ladders at Rock Island, Wells and Priest Rapids. Primarily the letter that was sent to FERC stating the bull trout are evident in those areas and utilizing their licensed projects. It was also a request to begin consultation, which is a requirement by law. Gregg (PUD) explained that FERC could appoint a non-federal representative for ESA-listed species. However, Richard clarified that for Rocky Reach he felt that the current studies are adequate. Jeff (PUD) recommended that a USFWS representative be present at the March 9 meeting to discuss the bull trout issue.

Jeff continued saying that for wildlife and riparian, he would like the consultant to be present to give an update on the index areas and finalize where the intensive cover-type mapping will be conducted.

### **Recreation and Aesthetics**

The working group has been spending much of its time reviewing the study plans, ensuring that all comments are incorporated and that the plan direction is agreed upon by the working group members. The recreation inventory will include an inventory of all public **and** private lands, which were not included in the recreation use assessment. The working group agreed to expand the study area beyond the project boundary to include areas including Forest Service park sites located in the Entiat River Valley, areas in the lower Wells Dam and Wenatchee Confluence Park. These areas were added because the working group members felt that these areas had an influence or were affected by recreation activities within the project area. Michelle continued saying that information from the Natural Resources Working Group will be used in recreation inventory, including the results from the mule deer mortality study to determine if recreation has an effect on wildlife. Aquatic Habitat survey results will also be used regarding milfoil and its impacts on recreation.

### **Land Management and Socioeconomics**

The working group has been spending much of its time reviewing the study plans in detail to ensure that everything is covered. The group has also been interviewing consultants. The intent is to have a consultant hired by the end of February and have a kickoff meeting in March. The plan is to conduct the study during March to July 2000 and have the first draft report out at the end of July.

The purpose of the Socioeconomic Study is to document factors that influence private and commercial development, agriculture, tourism and recreation. Entiat will be the primary focus to determine the impacts the project has had on their economy and any potential enhancement opportunities.

A matrix will be used in the land management study to list management and comprehensive plans that are relevant to the project. Those will be compared to all of the resource areas that are affected to assure that there is consistency among the plans and also to guarantee that environmental resources are considered in those plans. This study will be conducted March through July 2000.

## **Historical and Cultural**

The next Cultural Resources Working Group Meeting will be a joint meeting between Lake Chelan and Rocky Reach the last week of March. The meeting will be combined because both working groups include the same participants.

## **Engineering – Soils and Project Operations**

Steve Lachowicz (PUD) reported that the two study areas are 1) the shoreline erosion study of the reservoir and 2) the tributary backwater analysis on the Entiat River. On March 13, 2000, the working group will tour the reservoir and take photos of the endpoint locations of various shoreline erosion sites. Currently for the backwater analysis, the working group is lining up a surveyor to update cross sections near Confluence and they will then prepare a computer model to evaluate the influence of the reservoir on the Entiat River at various flows. The goal is to have the draft findings by mid-October.

## **Overview of comments on Scoping Document No. 1**

Gregg (PUD) stated that twelve comment letters were received for Scoping Document No. 1. The second document will be issued in June that will contain the detailed study plans as well as the baseline study plans. The letters received were from WDFW, USFWS, USFS, Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission (CRITFC), Umatilla Tribe, Yakama Nation, Grant PUD, American Rivers, Entiat Focus Group and NMFS. Gregg has reviewed all of the letters and he will be responding to all of them. He will either incorporate the comments into the Scoping Document No. 2 and change the study plans to reflect the comments or he will respond in a matrix form. He estimates that the response letter will be going out in March.

He mentioned that the most interesting letter he received was from CRITFC, who have not been participating in relicensing. The letter highlighted that they believe Chelan PUD has one of the poorest anadromous fish passage performance on the main stem Columbia and also indicated that Chelan PUD has not provided compensation for mitigation for anadromous fish losses and have not developed an HCP. In 1999, Chelan PUD spent \$17.5 million on mitigation and studies for fish, which accounted for 30% of the budget. Gregg then showed a 12-minute video that highlighted other efforts Chelan PUD is doing for fish protection. Gregg intends to meet with CRITFC in April.

## **Study Plan Updates**

Gregg clarified that the draft study plans were submitted on December 1, 1999, and the final study plans were submitted on January 15, 2000. All study plans are available on the Web site.

## **Cultural Resource Study**

Nothing to report at this time. The study plan is in preparation and will be presented at the next working group meeting.

## **Recreation, Land Management, Milfoil, Socioeconomics**

Michelle reported the study plan updates during the working group portion of the meeting. Bill Humm received consensus that there were no additional questions from the group.

## **Tributary Backwater Analysis**

Discussed in working group update.

## **Bull Trout Investigation**

Richard Smith (USFWS) indicated that NMFS might have a conflict with trapping fish in the ladders for the study. Jeff (PUD) agreed that summer steelhead and spring chinook are bound to be affected and consultation with NMFS will occur, but he is still trying to determine how the fish can be trapped in the ladders. Jeff will be working with Chelan PUD engineer, Bill Christman, to determine if the Buckley Trap can be modified and possibly use video cameras to reduce the interception of other listed species. Any methods of targeting bull trout in the ladders should be brought to the March 9, 2000, working group meeting. Tony Eldred (WDFW) indicated that the ladder is the most logical place to trap; however, Art Viola (WDFW) mentioned to him that there may be more fish up or down river that choose not to pass the dam and those fish would be excluded from the study. Jeff stated that Art had sent him a letter dated January 4, 2000, which is on the Web site. The letter stated his concerns as well as study design

alternatives. Jeff added that it will be very important to make sure all the agencies and tribal interests are present to ensure that everyone's interests and policies are met.

### **Literature Investigation**

Chelan PUD will be selecting a consultant within a month to begin the literature investigation and it should be completed by mid-summer.

### **White Sturgeon**

Jeff is currently working with NMFS in finalizing the study plans.

### **Next Working Group Meetings**

Fisheries Working Group – March 9, 2000  
Erosion Working Group – March 13, 2000  
Recreation Working Group – March 28, 2000  
Cultural Resources Working Group – March 20, 2000

### **Action Items**

- ✓ Working group members and stakeholders to review the HCP White Paper and provide written comments to Gregg Carrington by March 24, 2000
- ✓ Gregg will respond to every Scoping Document comment letters in March.

Reference materials are posted on the web site, [www.chelanpud.org/relicense](http://www.chelanpud.org/relicense).

Please contact Rosana Sokolowski, (888)663-8121, Ext. 4290, if hard copies are needed.

- HCP White Paper
- PowerPoint Presentation of Studies Update
- Water Quality Monitoring Report
- Sign-up Sheet
- Distribution List