



FINAL CONFERENCE CALL MINUTES

Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee
Thursday, Nov. 1

PRCC Committee Members

Scott Carlon/Bryan Nordlund, NMFS	Jim Craig, USFWS
Jerry Marco, CCT	Tom Dresser/Curt Dotson, GCPUD
Steve Parker/Bob Rose, YN	Carl Merkle, CTUIR
Carmen Andonaegui, WDFW	Denny Rohr, Facilitator

ATTENDEES (*denotes PRCC representative):

*Scott Carlon, NMFS	Curt Dotson, Grant PUD
Bryan Nordlund, NMFS	Shannon Lowry, Grant PUD
*Carmen Andonaegui, WDFW	
*Jerry Marco, CCT	
*Bob Rose, YN	
Denny Rohr, facilitator	

Action items:

1. Rohr reminded participants that contractor questions concerning the predator study proposals are due by noon on Friday, Nov. 2. Dotson noted questions from USFWS and WDFW have been received.
2. Broodstock collection at the Priest Rapids Hatchery, and OLAFT and Priest Rapids Dam left bank fish ladder counts, in addition to Bonneville Dam egg collection numbers, will be distributed by Dotson each Tuesday. Dotson will keep members notified of the results of those efforts and provide a final report of 2007 collection in comparison to mitigation requirements.
3. Dotson will notify David Benner of the Fish Passage Center concerning the PRCC decision to close the Priest Rapids Dam Right Bank Fish Ladder prior to the Nov. 2, 2007 ladder inspection.

Decision summary:

- ◆ Members approved closing the Priest Rapids Dam Right Bank Fish Ladder to increase efficiency of collection at the Priest Rapids Dam Off-Ladder Adult Fish Trap (OLAFT).
- ◆ The Priest Rapids Dam Right Bank Fish Ladder will be left in “standby” position until fall Chinook runs are completed in the case it may need to be re-opened.

Review/Discussion of Right Bank Closure Data/Information and Next Steps – Dotson distributed Priest Rapids Dam (PRD) left bank fish ladder counts through Oct. 29, 2007. Data was not yet available for Oct. 30 and Oct. 31. The PRD right bank fish ladder was closed on Oct. 25. Counts indicate the number of adults passing the dam was consistent following right bank closure, and there appears to have been no delay due to the closure. Dotson noted that Grant PUD’s mitigation requirement is for 5,750,000 eggs and that there is currently a 3,520,785 shortfall. Only 471 hens have been collected to date (roughly one-third of what is necessary). A total of 2 million eggs may be provided by Bonneville Hatchery, still leaving Grant PUD short by 1.5 million. In analyzing the numbers, closing the right bank ladder appears to have been effective in Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee
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increasing number of females collected by WDFW at the OLAFT, stated Dotson. Based on the number fish passing PRD, no significant delay in fish passage appears to be occurring when the right bank fish ladder is closed, Dotson noted. Marco asked what the projected forecast for fall Chinook over Bonneville is for this year. Dotson stated while there were isolated days where the counts were higher than the day-by-day 10-year average, in the last few days it has been significantly lower, indicating the run is slowing down. Marco asked what the history of broodstock returning to Priest Rapids Hatchery (PRH) is. Do they see a reduction in broodstock collection occurring during last 1/3 of the run, in November? What's the background? Nordlund noted that the projected 118,500 Upriver Bright fall Chinook returns for 2007 is roughly half of the 10-year average over Bonneville Dam, but slightly more than the 2006 return. The McNary Dam count was 57,000 so far in 2007 (also half of what was projected). Dotson noted that Vernita Bar Counts over the last three weekends have only revealed three redds. Deep-water redds are occurring, but not higher on the banks, stated Dotson, which could indicate that the runs are either low or late. Grant PUD will likely not meet its fall Chinook mitigation numbers this year, stated Dotson. Rose recommended continued closure of the PRD right bank fish ladder with collection of as many fish as possible at the Off-Ladder Adult Fish Trap (OLAFT) located on the left bank of PRD. Dotson noted that Grant PUD is doing everything possible to secure the highest number of eggs from other facilities to meet its mitigation requirements. Carlon stated he is supportive of closing the PRD right bank ladder. Andonaegui agreed, noting that it doesn't appear as if a delay is occurring with the right bank ladder closed and that by trapping at the OLAFT, each female results in 4,500 eggs. Marco noted it appears by Bonneville counts that the run is near its end for the season and asked if there will be criticism by the HSRG on how hatcheries are managed in terms of focusing on egg production requirements. Marco also noted the inconsistency in fall Chinook counts at Wanapum Dam (17,000) and Rock Island Dam (3,000). Marco noted his support of closing the right bank to increase collection efficiency at the OLAFT. Dotson agreed. **Members approved closing the Priest Rapids Dam Right Bank Fish Ladder to increase efficiency of collection at the PRD Off-Ladder Adult Fish Trap.** Dotson noted that WDFW has been very involved with Grant PUD in locating additional eggs from other facilities. **Dotson will keep members notified of the results of those efforts and provide a final report of 2007 collection in comparison to mitigation requirements. Broodstock collection at the Priest Rapids Hatchery, and OLAFT and Priest Rapids Dam left bank fish ladder counts, in addition to Bonneville Dam egg collection numbers, will be distributed by Dotson each Tuesday. Nordlund requested that David Benner of the FPC be contacted during the PRCC decision concerning closure of the PRD right bank ladder closure.** Because only 35 percent of the needed collection has occurred, Marco suggested as many females as possible be collected at both the PRH volunteer trap and the Priest Rapids Dam OLAFT. Once that effort appears to be exhausted, the balance of required eggs could be obtained from Bonneville. Andonaegui noted that 1.7 million eggs are still needed for the John Day mitigation program, which makes collecting as many eggs as possible from Bonneville necessary, noting that all returns to PRH and the PRD OLAFT would be used for the Priest Rapids fall Chinook program. Andonaegui noted that collection at the PRH volunteer trap is usually completed by the end of the second week in November. Dotson noted Grant PUD's support of keeping the traps open as long as necessary. Normal maintenance on the right bank ladder generally occurs in early December, stated Dotson, noting the schedule will stand, even with early closure, and the ladder will be left in "standby" position in the case it may need to be re-opened. Rohr asked if members had input on what happens if mitigation numbers fall short. Dotson noted that the bottom line is that if the fish are not in the system, mitigation numbers cannot be met in this low-return year. Dotson noted that historically the ladders would be going off-line for maintenance following the fall Chinook run. WDFW will address spawning issues at PRH.