

FINAL MEETING MINUTES

Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee

Wednesday, August 29, 2007

9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

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 member or alternate):

*Bryan Nordlund, NMFS	*Carmen Andonaegui, WDFW
*Scott Carlon, NMFS	*Curt Dotson, Grant PUD
*Jerry Marco, CCT	Ben Lenz, Grant PUD (by phone)
*Jim Craig, USFWS	Denny Rohr, Facilitator
*Bob Rose, YN	Shannon Lowry, Grant PUD

Distributed items:

- Spreadsheet of average of 12 highest hourly TDG levels for 2007 fish spill season at WAN and PR dams
- Photos of the Wanapum TG-12 east trunion and construction work at Wanapum Future Unit Fish Bypass.
- July and August fish counts at Wanapum and Priest Rapids dams.
- Draft copy of request for proposals for professional environmental services for the WDFW-sponsored NNI-funded predation study.
- Ben Lenz comments to predation study RFP.
- Habitat Funds account balances spreadsheet.
- Draft NNI Fund Protocols
- PRCC HSC SOA 2007-16 (Grant PUD coho obligation)
- Summary of the 2007 USGS observations and recommendations for Grant PUD study fish source and tagging techniques.

Action items:

- Dotson and Rohr will provide updates on efforts to coordinate use of regional study fish tag information at the September PRCC meeting.
- Dotson will follow-up with HTI on potential use of hydro-acoustic technology for fish counting as a back up to counts at the Wanapum Dam ladder.
- Grant PUD will establish video fish count quality control protocols and report those protocols to the PRCC for follow-up recommendations
- Grant PUD will compare Wanapum and Priest Rapids fish count numbers with Rock Island Dam counts.

- Carlon will follow-up on the report that efforts by NOAA Fisheries to increase the tern population in the Potholes/Goose Island area is taking place, which could potentially be having an effect on fish survival numbers.
- Following PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee approval of SOA 2007-16 (Grant PUD coho obligation) in September, the PRCC will be requested to vote by e-mail.
- Rohr will review Habitat Funding Project Proposal Specification Sheet and revise it as appropriate for the NNI funding process.
- Rohr will develop a reporting protocol for PRCC Habitat Funds commitments and expenditures.
- Grant PUD will process the predator study RFP through its contracting system.
- Andonaegui will report back to the PRCC on where WDFW's parentage analysis using macro-satellite data is for use as it relates to the White River spring Chinook program.
- Andonaegui will request further information about issues surrounding the Blackbird Pond project from Trout Unlimited and report those findings at the next PRCC meeting. The Committee will further discuss the proposal at the next meeting.
- At the Committee members request, Rohr will request Bob Bugert's questions concerning the White River program; Committee members agreed to take Bugert's request for a policy-level meeting to their respective agency's policy-level staff and report back to Rohr.

Decision summary:

- PRCC members approved the predator study request for proposals (RFP) with a revised response date of Oct. 12, 2007.
- PRCC members agreed to vote by e-mail following review of SOA 2007-16 (Grant PUD coho obligation). The PRCC also approved two minor revisions to the SOA.

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Rohr welcomed participants. The Blackbird Pond Project proposal and the PRCC Hatchery Aug. 15 public meeting re-cap were added topics to the agenda.
- II. **Approval/Finalize Meeting Minutes:**
 - A. May 23, 2007 - Approved
 - B. June 27, 2007 - Approved
 - C. July 25, 2007 - Approved
- III. **Spill 2007 Update** – Dotson distributed a spreadsheet showing the percentage highest hourly TDG levels at Wanapum and Priest Rapids dams. Dotson noted the fish season was similar to last year, but with fewer exceedances. Fish spill ended Aug. 23, 2007 at Wanapum Dam and Aug. 24, 2007 at Priest Rapids Dam. Dotson also stated that operation was affected for 10 days by a crack in the concrete of TG-12 east trunion. Fish spill continued following an engineering inspection. Maintenance on the gate will now occur with the conclusion of fish spill.
- IV. **Wanapum Future Unit Bypass (WFUFB) Update** – Dotson distributed recent photos of WFUFB construction activity. The coffer cell has been removed and the 4-foot extension walls have been poured. Dotson noted that construction is on schedule for anticipated completion in mid-December 2007. The project is anticipated to be operating in spring 2008.

- V. Update on 2007 PR Top-Spill Behavior Study** – Dotson anticipates that the draft 2007 head-to-head methodology study report will be distributed to the Committee in September. Dotson noted that following questions surrounding methodologies used in the 2006 study, a quality control study was conducted in spring 2007. Dotson distributed a summary of the findings by USGS, which evaluated the facility and tagging procedures. The report, provided to the PRCC for information only, included an assessment of gatewell dipping procedures, fish transfer and pescalator processes, fish sorting, and tagging surgical techniques. USGS offered several recommendations based on the assessment, including an analysis of collected culling rate information and a recommendation of more detailed monitoring and logging of the sorting process to ensure that study fish sufficiently represent the fish population at large. Also suggested were better documentation of recaptured tagged fish, tagging of fish meeting weight criteria (even if it fails to meet the length criteria), use of a sanctuary net on all fish transfers, buffering of anesthesia, minimizing fish transfer during tagging, and development and implementation of a protocol for the application of a slime coat restorer in all water sources. The information will be provided to Grant PUD's fish-handling contractor.

Rose questioned whether the findings of a regional tagging technology working group will affect studies conducted throughout the region. An effort to maximize the information gathered from tagged fish through coordination between Columbia River hydro operators is in the early stages of discussion, stated Dotson. Marco asked whether tagging standardization is focused only on 3-D acoustic tag technology. Dotson stated that it can also be used for radio telemetry tags, but that PIT-tags rarely need any significant holding of fish, so the issues for that technology are different. The 2007 head-to-head methodology fish study summary will be an appendix to the 2007 head-to-head study report. Nordlund expressed his concern that tagging information isn't freely shared between Columbia River PUDs and federal dam operators, noting that a full picture of the information gathered from the tags would be useful to the resource. Dotson noted he is working with Chelan PUD on the potential of sharing study fish and with USGS in providing tag code information from Grant PUD fish at McNary Dam. Nordlund noted the advantage of looking at sockeye behavioral information (from Chelan PUD tagged fish) as they approach the Priest Rapids Dam Top-Spill Bulkhead. Dotson noted that such information has been gathered and will be outlined in the 2007 study report. Dotson will provide updates to the PRCC on efforts to coordinate use of study fish within the region. Rose expressed concern that more effort isn't being put into such coordination, particularly between Grant and Chelan PUDs. Andonaegui noted that in the HCP and PRCC environments, there are efforts to coordinate looking at system survival with shared tag information. Rohr recommended further discussion at next month's meeting when the study results are released in draft form.

VI. PR OLAFT Update

- A. Update and Discussion of Design Issues – Dotson noted that Grant PUD engineers were able to increase the stiffness of the picketed lead and are working to resolve denial issues. Dotson noted other changes include widening of the work-up table and a change in the width of the stainless steel channel to keep fish moving forward. Andonaegui asked if the trap set-up could be changed to handle more fish when runs are high. Dotson noted that the size of the available work space is the limiting factor when large numbers of fish come through and that

increasing the number of work hours that the trap is operated may help address the issue as it pertains to getting the needed number of fish to represent a needed percentage of the run. Staff is also looking at electro-anesthetic treatment of fish. Carlon asked about the long-term effect to the gamete when using the technique. Nordlund stated he suspects there have been advancements to the technique, potentially making it more viable as an accepted form of anesthetizing the fish..

VII. Video Fish Counting (VFC) Update

A. Discussion of Adult Count Variances between PR and WAN – Dotson distributed a spreadsheet outlining apparent discrepancies between fish counts at Wanapum and Priest Rapids dams. Dotson stated that there was a much larger discrepancy in the number of fish counted in July (23.61% difference between dams) from those counted in August (1.72% difference). Dotson noted that Grant PUD addressed the problem through fish-counter staff changes. Rose asked if Grant PUD is more rigorously and consistently conducting QA/QC with installation of the new video count system. Dotson stated that accuracy is important to Grant PUD and staff is working to address any discrepancies. Marco stated he believes Chinook were being over-counted at Wanapum Dam. Carlon asked if raising the ramp within the ladder would alleviate the issue of fish “fall back,” which may have resulted in the over-counting. Nordlund noted the limitations of the Wanapum Dam ladder, but asked if a hydro-acoustic transducer could be used below the counting stations to give a general fish count, reducing the possibility for error. Both Marco and Nordlund noted that the technology should be able to detect fish direction. Dotson will follow-up with HTI on the potential use of hydro-acoustic technology for fish counting as a back up to apparent discrepancies of counts at Wanapum Dam. Andonaegui requested the establishment of quality control protocols by comparing counts at both dams with random checks of the video tape. Once Grant PUD provides the protocols, recommendations can be made by the Committee. She also asked if Grant PUD could look at Rock Island numbers to assess where the problem might be occurring.

VIII. Northern Pikeminnow Program and Avian Predation Update – No updates. Both the Northern Pikeminnow and Avian program reports are being drafted. Dotson noted that 16 fish tags were recovered in the Potholes/Goose Island area in June. As a follow-up, a research team collected 195 acoustic tags at Goose Island. An apparent effort to increase the numbers of Caspian terns in the Potholes/Goose Island area via decoys and electronic calls appears to have had an effect on fish predation in the area, stated Dotson. The team estimated they recovered approximately 40% of the tags consumed by terns in that area. While the tags are likely a combination of both Chelan and Grant PUD tags, Dotson noted there is no way to determine who the tags belong to. Dotson stated that Grant PUD has concern that re-introduced terns to the Potholes/Goose Island area may be having a direct effect on fish survival percentages. Andonaegui encouraged the gathering of accurate information and further details on the research activities. Carlon will follow-up with his agency on any possible efforts by NOAA Fisheries to increase the tern population in the Potholes/Goose Island area.

IX. Grant PUD Coho Obligation SOA – Dotson noted that any Statement of Agreement concerning Covered Species under the Priest Rapids Salmon and Steelhead

Settlement Agreement also requires approval by the Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee. A coho hatchery compensation SOA between Grant PUD and the Yakama Nation is currently under consideration by the PRCC HSC. Rohr suggested the Committee review the SOA and, following anticipated PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee approval in September, Rohr will request PRCC approval by e-mail in order to meet an Oct. 1, 2007 contractual deadline. The Committee approved the approach. The group requested a minor revision to Line 2 and a clarification of the word "interim" in Line 3 (see SOA 2007-16 for revisions).

- X. NNI Fund Discussion** – Rohr walked members through the draft NNI Fund protocols. Rohr requested further comments. The Committee discussed further revisions which clarify the role of the PRCC Habitat Subcommittee in reviewing and providing input on proposed projects involving use of NNI Funds. Such review and subsequent discussion could occur at intermittent meetings between the PRCC Habitat Subcommittee and PRCC. Rohr discussed the issue as it relates to the annual Habitat Plan required under the Priest Rapids Project Biological Opinion. The Committee discussed potential coordination on the Habitat Plan as it relates to NNI funding proposals. Andonaegui also expressed concern that the current Habitat Project Proposal Specification Sheet may not be appropriate for NNI projects. Rohr will review the Habitat Funding Project Proposal Specification Sheet and revise it as appropriate for NNI project proposals.
- XI. WDFW Proposed Predation Study**
- A. ACTION ITEM: RFP for Professional Environmental Services** – Dotson distributed the draft RFP with comments from Andonaegui (provided August 15, 2007). The Committee changed the RFP response date to October 12, 2007. Dotson stated that comments provided by Ben Lenz regarding capture/re-capture issues will be addressed in the contractor selection process. Committee members approved the RFP. Grant PUD will process the RFP through its contracting system. Dotson outlined the steps involved with that process.
- XII. Blackbird Pond funding proposal** – Andonaegui provided details concerning a Trout Unlimited project proposal for modifications to an existing kids fishing pond in the Leavenworth area. An original request for funding was proposed to the HCP Habitat Subcommittee, but was turned down because the project was not considered a habitat project. Andonaegui explained that \$75,000 is being requested from NNI funds for use of the pond for steelhead acclimation with the acknowledgement that it's not a "clean fit" for NNI funding. Andonaegui stated it would be a public relations boost for both Chelan and Grant PUDs because of its use as a kids fishing pond (after release of the steelhead in early spring and the pond is planted with trout for the remainder of the summer) in an area where the public has significant concern over fish mitigation programs. Andonaegui noted that Chelan PUD stated it would be glad to work in coordination on the project, but is not willing to directly fund the project. Andonaegui noted that engineering, stocking and water rights are potential issues with the project. The Trout Unlimited proposal requests funds for engineering and construction, though Andonaegui noted that \$75,000 would not cover engineering costs. Rose questioned how the proposal relates to NNI. Andonaegui stated the project would provide an estimated 50,000 steelhead which would be acclimated on Wenatchee River water. Rose noted the project only contributes to Chelan mitigation, not Grant PUD's (Methow and Okanogan mitigation steelhead only). Andonaegui also noted that the

steelhead supplementation would contribute to a Wenatchee River harvest which could also be a potential boost to Grant PUD's relationship to the public in Chelan County. Andonaegui also stated that fishing from the pond (possibly stocked with redband trout) wouldn't begin until the steelhead are voluntarily released from the pond. Rose asked if Chelan County Natural Resources, Trout Unlimited, or the City of Leavenworth had been approached for funding. Nordlund stated that NMFS would need to internally discuss the proposal as it relates to ESA issues. Carlon stated he has trouble tying it to Grant's mitigation requirements and that its benefit to Grant PUD's relationship to the public is questionable. Andonaegui suggested that Grant PUD consider funding the project out-of-pocket. Dotson noted that Grant PUD's mitigation has already been met and requested that M&E, water rights, ESA, and permitting issues be resolved prior to the PRCC making a decision about NNI funding. Rose noted he is not supportive of the proposal because Grant PUD should not use NNI funds to support its public relations efforts and that only mitigation obligations should be at the center of discussion concerning the potential creation of a fishery. Andonaegui will request further information about issues surrounding the project from Trout Unlimited and report those findings at the next meeting. The Committee agreed to further discuss the proposal at the next meeting.

- XIII. PRCC Hatchery SC Report** – HGMPs for the White River and Nason Creek spring Chinook are being drafted and public input has been requested. The JFP is working on determinations concerning summer Chinook and facilities for are being evaluated by Grant PUD. NMFS is also making a determination on whether the Okanagan Nation Alliance Reintroduction of Sockeye into Skaha Lake 12-year plan substitutes as a HGMP submission.
- XIV. PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee White River/Nason Creek Public Meeting** – The group discussed the Aug. 15, 2007 public meeting and issues related to a request by Bob Bugert, Chelan Douglas Land Trust, for a policy-level discussion concerning the White River spring Chinook program. Andonaegui noted that while WDFW is not opposed to independent scientific review of the program, the public has been presented with scientific information concerning the captive brood method of recovering the White River stock. Andonaegui also noted that for a change to occur concerning the program, NMFS, which has ESA legal authority, should consider WDFW's current macro-satellite data report to make any further determinations concerning the captive brood program. Andonaegui stated that it needs to be made clear to those with questions concerning the program that answers can be found in the HGMP (available on Grant PUD's website). Committee members requested that Rohr obtain Bob Bugert's specific questions concerning the program and agreed to take the request for a policy-level meeting to their respective agency's policy-level staff and report back to Rohr.
- XV. PRCC Habitat SC Report (Ben)**
- Lenz noted the following habitat project proposals are now finalized: USGS LiDAR analysis contract, Hardesty property purchase, Godwin parcel purchase
 - Nordlund requested an update on the Fulton Diversion Dam roughened channel success. Lenz will provide the information at the next PRCC meeting.
- XVI. Update on Hanford Reach** – No update.

XVII. Review of Grant PUD FTP Site and Operations – No update.

XVIII. Next Meeting –

- Due to a scheduling conflict with the PRCC Habitat SC meeting on September 26th, Rohr requested the next PRCC meeting be moved to Tuesday, September 25th. Committee members agreed.
- Next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 25, 2007 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Radisson Gateway Hotel at SeaTac.