



Grant County
PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT
Excellence in Service and Leadership

CONFERENCE CALL

PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee Meeting

Tuesday, October 3, 2006
9:00 - 12:00
(Shannon will provide call in numbers)

PR Hatchery Subcommittee Members

Kris Petersen, NMFS	Jerry Marco, CCT
Tom Scribner, Keely Murdoch YN	Kirk Truscott, WDFW
Dave Carie, USFWS	Russell Langshaw, GCPUD
Carl Merkle, CTUIR	Denny Rohr, Facilitator

MEETING AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - A. June 22, 2006 (need approval of Truscott and Petersen)
 - B. July 20, 2006
 - C. August 17, 2006
 - D. August 26, 2006 Public Outreach Meeting
- III. Review of August 26th Public Outreach Meeting
- IV. Discussion of Newsletter
- V. Nason Creek
 - A. Weir Update
 - B. Property Update
- VI. Discussion of Summer Chinook Program
- VII. Discussion of Steelhead Program
- VIII. White River
 - A. Marking Update: Aquaseed, Little White Salmon
 - B. Unfertilized Eggs Transfer
 - C. LWSNFH Potential Rearing Capacity
 - D. Alternative Release Strategies
 - E. HGMP/Permit Update
 - F. Net Pens Update
 - G. Egg Pumping
 - H. M&E Discussion

- I. JFP discussions with Grant PUD
- IX. PRCC Request to Discuss Steelhead Survival Study Fish
- X. REVIEW of Meeting Schedule for 2006
 - A. October 19th, SeaTac
 - B. November 16th, SeaTac
 - C. December 21st, SeaTac

ATTENDEES: Dave Carie, USFWS; Jerry Marco, CCT; Kris Petersen, NMFS; Tom Scribner, YN; Kirk Truscott, WDFW; Tom Dresser, Grant PUD; Russell Langshaw, Grant PUD; Shannon Lowry, Grant PUD; Denny Rohr, facilitator.

DECISION SUMMARY:

- PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee members agreed that the words "...and future" will be removed from the fourth paragraph of the Douglas Hatchery Sharing Agreement memorandum requesting formal approval to implement rearing programs of 100,000 steelhead and 201,000 spring Chinook at Douglas PUD's Methow and Wells hatchery facilities for Brood Year 2006. The sentence now reads, *"In September 2004, the Habitat Conservation Plan and Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee hatchery subcommittees agreed on the framework regarding current plans for Douglas PUD to raise mitigation and study fish for Grant PUD."* With those words removed, the Douglas Hatchery Sharing Agreement memorandum was approved by all subcommittee members.
- The PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee agreed that 150,000 steelhead can be differentially marked and moved from Wells Hatchery to Ringold Hatchery for final rearing to the smolt stage and released if an acceptable alternative between Grant PUD and WDFW is not reached.

DISTRIBUTED ITEMS:

- Douglas Hatchery Sharing Agreement Memorandum

FINAL MEETING MINUTES

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Rohr welcomed subcommittee members to the call.
- II. **Approval of Meeting Minutes –approved pending K. Truscott's edits (sent following the conference call)**
 - A. June 22, 2006
 - B. July 20, 2006
 - C. August 17, 2006
 - D. August 26, 2006 public outreach meeting
- III. **Douglas Hatchery Sharing Agreement** – PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee members agreed that the words "...and future" will be removed from the fourth paragraph of the Douglas Hatchery Sharing Agreement memorandum requesting formal approval to implement rearing programs of 100,000 steelhead and 201,000 spring Chinook at Douglas PUD's Methow and Wells

hatchery facilities for Brood Year 2006. The sentence now reads, *"In September 2004, the Habitat Conservation Plan and Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee hatchery subcommittees agreed on the framework regarding current plans for Douglas PUD to raise mitigation and study fish for Grant PUD."* With those words removed, the Douglas Hatchery Sharing Agreement memorandum was approved by all subcommittee members.

- IV. **Review of August 26 Public Outreach Meeting & discussion of newsletter** – Marco requested more time to provide comments on future newsletters. Petersen requested that scheduling a public meeting be done as soon as possible to increase the likelihood of her attendance. HSC members will work by e-mail to schedule a future meeting. Petersen noted that the Aug. 26 meeting went very well, but was dismayed by an article about the meeting which ran in the Leavenworth Echo. Petersen requested the meeting minutes by sent to the writer of that article.

- V. **Independent scientific review** – Marco stated his concern that without a follow-up with the public on the issue of independent scientific review of the White River spring Chinook supplementation program, further public relation efforts may be compromised. Petersen stated that she had spoken with assistant regional administrator Rob Walton, but there has not been time to work through the issue with internal NMFS staff. Langshaw asked whether NMFS had responded to Chelan County's request for an independent scientific review of the program. Petersen stated that, to her knowledge, NMFS has not responded. Truscott stated that a timely response is necessary, but also noted that a review report could be a long way off. Truscott also stated the importance of stating to the public that the Waldo review would in fact be independent and to provide the credentials of the reviewers who would be involved with that process. Marco noted that the success of the HSC's public outreach efforts is directly related to its response to the question of independent scientific review. Langshaw asked whether it would be appropriate for Waldo to provide information about the review at the next public meeting. Rohr noted that the Waldo group would not be reviewing the Nason/White River basins until next spring. Both Petersen and Rohr stated they would discuss the issue with NOAA regional director Rob Walton within the next few days.

- VI. **Nason Creek** –
 - A. Weir Update – Grant PUD staff contacted WSDOT regarding the status of their review of the weir plans. WSDOT has not reviewed the plans yet but should soon.
 - B. Property Update – Well drillers will be on site next week to begin drilling the test wells. Clean-up and maintenance of the property was completed by Grant PUD staff to address fire concerns expressed by neighbors attending the public meeting in August.

- VII. **Discussion of Summer Chinook Program** - Langshaw asked whether the Joint Fishery Parties (JFP) has discussed Grant PUD's request to raise summer Chinook at Chief Joseph Hatchery in a cooperative agreement between Grant PUD and the Colville Confederated Tribes. Marco stated that

the issue had not yet been discussed among the JFP. Rohr will contact Marco following the conference call to schedule a meeting prior to the next PRCC HSC meeting.

- VIII. **Discussion of Steelhead Program** – This discussion will occur by the JFP at the same time as the summer Chinook program (see above).
- IX. **PRCC Request to Discuss Steelhead Survival Study Fish** – The PRCC agreed in July 2006 that run-of-river fish would be used for the 2007 steelhead survival study, rather than hatchery fish. WDFW is proposing that because the 150,000 hatchery steelhead are not needed for the 2007 study, Grant PUD fund rearing of the fish at Ringold Hatchery. Truscott explained that Wells Hatchery is running out of water and the steelhead need to be moved as soon as possible. Langshaw noted that Grant PUD is uncomfortable with paying for rearing the fish which will ultimately be released for WDFW fishery programs. Truscott noted that because the eggs were originally earmarked for Grant PUD's survival studies, it is the District's obligation to rear them to smolt stage and then release. Dresser requested that the HSC work with Grant PUD to find an alternative to raising the fish for fishery program purposes, noting if the District agrees to fund rearing of the fish, it will not get credit for its fish mitigation requirements under WDFW's proposal. Truscott stated that discussion needed to occur immediately to determine any possible alternatives and requested agreement from the HSC that the fish could go to Ringold Hatchery for full rearing unless an acceptable alternative is identified. Petersen noted that prior agreements were made that Grant PUD would rear fish intended for the District's survival studies to the smolt stage. Dresser, Langshaw and Truscott will discuss the issue prior to the next HSC meeting. Truscott stated that a decision is needed within the next two weeks. Dresser noted that Grant PUD is committed to paying for the fish while they are at Wells. **The PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee approved the differential marking and transfer of 150,000 steelhead from Wells Hatchery to Ringold Hatchery for final smolt-stage rearing and release if an acceptable alternative between Grant PUD and WDFW is not reached.**
- X. **White River**
- A. **Marking Update:** AquaSeed, Little White Salmon – White River fish at Little White Salmon (LWH) & AquaSeed were differentially marked by location, stated Langshaw, and are on schedule for PIT-tagging this fall. Langshaw is working on a proposal with John Skalski to determine the appropriate number of fish to be tagged for release evaluations.
- B. **Unfertilized Eggs Transfer:** The first group of eggs was transferred from AquaSeed to Little White Salmon last week, with the second group likely moved this week. Langshaw noted that the eggs are eyeing at the rate in which they were collected. There are approximately 380,000 eggs and staff is anticipating another 15,000 in the next couple of weeks. About 10% of the eggs are in the low and below ELISA groups. The remaining 90% are moderate to high ELISA, with 50% of those in the high group (these percentages are only through first three spawnings). Langshaw noted that the ELISA levels are much higher than last year. Truscott

explained that early spawning occurred in the four-year-old females, many of which had swollen kidneys. Three-year-old females are currently being spawned and the disease levels look better, noted Truscott. Eye-up on first spawning from the first five females was 45% at LWS and 61% at AquaSeed. Langshaw noted that those numbers reflect a much lower rate than previous years but are from only 2% of the total population. If the trend continues throughout spawning we will have far fewer smolts than expected. However, the very first and very last spawners are suspect and usually different than the rest of the population.

- C. **LWSNFH Potential Rearing Capacity:** LWS has agreed to rear the moderate and high ELISA level fish as long as space is available, stated Langshaw. LWS staff will maintain the low rearing density and will raise all fish through marking. After which, any fish beyond 150,000 smolts will be released based on the yet to be developed alternative release strategy.
- D. **HGMP/Permit Update:** Petersen noted that the NEPA analysis has been through NMFS general council and NEPA coordinator review. Petersen is currently addressing their comments and hopes to have them completed later this week, noting the transmittal memo has been prepared for submission to the Federal Register. Petersen will let the public know as soon as the permit is transmitted and posted to the Federal Register, which begins the public comment period.
- E. **Net Pens Update:** Truscott has not been updated by WDOE on net pen status.
- F. **Egg Pumping:** Because a permit is not in place, eggs will not be pumped. Langshaw noted that as an alternative, fry will be collected. Truscott stated that most of the fish identified are of natural origin. Exact locations are being determined for fry collection purposes, noted Truscott. Petersen stated that numbers provided by Andrew Murdoch several weeks ago, indicated that 30 to 32 redds were identified as natural origin or natural origin/unknown. At least four were hatchery origin. Petersen stated that Grant PUD would fund fry trapping and that WDFW needs to prepare for fry collection whether directly from redds or smolt trapping. Petersen stated that Andrew Murdoch is doing survey work assessing location of each redd to determine whether sites would be appropriate for redd capping. Truscott has requested Murdoch put together a proposal for collection. Langshaw noted that once Murdoch's proposal is received, the HSC will discuss (by e-mail or conference call) options on a redd-by-redd basis.
- G. **M&E Discussion** – Langshaw discussed Grant PUD's proposed alternatives to reference streams with the HETT. HETT members had concerns about viability of the proposal and Grant PUD will keep the group updated on further development of the proposed alternative. Scribner asked if an official letter from the HETT commenting on the proposal had been received by Grant PUD. Langshaw stated he had seen an e-mail which outlined the concerns with the proposal. Scribner noted his appreciation that the technical discussion regarding the proposal occurred at the HETT level and indicated that it is the appropriate level for further discussion. The HSC was supportive of that approach.

- H. **JFP discussions with Grant PUD** – Grant PUD will participate in JFP discussions on a case-by-case basis. Langshaw asked if upcoming discussion concerning summer Chinook and steelhead programs could occur with Grant PUD present. Petersen and Truscott noted that the JFP will need to meet independently of Grant PUD to discuss both Grant PUD’s summer Chinook and steelhead programs.
- I. **Online database for WR program** – Langshaw will check on the progress of the database with Chris Carlson. Truscott explained that WDFW needs access to the database for its reports and may preclude WDFW meeting its contractual report obligations (annual report) if the database is unavailable in a timely period. Langshaw will contact Truscott after he receives the information.
- J.
- XI. **REVIEW of Meeting Schedule for 2006**
 - A. October 19 (no meeting, conference call if necessary for steelhead discussion, marking proposal)
 - B. November 16, Wenatchee
 - C. December 21, SeaTac