

Revised Proposal on the Number of Juvenile White Sturgeon to Release into the Rocky Reach Project Area in 2015

On 28 April 2014, members of the White Sturgeon Technical Subcommittee (WSTS) met at Chelan PUD to discuss the next phase of white sturgeon hatchery supplementation into the Rocky Reach Project Area (RRPA). In attendance was WDFW (Chad Jackson and Patrick Verhey), Yakama Nation (Donella Miller via telephone), Colville Confederated Tribes (Jason McClellan), Ecology (Pat Irle), Chelan PUD (Steve Hemstrom and Lance Keller), Grant PUD (Mike Clement), Douglas PUD (Andrew Gingerich), and Blue Leaf Environmental (Corey Wright). Release year 2014 marked the end of Chelan PUD's "Phase 1" or "front-loading" of white sturgeon stocking. According to Chelan PUD's White Sturgeon Management Plan, the next phase of stocking is to be determined and approved by the Rocky Reach Fish Forum (RRFF). Development of a long-term white sturgeon stocking plan for Chelan PUD is likely to also shape Grant and Douglas PUD's Phase 2 plans.

The WSTS meeting was very productive and attendants agreed that the first step was to identify a white sturgeon recovery or population abundance target for the RRPA. Once a target has been identified, a long-term stocking plan can be developed. Attendants also agreed that it will likely take a year or two to draft and finalize a new, long-term white sturgeon hatchery supplementation plan for the RRPA. As such, the group discussed a more pressing matter, which is how many fish to stock in 2015 and perhaps in 2016. What the group agreed to, in principle, was to follow the same stocking protocol used during Phase 1 (i.e., up to 6,500/year), but with a few additional conservation oriented guidelines (see May 2014 RRFF notes, Attachment #2 for details). This interim approach would also be applied to Grant PUD's stocking program in 2015 (and perhaps 2016).

The group suggested that the interim stocking approach be presented to and approved by the RRFF and Priest Rapids Fish Forum (PRFF) prior to 2014 brood stocking and spawning activities. This task did not occur until well after white sturgeon had hatched. As such, the original interim stocking approach language was modified to reflect known numbers and diversity available in state and tribal hatcheries. Provided below is the modified white sturgeon stocking strategy proposed for release year 2015.

2015 White Sturgeon Stocking Agreement (Rocky Reach Project Area):

- I. **Chelan PUD currently has 40 half-sibling families available for stocking.**
- II. **Based off available half-sibling families in the hatchery, the RRFF agrees (through unanimous vote) to stock 6,500 age-1 juvenile white sturgeon into the Rocky Reach Project Area in 2015 provided:**
 - i. **≥18 half-sibling families are available at the time of release.**
 - ii. **Half-sibling equalization is reflected in the release to the greatest extent possible.**

- III. **If <18 half-sibling families are available at the time of release, a reduced and pro-rated release strategy will be employed.**
 - i. **For example: If 10 half-sibling families are available then the 2015 release would be 3,610 age-1 juvenile white sturgeon (6,500/18 half-sibling families = 361 fish/half-sibling family; 361 fish/half-sibling family X 10 half-sibling families = 3,610 stocking rate)**
- IV. **This white sturgeon stocking agreement only affects release year 2015 and does not have any bearing on future releases.**