

# Rocky Reach Fish Forum

Wednesday, 6 February 2013

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Chelan PUD Second Floor Conference Room

Wenatchee, WA



Meeting called by Steve Hemstrom  
Notes taken by Suzanne Hodgson

Chairperson: Tracy Hillman

## ***Attending Representatives:***

Hemstrom, Steve	CPUD	(509) 661-4281	steven.hemstrom@chelanpud.org
Huber, Bob (phone)	Alcoa	(509) 664-2193	bob.huber@alcoa.com
Irle, Pat (phone)	Ecology	(509) 454-7864	pir461@ecy.wa.gov
Lewis, Steve	USFWS	(509) 665-3508 x14	stephen_lewis@fws.gov
Rose, Bob (phone)	YN	(509) 865-5121	rosb@yakamafish-nsn.gov
Verhey, Patrick	WDFW	(509) 754-4624	patrick.verhey@dfw.wa.gov

## ***Attending Participants:***

Burgess, Dave (phone)	WDFW	(509) 925-1025	burgedsb@dfw.wa.gov
Clement, Mike (phone)	Grant PUD	(509) 754-5088 x2633	mclemen@gcpud.org
Hillman, Tracy	BioAnalysts	(208) 321-0363	tracy.hillman@bioanalysts.net
Hodgson, Suzanne	Chelan PUD	(509) 661-4244	suzanne.hodgson@chelanpud.org
Jackson, Chad (phone)	WDFW	(509) 754-4624 x250	chad.jackson@dfw.wa.gov
Keller, Lance	Chelan PUD	(509) 661-4299	lance.keller@chelanpud.org
Murauskas, Josh	Chelan PUD	(509) 661-4181	josh.murauskas@chelanpud.org
Nelle, RD (phone)	USFWS	(509) 548-7573	RD_Nelle@fws.gov

## Meeting Minutes

### I. Welcome and Introductions

Tracy Hillman welcomed everyone to the Rocky Reach Fish Forum (RRFF) meeting and made known that voice recording of the meeting was initiated for note-taking purposes. Suzanne Hodgson was introduced as the new note-taker.

### II. Review of Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and approved with one change. The group agreed to switch the order of the Pacific Lamprey and White Sturgeon discussions.

### III. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

The 5 December 2012 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved with edits.

### IV. White Sturgeon Updates

#### Juvenile Sturgeon Rearing

Lance Keller reported that he and Mike Clement (Grant PUD) recently visited the Columbia Basin Hatchery and noted that the juvenile sturgeon looked great. He said that there are about 5,600 juvenile sturgeon that will be pit tagged and scute marked next month (before release into Rocky Reach Reservoir), and that 65 of those fish will receive acoustic tags. Josh Murauskas stated that they will release the juveniles when the river temperature reaches about 8°C, which will likely be late April or early May. Josh asked the RRF if it would be OK to release more than 6,500 sturgeon (the maximum release target). It is likely that there will be about 7,600 sturgeon available for release. This exceeds the target by about 1,100 fish. Josh noted that the additional fish may help tighten M&E results. **After discussion, the RRF agreed to release the additional 1,100 juvenile sturgeon into Rocky Reach Reservoir.** Thus, up to a total of about 7,600 juvenile sturgeon will be released in Rocky Reach Reservoir in 2013. Bob Rose asked Josh if it would be possible to hold the extra juvenile sturgeon in the hatchery for an addition year. Releasing larger, older fish may increase the survival of released fish. Josh agreed that this may be a possibility and will contact the hatchery manager to see if it is feasible. Some thought it may not be feasible given current rearing constraints at the hatchery, and Josh noted that issues with domestication may come about with longer rearing terms.

#### Action Item:

- Josh Murauskas will evaluate the possibility of holding a small number of juvenile sturgeon within the hatchery for an addition year. He will report back to the group in March on his findings.

Josh Murauskas asked Bob Rose about the health of juvenile sturgeon at Marion Drain. Bob said that the fish are doing well and have been given a clean bill-of-health. Bob will send a report that provides an update on fish health.

#### Action Item:

- Bob Rose will send a report to Tracy Hillman on the health of juvenile sturgeon at Marion Drain. Tracy will then send the report to the RRF.

#### Juvenile Sturgeon Monitoring

Josh Murauskas reported that Blue Leaf Environmental is writing an annual report on M&E results, which should be available for review next month. The report will include information on movement, growth, habitat use, recaptures, and survival estimates for fish released in 2012. Josh also reported that Chelan PUD is coordinating its 2013 brood collection work. Josh and others will attend a meeting on this topic in Ellensburg on 25 February. He added that Chelan PUD will be funding Blue Leaf Environmental to do some recreational fishing to capture

broodstock. Josh encouraged members of the RRFF to participate with Blue Leaf in the capture of brood stock. Lastly, the group asked about the use of D-ring sampling to capture sturgeon fry for broodstock. Josh indicated that Chelan PUD will not conduct D-ring sampling in 2013, because other parties (Grant and Douglas PUD) will fund this form of sampling downstream from Rock Island Dam.

## V. Pacific Lamprey

### Relationship between Lamprey and Their Hosts

Josh Murauskas provided a PowerPoint presentation (see Attachment 1) on his recent paper published in the Transactions of the American Fisheries Society. Co-authors included Alexei Orlov (Russian Federation of Oceanography) and Kevin Siwicke (University of Alaska, Fairbanks). The paper demonstrated the recent returns of adult lampreys to the Columbia River are mostly a result of host abundance in the marine environment. Josh pointed out that his presentation was an action item requested by the RRFF during the last meeting. The group discussed some of the findings and possible trends illustrated in the presentation.

### Rocky Reach Project Effects Analysis and JFP Alternatives Recommendations

Bob Rose reported that because of other pressing issues, the parties were not able to meet to discuss actions to address NNI. They will try and meet sometime this month. Bob noted that the meeting is not exclusively JFPs, but can include any interested party. Steve Lewis added that the recommendations should be consistent with those in the Pacific Lamprey Conservation Agreement.

Steve Lewis asked if Chelan PUD had thought about the November discussion regarding NNI. Steve Hemstrom replied that NNI is only defined in terms of the HCP and that it is not clear what NNI should be. He added that there are limited data and that the PUD is looking for answers, as evidenced by Josh's presentation. He stated that he is hoping that the JFP can bring some ideas to the RRFF. Steve Lewis suggested that the discussion should move past "impact" (i.e., negative effects). Steve Hemstrom said that more specific data are needed in order to show the negative effects of Rocky Reach Dam operations on juvenile lamprey. Indeed, unbiased juvenile lamprey survival studies are not possible at this time. Steve Lewis commented that the goal should be to find middle ground. Tracy Hillman recommended that the biologists involved in lamprey efforts meet to identify various actions that meet NNI. As noted during the November 2012 meeting, those actions need to be consistent with the language in the Rocky Reach Pacific Lamprey Management Plan in the Rocky Reach Project Effects Analysis and JFP Alternatives Recommendations section.

#### Action Item:

- Bob Rose, Steve Lewis, RD Nelle, Josh Murauskas, Steve Hemstrom, and representatives from the other PUDs will meet in the next week to discuss NNI. They will share their recommendations to the RRFF in March.

### Future Planning: Potential Juvenile Lamprey Measures, Timeframe, and Budgeting

Steve Hemstrom noted that the Settlement Agreement sets out timelines for completion of projects and that it is his responsibility to keep on top of deadlines. Although the initial adult lamprey work is done (i.e., initial adult passage fixes recommended by the RRF have been installed in the Rocky Reach fishway), the Pacific Lamprey Management Plan specifies that during years two through five of the new license, Chelan PUD will “continue to measure the type and magnitude of any ongoing Project impacts on the downstream passage of juvenile lamprey, using appropriate and reasonable methodologies.”

### Adult Lamprey Monitoring Results

Tracy Hillman asked about detections of adult lamprey through the Rocky Reach Project. Steve Hemstrom reported that eight out of eight HD PIT-tagged lamprey had successfully passed Rocky Reach Dam. Lance Keller reported that four untagged adults were found in the upper fishway during dewatering for maintenance; none were found in the lower fishway. He added that the fishways are dewatered at the highest point first during the dewatering process. Tracy asked about the migration timing of the eight that were detected passing through the project. Steve Hemstrom had no details, but said that he will look into that. Tracy also asked if a tour of the fish ladder could be scheduled before re-watering. Several within the RRF expressed interest in a fishway tour.

#### Action Item:

- Steve Hemstrom will poll the RRF to schedule a tour of the Rocky Reach fishway.

## VI. Resident Fish

Tracy Hillman reported that Dave Burgess is writing the resident fish report. Steve Hemstrom added that the draft report is due on 25 February, but Dave hopes to complete the draft by 15 February. Dave said that he will use GIS to note the locations of sampling sites on maps. He also suggested that because of the high biomass of catostomids (suckers) in the reservoir, WDFW should look for ways to encourage sport fishermen to catch suckers.

#### Action Item:

- Dave Burgess will send his draft resident fish report to Chelan PUD by 15 February. The draft report will be sent to the RRF by 25 February. The RRF will have 30 days to comment on the draft report.

## VII. Water Quality

Tracy Hillman reported that Steve Hays is still analyzing water quality data and writing the report. Pat Irle said that she would like to start tracking the time when documents are due, such as the TDG alternative spillway configuration study analysis and the DO-pH study in which Steve was collecting data from various locations around the reservoir. Steve Hemstrom

indicated that he will identify and help track report deadlines.

**Action Item:**

- Steve Hemstrom will identify reporting deadlines and share those with the RRFF during the next meeting. This will include deadlines identified within the FERC Settlement Agreement as well as the TDG and DO-pH reports.

## **VIII. Next Steps**

The next RRFF meeting will be held on Wednesday, 6 March 2013, in the Chelan PUD Second Floor Conference Room from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

# Attachment 1

**Presentation by Josh Murauskas on Abundance of Pacific Lamprey in the  
Columbia River and Common Hosts in the Marine Environment**