

Rocky Reach Meeting Minutes

To: Distribution List
From: Gregg Carrington
Date: April 27, 2000
Subject: Rocky Reach Relicensing Issues
Attendees: Refer to Sign-Up Sheet
Location: Chelan PUD Auditorium, Wenatchee, WA
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Meeting Purpose

- 1) Provide updates on studies underway and proposed 2001 studies
- 2) Provide working group updates

Endangered Species Act (ESA) Consultation Process

Gregg Carrington, Chelan PUD (PUD), informed the group of two new subgroups: One that will address anadromous fish issues; the other, total dissolved gas/water temperature issues. The purpose of the groups is to coordinate efforts with the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and anadromous fish issues. Steve Hays (PUD) is involved in both issues and will be heading both working groups. Gregg also mentioned there are Mid-Columbia Coordinating Council meetings that are underway and the PUD will put those agendas and schedules on the Web site so people will be aware of those as well.

Steve (PUD) explained that there has been a long-standing process that was initiated in 1979 through Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) due to a petition by various fish and wildlife agencies and tribes. The petition was to get protection for juvenile migrant steelhead at all five area dams, which was called the Mid-Columbia Proceeding. The first proceeding resulted in a settlement with a five-year study period. After the study period, the parties involved concluded that at four of the projects more studies were needed and a second agreement was reached called the First Interim Stipulation. Additional five-year studies were conducted at Rocky Reach and at the other PUD dams.

To this point Rocky Reach has been through the initial stipulation and the four interim revised stipulations. A fifth was due to be filed at the time HCP negotiations were nearly completed. Now there is an expired fourth revised stipulation and studies proceeding. All of the studies were primarily focused for juvenile fish passage.

It has been determined that there needs to be a tie between ongoing FERC proceedings and the HCP as it becomes part of the data record for relicensing in order to keep relicensing stakeholders (who have not been involved in the HCP process) informed.

An application has been filed with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for a Section 10 permit. NMFS has initiated a National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) consultation on the HCP, which is a portion of a

Section 10 application for incidental take. The NEPA process is nearing the point for a “draft” environment impact statement (EIS) for public review and comment with a final EIS later in 2000. NMFS will also initiate a Cumulative Impacts and Likelihood of Recovery process to determine if the application filed will meet the recovery needs. The modeling study will be conducted to determine what kinds of measures will allow the immediate prevention of extinction and lead to long-term recovery of the listed species (salmon and steelhead). The two listed species are only part of the HCP negotiations because it was decided that the HCP forum would be a good process to develop a complete settlement agreement. What was negotiated was an Anadromous Fish Agreement and HCP. The Anadromous Fish Agreements goes beyond the HCP and gets into hatchery compensation, tributary funds and no-net impact (NNI). The Anadromous Fish Agreement will be brought to the relicensing groups and used as the long-term agreement for those species. Again, the importance to tie in the stakeholders that are not involved in the day-to-day business with the Mid-Columbia Proceeding or HCP Plan of Action is to get them involved in order to make an informed decision when preparing the license application.

Gregg explained that the two new working subgroups will be formed to focus on total dissolved gas temperature issues and the other to focus on anadromous fish issues. Gregg added that the PUD is also providing a forum for people to participate at the Mid-Columbia Coordinating Council level. He indicated that Chelan PUD will be separating themselves from some of the other meetings (at Grant or Douglas) and have a separate time set aside for the Rocky Reach Project for people to participate at that level. Steve stated the coordinating council meetings are very detailed to design studies, discuss results and plan future protection actions.

Bill Humm (facilitator) mentioned that there is a whitepaper that discusses the relationship between the HCP and relicensing and is available on the Web site.

1999- 2000 Baseline Study Updates

Natural Resources (see handout)

Jeff Osborn (PUD) stated the fieldwork is beginning for most of the studies, including water quality monitoring, creel survey, fish presence and habitat, wildlife cover-type mapping and botanical survey. He mentioned he was hoping to include white sturgeon sampling in with the fish presence survey; however, due to permitting process delays with NMFS and the US Fish and Wildlife (USFWS), it will probably be delayed until late summer.

Mule Deer Mortality

The Mule Deer Study is in progress and tracking is underway. Twenty deer were trapped and collared between Chelan Butte and Swakane Canyon. The plan is to collar 20 more in winter 2000.

Water Quality Monitoring

Pat Irlle. Washington Department of Ecology (DOE), indicated the consultant was going to provide data from other sources that would demonstrate what the temperature profile would look like in the Columbia River upstream from Rocky Reach. She continued saying that she has not seen that data. Without it, there is insecurity with the DOE whether the level of existing data is adequate to only require basic field sampling. Gregg (PUD) stated the quarterly report was distributed at the February 24, 2000, full meeting and is available on the Web site and indicated the next update is due in June. He also stated the consultant would be conducting temperature profiles highlighted in the study plan as well as spot samplings at other cross sections. Bill Humm (facilitator) recommended that Pat review the June report and discuss any concerns she may still have with Jeff.

Creel Survey

The winter walleye fishery was missed; however, Bob Whitehall (city of Entiat) indicated that he has some data from the Entiat boat launch, which should provide enough information to make some determination of the walleye fishery resource.

All of the natural resource study updates are highlighted on the handout.

Social Sciences

Recreation Use Assessment

Michelle Smith (PUD) explained the study would look at the activities and use that is going on at the seven parks along the reservoir and any displaced or dispersed activities. The purpose is to determine if current park accommodations are adequate and to make sure there is not much displaced activity occurring. The study began in summer 1999 and will conclude in May 2000. The first-draft report is expected by June or July.

Cultural & Historic Resources

Gregg (PUD) distributed a handout that lists the steps for Section 106 Compliance. The working group developed the steps. "Step 1" is in process and a letter was developed by the working group and mailed to FERC on April 27, 2000. Gregg mentioned that "Step 5" was eliminated because a background overview was done for the Rocky Reach pool raise application and after review the working group decided that another overview is not needed. All of the steps and status of those steps are documented on the handout. Joe Kastenholz (USFS) asked if Bill Lehman's book had been completed. Gregg stated it has been completed and will be used by the Cultural Resources Working Group. Steve Lachowicz (PUD) mentioned there are many historical photographs that are included in the book; however, the book photos are not photo quality but he will try to scan the actual photos and post them onto the Web site.

2000 – 2001 Studies

Literature Review

The working group discussed the issues (lamprey, sports access in the Wenatchee River, large woody debris, sediment transport, resident predation on anadromous fish and modified Project pool operations assessment) and determined that a literature review should be conducted prior to determining if full studies are needed. Jeff has requested a scope of work and budget from the consultant, but has not received it yet.

White Sturgeon

White sturgeon was identified as a separate issue during the issue identification phase to ensure that the interests of USFWS were captured. It will be included in the fish presence and habitat surveys.

Bull Trout

Request for proposals have been sent to potential consultants and are due by May 12, 2000. It appears the window of time to tag and track bull trout for 2000 was lost due to the permit backlog issues and the unavailability of monitoring equipment. Phil (USFS) asked if there is no tagging done this year, what does that do for the future when refining methods, collecting additional data or answering questions from the first-year results. Gregg explained that two to three years of studies are adequate for this type of study and we will have 2001, 2002 and 2003.

Mule Deer Mortality

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is conducting a large scale study on mule deer mortality, but the focus for Rocky Reach relicensing is to use mule deer as an indicator species to assess the health of wildlife on the 20,000 acres of mitigation lands. Jeff mentioned that Tony Eldred (WDFW) has expressed concern as to whether the habitat mapping that has been proposed is going to be sufficient for relicensing purposes and a meeting will be held to make that determination.

Total Dissolved Gas Issues

The expectation is to develop a gas abatement plan that would achieve 110% standard. Gregg mentioned there is another issue of gas coming into the Project above 110%. Are we responsible for reducing the gas created by other dams?

Socioeconomics

The socioeconomics study kickoff meeting was held on March 28, 2000. Reed Hansen and Michael McHugh are the consultants hired to conduct the socioeconomic study. The study is split into two components. Michael will be responsible for the operating aspect that will determine the operating economics of the Project and assess direct and indirect effects on the regional economy and primary impact within the region. Reed will be responsible for the

socioeconomic component that will assess impacts to the areas around the Project. The study is currently underway and an update is expected by June 5, 2000.

Recreation Resources Inventory

The working group identified that recreation occurs beyond the parks on the reservoir. Fieldwork and literature research will be gathered to assess recreation on private lands, public access areas and trails (potential or existing). A first draft is expected in June.

Land Management

A matrix will be put together that will include all of the relevant land management plans that exist in the reservoir as well as permitting activities. When completed the group will assess the matrix to determine if there are conflicts within the plans and to ensure that the environmental resources are being considered.

Shoreline Erosion

One day of fieldwork covering one-third of the shoreline is complete and approximately 22 sites were documented. Two more days of fieldwork are expected and will be conducted late spring or early summer. Three members of the working group are conducting the preliminary work and at this point there is not a consultant involved.

Tributary Backwater

The survey is in process. After the survey is complete, a model will be prepared to evaluate the impacts of the reservoir on the Entiat River at various flows.

Cultural Resource Overview

The working group decided the existing overview is adequate for their purposes.

Working Group Updates

Natural Resources

Jeff mentioned the he will be combining water quality, fisheries, wildlife and riparian to one working group. He will allow time at each meeting for each area. He mentioned that at the next meeting they would be discussing water quality, bull trout, anadromous fish, and site selection for cover-type mapping.

Social Sciences

Michelle mentioned that an Entiat Park survey and a USFS survey are also being conducted to look at the relationship between the two to determine any occurrences of displaced recreation. The study will begin mid-May going through the summer months. The purpose is to determine if people are being turned away at the Entiat Park and having to drive up the Entiat Valley to a USFS campsite. If so, the working group will begin to discuss measures to meet the public needs.

Next Meeting

Mid-Columbia Coordinating Council – May 3, 2000
Total Dissolved Gas and Anadromous Fish Working Group – To be determined
Natural Resources Working Group – To be determined
Social Sciences Working Group – June 5, 2000
Erosion Working Group – To be announced
Cultural & Historic Working Group – To be announced
Rocky Reach Full Team – To be announced

Reference materials are posted on the web site, www.chelanpud.org/relicence. Please contact Rosana Sokolowski, (888) 663-8121, Extension 6371, if hard copies are required.

Sign-up Sheet
Distribution List
Natural Resource Study Plan Updates handout
Steps for Section 106 Compliance handout