

# PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee Newsletter

April 2007



## Introduction

The Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee\* (PRCC) Hatchery Subcommittee is committed to guiding hatchery programs in a manner consistent with plans to restore Endangered Upper Columbia River (UCR) spring Chinook salmon in the White River and Nason Creek. Public involvement is an important aspect of salmon recovery and it is the PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee's goal to provide regular updates on activities in the Nason Creek and White River areas through public meetings, Web site updates ([www.gcpud.org/stewardship/whiteriver.html](http://www.gcpud.org/stewardship/whiteriver.html)) and regular newsletters.

The White River and Nason Creek spring Chinook supplementation programs are two of the activities described as mitigation responsibilities of Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County (Grant PUD) in an interim Biological Opinion issued in May 2004 by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission issued an order in December 2004 to include the actions identified in the Biological Opinion as conditions of the Priest Rapids Project license.

## White River update

White River UCR spring Chinook are an important component of the Wenatchee Basin anadromous fish population. This population of fish is within the UCR spring Chinook Evolutionary Significant Unit (ESU) which has declined and is listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Fish resource managers are working diligently to increase the number of White River spring Chinook spawners in the natural environment, while maintaining the spatial and genetic diversity of the Wenatchee spring Chinook population.

While the requirement for the White River program originally contemplated development of conventional hatchery facilities, the PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee has listened closely to the concerns of interested citizens, and is now working to

develop designs with more limited impacts to other environmental resources. The PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee is interested in public input on development of spring Chinook acclimation, adult collection and release facilities, and has scheduled public meetings for May and July 2007 (see below).

### ESA Section 10 Permit

An Endangered Species Act Section 10 Permit for the White River program is pending and is anticipated to be issued soon by NMFS. This three-year permit authorizes Grant PUD, the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, and the Yakama Nation to collect, rear, release and monitor White River spring Chinook.

As an interim measure, NMFS initiated emergency consultation on March 26, 2007 authorizing the transfer of approximately 60,000 White River spring Chinook to net pens on Lake Wenatchee. The permit also authorized the holding of those fish in the net pens for the next several weeks.

This ESA Section 10 permit will allow program activities in the short term while a Hatchery and Genetic Management Plan for White River spring Chinook is developed by the PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee. The plan will provide full details on the White River spring Chinook program and will be evaluated under the ESA and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

### Activities Planned for this Spring

Grant PUD and the Yakama Nation will conduct fish monitoring activities in the White River starting this spring. As part of a monitoring and evaluation program, a rotary screw trap will be installed in the White River to help enumerate emigrating juvenile White River spring Chinook as they move downstream. The trap will be located downstream of the Sears Creek Bridge and may remain in operation until late fall.

Additionally, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) crews will collect spring Chinook fry. If genetic analysis indicates these fry are of White River origin, the collected fry will be

\*Members of the PRCC include NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service, Colville Confederated Tribes, Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, and Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County.

incorporated into the captive broodstock part of the supplementation program.

#### Net Pen Acclimation and Release

Approximately 60,000 White River spring Chinook juveniles are being acclimated for up to eight weeks in net pens in Lake Wenatchee prior to their May 2007 release into the lake near the mouth of the White River. This three-year temporary acclimation/rearing program is the best available alternative until acclimation facilities can be developed on the White River. WDFW transferred the fish this month to the net pens in Lake Wenatchee from the Little White Salmon National Fish Hatchery and AquaSeed Corp. Approximately 150,000 additional subyearling spring Chinook will be planted directly into the White River over two days during the next few weeks.

## **Nason Creek Update**

#### Cascade Gardens Property Water Evaluation

Current plans for the Cascade Gardens property (3 acres lying in Section 12, Township 26N, Range 16 E.W.M., in Chelan County, adjacent to Nason Creek) include rearing and acclimation facilities for the Nason Creek spring Chinook supplementation program. Blue Star Inc. well drillers have conducted a pump test on the first of two wells. Water quality samples were taken from the well and creek, and those samples were analyzed. Heavy snow in the vicinity of the second well has precluded access to the site and as a result testing has been delayed until later in spring 2007. Additional water quality samples will be collected at that time.

#### Surveys

Archaeological surveys are now complete for Nason Creek properties. No archaeological material was found. Land surveys by Jacobs Civil are scheduled for the future.

#### Permitting

A final Determination of Non-Significance and an environmental checklist for a hydro-geologic assessment of water quality and quantity on a portion of a 20-acre parcel that is planned for an acclimation pond (Section 3, Township 26N, Range 16 E.W.M., Chelan County) near Nason Creek has been submitted to the Washington State Department of Ecology. The State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) checklist provided information regarding hydro-geologic assessment methods to measure water quality and quantity for a particular type of water supply system at the site. For further information about this evaluation and the resulting Determination of Non-Significance, visit

the Web site

[www.gcpud.org/stewardship/whiteriver.html](http://www.gcpud.org/stewardship/whiteriver.html). A Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA) has also been submitted.

Grant PUD requested that Chelan County grant a vacation of right of way (Day Street) on the Cascade Gardens property. At a public hearing held March 20, 2007, the Chelan County Commissioners tabled the decision pending Grant PUD's demonstration of a clear benefit from the Nason Creek Supplementation Program to the citizens of Chelan County.

#### Property Needed

The PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee continues to seek property appropriate for facilities for the acclimation and release of White River spring Chinook, and possible incubation, rearing, acclimation and release of Nason Creek spring Chinook. Property owners interested in sale, lease, or partnering in these programs can contact Grant PUD Lands Specialist Sheryl Dotson at 509-754-5014 or 750-1988.

#### **Public Meeting**

The PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee invites you to a public meeting concerning activities related to the Nason Creek and White River spring Chinook supplementation programs. The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 17 in the Leavenworth, WA area. Time and specific location will be announced soon.

The PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee is committed to involving the public and incorporating their input on how best to implement ongoing or upcoming UCR spring Chinook supplementation programs for the White River and Nason Creek. The meeting will be the third held in the past year to provide information and to solicit comment on both the White River and Nason Creek programs.

The May 17 meeting is designed to gather input from local stakeholders concerning the specifics of implementing each program, including planned activities, property location, and potential designs. If you are interested in participating in this process, please consider attending this meeting. If you are unable to attend, but you (or someone you know) would like to participate in this effort, please call Sarah Morford at (509) 754-6633.