



White River & Nason Creek WORKING GROUP MEETING

Priest Rapids Hatchery Subcommittee

Thursday, October 18, 2007

Howard Johnson Motel Conference Room

Leavenworth, WA

PR Hatchery Sub Committee Members

Kris Petersen, NMFS

Tom Scribner, Keely Murdoch, YN

Dave Carie, USFWS

Carl Merkle, CTUIR

Jerry Marco, CCT

Kirk Truscott, WDFW

Russell Langshaw, GPUD

Denny Rohr, Facilitator

Attendees (*Denotes PRCC HSC member):

*Kirk Truscott, WDFW

*Russell Langshaw, Grant PUD

*Jerry Marco, CCT (by phone)

Greg Ferguson, Sea Springs, Inc.

*Curt Dotson, Grant PUD

Denny Rohr, facilitator

Jon Soest, NCW Audubon Society

Tom Clark, Advocate

Shannon Lowry, Grant PUD

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Rohr welcomed attendees.
- II. **Agenda Review** – Clark requested that a tribal-run hatchery in the White River and promotion of a moratorium on sport and commercial fishing of anadromous fish throughout Washington State be added to the agenda. Soest requested a summary of the Wenatchee Watershed Planning Unit meeting held October 17th also be added.
- III. **Tribal-run White River hatchery proposal** – Clark is proposing the option of tribes taking the lead on the White River spring Chinook program because of their standing in the region for fish recovery. Langshaw stated there are positive things about the approach and encouraged Clark to continue thinking “outside the box” on recovery of White River spring Chinook. In prior discussion, Langshaw explained to Clark that there are legal reasons why Grant PUD cannot use this type of approach. Soest noted that most of what is proposed in terms of facilities for the White River can be conducted at Tumwater Dam, noting that it doesn’t matter who runs a hatchery that doesn’t help wild fish. Soest noted a recent science article discussing a second-generation steelhead hatchery population with a reduced ability to reproduce. Clark noted that it pays to err on the side of caution when a wild population return is reduced to single digits, as it is in the White River. Truscott noted that in some instances there is a balance between keeping a population afloat from an abundance standpoint with doing nothing because a single study indicates reduced reproduction among a single population. Clark noted that there are arguments of whether wild and hatchery fish are the same or if there are genetic markers in separate tributary fish of the same species. There are numerous examples of how adaptable salmon are, stated Langshaw, noting that if a population is given sufficient opportunity to succeed, it can. Clark stated his belief that all

possibilities to recover the species need to be explored. Truscott noted that a pedigree analysis of Wenatchee UCR spring Chinook is being conducted and this was the first year that juvenile information could be collected from naturally spawning hatchery fish. With enough years of data, an assessment can be made on reproductive success. Soest asked if there is any university participation in that assessment. Truscott replied that there is not but that the NOAA Science Center is also participating in the study.

- IV. Moratorium on sport fishing of anadromous fish proposal** - Clark stated that he has advocated for many years a moratorium on sport and commercial fishing of several age classes of anadromous fish throughout Washington State, noting that increasing fish numbers could be assisted by such a moratorium.
- V. Wenatchee Watershed Planning Unit Meeting** – Soest noted the absence of Grant PUD at the Oct. 17 WWPU meeting. A White River update was presented at the WWPU meeting by Soest and Chelan County’s Mike Kaputa. Vaughan Marable of the USFS was present at the meeting and clarified that an official request for a conditional-use permit for acclimation at RM 10.5 has not yet been received from Grant PUD (clearing up earlier misinformation provided to Soest). Langshaw noted that Grant PUD met with USFS with an informal proposal for over-winter acclimation site at RM 10.5 on the White River. A tour is scheduled next week (Tuesday, Oct. 23 and Friday, Oct. 26-tentative). Members of the working group are invited to attend the tour. Following the tour, a formal request to use the site will be sent to the USFS.

Update: Requested Policy Meeting – Rohr distributed a copy of a letter sent by the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust and Chelan County to NMFS and WDFW requesting a policy meeting concerning the White River spring Chinook program. Rohr stated he believes a response is being drafted. Soest noted that the PRCC HSC was notified that the letter was being sent. No hatchery facility has been proposed for the White River, stated Ferguson, noting the erroneous multiple references to a “hatchery” in the letter. Soest stated he believes those who oppose the program know that it does not involve a hatchery facility. Clark suggested the invitation also be extended to State Sen. Linda Evans-Parlette. Clark also questioned why the Wild Fish Conservancy did not sign the letter. Rohr noted that Ramon Vanden Brulle resigned from the WFC, but that Nick Gayeski is still a participant in the working group (not in attendance at this meeting). Soest and Clark discussed the work Chelan County has done to restore fish in the Wenatchee Basin. Soest noted the Wild Fish Conservancy has made a number of useful suggestions for the draft copy of the White River HGMP.

VI. White River and Nason Creek Activities

- A. Status Review -
- B. Update: McComas Property – No activities are anticipated in the foreseeable future. Soest noted that the property shows evidence of flood movement at the back of the property. Langshaw stated the channel cuts through and connects to a pond on an adjacent property. Soest believes the water is not moving to where the ponds are. An evaluation of water movement will be done if activities occur on the property, stated Langshaw, noting pressure transducers are being installed to gauge water levels near the site when flooding occurs. Hydraulic modeling may be looked at to see what the water does during different flows. Langshaw stated that the sight was recently cleaned of apple bins, an old corral, and fencing. The ponds could potentially be excavated to work within the wetland, stated Clark, citing an example.
- C. Update: White River, RM 10.5 Net Pens – Rohr noted the agenda should read “block” or “enclosure” nets. Net pens will not be used. Langshaw showed a conceptual diagram of the proposed acclimation site and the approach which would be used to transfer fish to the site. Block nets are an enclosure which separate and protect the released fish from wild fish in the side channel. Langshaw stated that approximately 20,000 fish would be

moved from tanks to the site by flushing them through a pipe (approximately 700 feet from the road to the net enclosure). A staff member will be on site to feed the fish and to watch that predators or other wildlife don't become entangled in the 200-foot net. The fish will be evaluated as they migrate from the stream and when they return in the future. The evaluation is part of a long-term monitoring program, though the current proposal is for spring 2008 only, stated Langshaw. A conditional-use permit will be requested from USFS to conduct the activity. Soest asked if the timing will overlap any potential flooding. During the time of year required for acclimation and release there is always the possibility of flooding, stated Langshaw noting the pipe would only be there for a day or two as the transfer occurs and would then be removed. If flooding occurs, the number one priority would be removing the enclosure net to prevent any potential impact to fish and wildlife. Ferguson noted that only 10 pounds of feed would be required each day and that the location is only a test site. No machinery would be required for the project. Langshaw reiterated his invitation to Soest, Clark and others to attend the tour on the afternoon of Oct. 23, noting he will e-mail or call with more specific logistical information. Truscott noted that the PRCC HSC is making every effort to minimize impact from the project. The activity will be covered under both the Section 10 permit and under the Bull Trout BiOp for the Priest Rapids Project, in addition to a JARPA, which will be submitted prior to activities being conducted.

- D. Other: Rotary screw traps are still being operated. About 42 White River spring Chinook were trapped in September, with 34 of those released as hatchery fish in spring 2007. On Nason Creek, redds are being marked and brood will be collected for BY07 in December-January, stated Langshaw. A well has been drilled on property in Nason Creek, but indicates insufficient water potential. A pump test will be conducted which will help evaluate which facilities would be appropriate for the site.

VII. White River and Nason Creek HGMPs -

- A. Update – Finalization of the HGMPs is in process. Determinations on broodstock management are being discussed by the JFP. Submission may be delayed by two to three months until those decisions can be made by the Joint Fishery Parties. However, the delay doesn't affect activities occurring for the next couple of years. Langshaw noted that Grant PUD is required to continue activities because fish are on station and that the HGMP will clarify the program for future operations and permits.
- B. Schedule (see above)

VIII. Next Public Meeting Schedule – Rohr noted that no new information is available and therefore a public meeting has not been scheduled. Soest agreed that such an approach is appropriate. Langshaw stated that for a public meeting to be meaningful, the request for a policy meeting and HGMP submission need to be addressed. Clark suggested requesting an interview with the Wenatchee World to address any misperceptions which may arise.

IX. Other – Rohr asked participants how often they would like working group meetings held. Rohr suggested holding working group sessions every other month. Clark and Soest agreed with the change. Rohr stated that meetings could be held more often when needed, as new information is available. Truscott also suggested that clarification on information be requested from the PRCC HSC members.

X. Next Meeting: December 2007, Leavenworth