

Rocky Reach Ute Ladies' Tresses Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Date: December 4, 2013
Time: 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Location: 2nd Floor Conference Room, Chelan PUD

Meeting called by: Von Pope, Chelan PUD

Type of meeting: RWF Meeting –Ute ladies' Tresses subcommittee

Note taker: Debi Bitterman

Attending Representatives

Name	Agency	Phone	Email
Boyer, Molly	BLM	(509) 665-2137	molly_boyter@blm.gov
Fox, Ron	WDFW	(509) 665-3383	Ron.Fox@dfw.wa.gov
Lewis, Steve	USFWS	(509) 665-3508 x14	stephen_lewis@fws.gov
Pope, Von	Chelan PUD	(509) 661-4625	von.pope@chelanpud.org

Attending Participants

Name	Agency	Phone	Email
Arnett, Joe	DNR, NHP	(360) 902-1710	Joseph.Arnett@dnr.wa.gov
Ranne, Brigitte	USDA-FS	(509) 682-4941	branne@fs.fed.us
Cordell-Stine, Kelly	Chelan PUD	(509) 661-4762	kelly.cordell-stine@chelanpud.org

Meeting Purpose: Meeting of the Ute Ladies' Tresses Subcommittee, weed control efforts, and 5-year monitoring

Minutes

Von Pope, Chelan PUD, welcomed everyone to the Rocky Reach Ute Ladies' Tresses Subcommittee (Subcommittee) meeting and made known that voice recording of the meeting was initiated for note-taking purposes.

Von noted that Joe Arnett (DNR) was going to call-in around 9:30 and that Steve Lewis (USFWS) would arrive around 9:45 am.

Review 2012 Annual Monitoring Report

This year's annual report is much larger since it includes the first year of weed control activities, the 5-year suitable habitat search and a summary of effort spent over the last 14 years. Therefore, the report was divided up into 3 chapters.

Chapter 1 – Annual Surveys

Kelly Cordell-Stine, Chelan PUD, provided a quick summary of Chapter 1 from the Rocky Reach Reservoir Ute Ladies' Tresses Annual Monitoring Report. The search for *Spiranthes* was more difficult because grasses were much taller and thicker than in previous years of surveys. Surveyors found 554 plants in 2013 within the six known sites, Chelan PUD Pond, Stocker Parcel, BLM Site, Gallagher Flat Site, Beebe Springs Natural Area, and Chelan PUD Beebe. The number of *Spiranthes* observed in 2013 was slightly above average for all years since surveys began in 2000. Kelly also noted that the Columbia River flows during 2013 were near-average. Individual *Spiranthes* located during the surveys in 2013 were marked using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit to document plant distribution at each site. Kelly provided a 2013 *Spiranthes* survey summary handout to Subcommittee attendees for their reference (included).

Chapter 2 – 2013 Weed Control

Von summarized the 2013 Invasive Plant Control Measures of Chapter 2 from the Rocky Reach Reservoir Ute Ladies' Tresses Annual Monitoring Report. Per the Ute Ladies' Tresses Integrated Terrestrial Invasive Plant Control Plan 2013 Project Proposal approved by the Subcommittee, the Chelan PUD Pond site was treated for blackberry and yellow flag iris within 100' of known *Spiranthes* locations. A certified aquatic weed contractor cut blackberry and applied Triclopyr using a wicking/daubing method, while yellow-flag iris were treated (daubed) with an approved herbicide, Glyphosate. The wicking tools allowed for direct treatment of invasive plant species with limited risk to *Spiranthes*. All the proposed treatment areas were completed per the 2013 project proposal.

The weed contractor was concerned that the blackberry cuttings will re-sprout next spring and noted that additional treatment will likely be necessary to control the blackberry by spot spraying new blackberry growth in the spring of 2014.

Chapter 3 – 5-year Monitoring

Von noted that Chapter 3 summarized the first 5-year monitoring effort and also provides a comprehensive review of *Spiranthes* monitoring along the Rocky Reach Reservoir. Defining suitable habitat along the Rocky Reach Reservoir was challenging. Chelan PUD has GIS data collected by the University of Washington in 2004 along Rocky Reach Reservoir that classified shoreline types and related them to piscivorous bird abundance along Rocky Reach Reservoir (specifically, mergansers). As the only comprehensive shoreline dataset available, it was used as the basis for the 2013 *Spiranthes* habitat model. Using the known occurrences of the *Spiranthes* and the available GIS data, Chelan PUD created a habitat model to identify additional areas to survey for *Spiranthes* in 2013 to meet the 5-year monitoring, a requirement from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The GIS model identified nine shoreline segments that had not previously been searched for *Spiranthes* and expanded the search area at 3 known sites for a total of 12 segments. Per the recommendation of the Subcommittee an additional 3 areas were added for a total of 15 shoreline segments to be searched.

All segments were searched in August of 2013. No plants were found at the new sites and 6 plants were found within 325 meters of the existing Stocker site, expanding that known population. While the shoreline attributes in GIS data used to develop the GIS model was found to be quite accurate in the habitat descriptions, the resulting model was not very successful in predicting occurrences of new *Spiranthes* locations.

Von explained to the Subcommittee with an increase in both the number of plants and sites where plants are located, the effort by Chelan PUD has increased and exceeds the annual funding of \$3,000 in the Settlement Agreement. In order to be consistent with the Rocky Reach Settlement Agreement, Von recommended conducting future *Spiranthes* surveys as follows:

- Reduce the number of annual monitoring surveys at each known site to 2 visits annually. Monitoring would be scheduled between calendar weeks 32 and 36.
- Conduct a search of suitable habitat for new populations in 2023 (10 years).

After discussion, the Subcommittee agreed that recommending to the RRWF that modifying the *Spiranthes* annual monitoring surveys would be a wise cost per effort option to implement. However, the Subcommittee thought that next suitable habitat monitoring could be done within the next 10 years, but might be best conducted when flows are low in the Columbia River. With additional monitoring, the subcommittee hopes to determine if low flow years might be better for suitable habitat monitoring. There was discussion about what low flows are and that they should be defined in advance of future suitable habitat monitoring.

2013 Weed Control Invoice

Von reviewed the 2013 weed control invoice with the Subcommittee. Chelan PUD conducted selective weed control on the Chelan PUD Pond site for Yellow-flag iris and blackberry. Blackberry stems were clipped near the base of the plant and the open stem was daubed with Triclopyr using a wick applicator. Yellow-flag iris plants were daubed with glyphosate using a wicking applicator.

After a brief discussion, the Subcommittee approved payment of the 2013 weed control invoice.

After further discussion, the Subcommittee agreed that if Subcommittee members did not reply or provide comments within 5 business days to Von on the December 4, 2013 meeting minutes, then the 2013 weed control invoice would be considered as approval for payment.

Proposed 2014 Weed Control

For 2014, the Subcommittee has approximately \$23,000 available for continued implementation of the Ute Ladies' Tresses Integrated Terrestrial Invasive Plant Control Plan.

After discussion, the Subcommittee recommended/agreed to the following 2014 weed control activities:

- Due to concern that the blackberry cuttings will re-sprout in spring 2014 at the Chelan PUD Pond site: additional treatment would be necessary to control new blackberry growth.
Treated blackberry will be visited again in April; if sufficient regrowth is present the plants will once again be wicked with Triclopyr (without cutting stems).
- If funds available: the Stocker property would be added for blackberry control treatment.
- Add flexibility into the 2014 weed control plan.
- Include approximately the cost of the weed control activities.

Brigitte Ranne, USDA-FS, suggested the Washington State Conservation Corps. as a work force to perform the 2014 weed control treatment activities. USDA-FS has used them in the past and were very satisfied with their work.

Action Item:

- Von will make edits that were provided by the Subcommittee at the meeting to the Rocky Reach Reservoir Ute Ladies' Tresses Annual Monitoring Report, 2013 Annual Summary, Weed Control, 5-year Survey and Historical Summary.
- Von will submit the final Ute Ladies' Tresses Annual Monitoring Report to USFWS, BLM WDFW and Washington Natural Heritage Program as per Rocky Reach license Article 404 by December 31, 2013.
- Von will draft a letter to FERC regarding a request to modify to a 5-10 year report including a low flow (including a definition of low flow) for consideration and email to the Subcommittee for their review/comments by January 31, 2014.
- Subcommittee will provide their comments on the draft letter to Von by February 14, 2014 (10 business days).
- Von will submit the Subcommittee's recommendations and the FERC submittal letter regarding *Spiranthes* survey modifications to the RRWF at their February meeting.
- Von will submit to the Subcommittee the 2014 Weed Control Proposal for their review/comments by January 31, 2014.
- Subcommittee will provide their comments/edits on the 2014 Weed Control Plan to Von by February 14, 2014 (10 business days).
- Brigitte will provide contact information for the Washington State Conservation Corps to Von.

Next Steps:

Next Ute Ladies' Tresses Subcommittee meeting will be Nov 12, 2014, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon.

2013 Spiranthes Surveys

Contains Privilege Information

-Do Not Release-

*Contains federally threatened plant sites and meets the privilege treatment requirements under 18 CFR 388.112(c). If you have any questions, please contact Von Pope, Wildlife Program Manager, at Chelan County PUD, (509) 661-4625 or von.pope@chelanpud.org.