



## DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

### Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee

Wednesday, Oct. 24, 2007

9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Grant PUD SeaTac Office

#### 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:

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

#### Action Items:

- Dotson will distribute electronically to all PRCC and PRCC Habitat Subcommittee members a copy of both the predator study RFP and the three received proposals. A conference call to discuss the predator study RFPs is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 30 from 10 a.m. to noon.
- Dotson will determine whether enough suitable fall Chinook broodstock can be collected at Bonneville Dam to meet Grant PUD's egg mitigation requirements. The information will be distributed as soon as possible.
- A conference call to discuss the PR RBFL closure / OLAFT operations for Chinook brood stock is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 1 from 0800 – 0900 hr.
- Dotson will distribute PR ladder count data and PRH brood stock collection data to all PRCC members prior to the Nov. 1 conf. call
- Grant PUD will provide further information on where electro-anesthetic is used and its effectiveness, as they come across it.

#### Distributed items:

- 2007 PR Top Spill Behavior Study preliminary draft report
- Design team plan for downstream fish passage measures at Priest Rapids Dam

#### Decision summary:

- Members approved closing the Priest Rapids Dam right bank fish ladder for five days, starting Oct. 25, 2007. The right bank ladder will be re-opened on the evening of Monday, Oct. 29, 2007 and left open until results are evaluated by the PRCC on a conference call on Thursday, Nov. 1 at 8 a.m.

- **The PRCC approved the delegation of the Okanogan Basin spring Chinook hatchery compensation assessment outlined in Section 12.2 of the Priest Rapids Project Salmon and Steelhead Settlement Agreement to the PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee. Once the assessment has been made, the PRCC will vote on approval prior to the end of the year to fulfill the requirement of the SSA.**

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Rohr welcomed attendees.
- II. **Review of Meeting Agenda** – Rohr reviewed the agenda and requested additions and edits. Marco requested that discussion of the Okanogan Spring Chinook Statement of Agreement be added to the agenda.
- III. Approval/Finalize Meeting Minutes
  - A. September 25, 2007 – Approved.
- IV. Review of September 25 Action Items – Rohr reviewed action items with attendees.
- V. Discussion of WDFW Proposed Predation Study
  - A. RFP Update – Dotson updated members on the status of the predation study RFPs. A total of three proposals were received by the deadline of Oct. 15, 2007: LGL/University of Idaho, USGS/WDFW, and HDR/Fish Pro. All three groups provided proposals for a three-year study, with estimated costs of the study ranging from \$1.6 million to \$3.5 million. Members discussed whether the estimated costs cover all three years of study. The sub-committee which developed the RFP made a conscious decision to make the RFP broad with costs broken down by task, stated Andonaegui, noting the scope of the study could be narrowed with the possible option of only funding one year of study. Andonaegui stated her discomfort with using NNI dollars to fund an entire three-year study. Dresser and Dotson noted the costs are in-line with other fish studies conducted by Grant PUD and others, noting some of the bids came in slightly lower than expected by Grant PUD staff. Members discussed the individual tasks involved with the study and whether or not the scope could be narrowed to reduce costs. Some tasks could be eliminated, stated Dotson, resulting in changes for “cost estimates” and changes for literature review in years two and three. Rose suggested discussing the proposals in general at today’s meeting, with a follow-up detailed discussion at a later date. Dotson recommended a decision be made as soon as possible following detailed review of each RFP. Dresser noted that taking the proposal off the table could result in credibility issues due to the cost of putting together a proposal (\$15,000-\$20,000). Rose requested the PRCC Habitat Committee be involved in the discussion and decision-making process. Dotson noted that NNI funding decisions are made by the PRCC only. Andonaegui stated that a one-year study with a contingency for a second year seems appropriate, and that because of the NNI Statement of Agreement and in an effort to communicate with internal agency staff, initial discussion should involve the PRCC only, with follow-up discussion between both committees on the commitment of funds. Nordlund noted NMFS’ PRCC Habitat rep Dale Bambrick could make a positive contribution to the discussion. Rose suggested that each PRCC rep communicate with their agency’s PRCC Habitat rep prior to a combined discussion. Rose noted his objection to making a decision prior to a combined discussion between both committees. Rohr reiterated that while the decision concerning expenditure of NNI funds is exclusively that of the PRCC, it is important for communication to occur between both committees. Andonaegui questioned the productivity of a combined discussion prior to a decision being made. Rohr suggested the information be sent to the PRCC Habitat Committee for their review prior to the conference call. **Dotson will distribute electronically to all PRCC and**

**PRCC Habitat Subcommittee members a copy of both the predator study RFP and copies of all three proposals.** Marco noted the PRCC's sensitivity to the costs involved with the predation study proposal. Rose asked if a meeting could be arranged with all three predator study proposal groups. Because of the time-crunch involved with the permitting of study activities, Dotson suggested distributing questions to the potential contractors in advance. Nordlund suggested asking the contractors what information can be gained from a three-year study that wouldn't be revealed with only one year of study. Rose requested that PRCC reps coordinate with their Habitat reps following distribution of the RFPs to both committees, followed by a conference call to pin down what specific questions the PRCC predator study committee wants to ask each potential contractor. Once those questions are determined, follow-up discussion will occur with the contractors. **A PRCC conference call to discuss the predator study RFPs is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 30 from 10 a.m. to noon.** Grant PUD fisheries scientist Russell Langshaw (PRCC Hatchery representative) asked what the focus of the study is, noting it could potentially be difficult to determine where the fish are at in the first year of the study, noting the second year of the study will provide a better idea of where they are located in the reservoir and what they are eating and when. Rose asked if the abundance estimate work could be separated from the consumption estimate. Dresser stated that the consumption estimates could be separated, but noted that a white paper exercise on abundance should be done on abundance. If the focus is on abundance, then the focus is on a massive mark-recapture effort involving a stratified random sampling design, stated Dresser. Rose noted his specific interest in studying abundance.

*(Dresser departs the phone call).*

- VI. Wanapum Future Unit Bypass Update (WFUFB)** – Dotson provide a construction update on the WFUFB, stating that the right wing wall on the downstream side is currently being poured. Construction is scheduled for completion in January 2008, with a 3-D acoustic tag survival/behavior study scheduled for spring 2008.
- VII. 2007 PR Top Spill Behavior Study** – Dotson distributed a preliminary draft Priest Rapids Top-Spill Behavior Study report. Several grammatical errors need to be corrected before the final draft is distributed at the November meeting, stated Dotson, noting that distribution of the final draft will be followed by a 30-day comment period from the PRCC. The 2007 head-to-head steelhead source study draft report should also be available in November for the PRCC's 30-day comment review, stated Dotson. Based on the preliminary information from the behavior study and from tailrace and forebay modeling conducted at IIHR, changes to the prototype design are being discussed, stated Dotson. In both 2006 and 2007, the movements of 1,000 fish were studied as they approached Priest Rapids Dam, stated Dotson, noting the only difference between the 2006 and 2007 studies was the level of river flow. Rose asked if the information could be presented in a way that indicates where the fish are located at first and last detection. A more formal presentation will be given when the final draft is available, stated Dotson. Testing at the University of Iowa (IIHR) is revealing that increasing bypass flow by releasing bottom spill through Spillbay 21 will likely allow increased draw, diverting fish from moving toward the powerhouse. Nordlund referenced a study that was conducted at Wells, which showed good promise for fish passage with the over-under spill gates were used. Dotson mentioned that Grant's proposal of using TG-19, 20, 22 as surface spill and TG-21 as bottom spill is along those same lines. Nordlund agreed. Nordlund asked if modeling had occurred using gate 21 and 22 top spill, in addition to top-spill through gates 19 and 20. Dotson noted that the protocol was looked at in the modeling process, but it doesn't appear it will be as effective as opening Spillbay 21 and the sluiceway.

Dotson also provided raw data on relative survival. In 2007, factors affecting the raw numbers include a small sample size going through the spillway and absolute survival of fish released in the tailrace.

*(Scott Carlon joins call). Carlon stated that the NOAA Fisheries Science Center was conducting a Caspian tern diet and breeding success study on Goose Island, but that lack of funding has terminated the study for 2008. The information was provided by Carlon following concerns expressed by Grant PUD staff that Caspian terns are possibly having a predation effect on fish passing through the Priest Rapids Project. (Carlon departs call).*

**PR Top-Spill Behavior Study (cont.)** - Dotson distributed a design team plan for downstream fish passage measures at Priest Rapids Dam. The plan outlines options for Priest Rapids Dam prototype testing in 2008, including top-spill through gates 19 and 20 with no change to flows, top-spill through gates 19 and 20 with an increase of flow through each spillbay, relocating top-spill bulkhead to spillbays 16 and 17, increasing top-spill flow by adding additional top-spill through spillbay 21, and increasing bypass flow by releasing bottom spill through spillbay 21 and the sluiceway. Nordlund asked if the plan can be commented on prior to the January 2008 visit to the University of Iowa. Dotson confirmed that the plan is a "living" document and can be commented on, noting that a design team (face-to-face) meeting in Seattle could be arranged prior to the Iowa trip. Dotson mentioned to Nordlund about the weekly Design Team conference calls and gave Nordlund the call-in phone number for those weekly calls.

- VIII. PR OLAFT** – Normal trap operations is completed for the season. Dotson distributed a spreadsheet of Priest Rapids Hatchery volunteer-trap counts of adult fall Chinook. The 2007 adult returns are significantly lower than usual, jeopardizing Grant PUD's ability to meet its fall Chinook production mitigation requirements for the year. As of the second week of October 2007, adult returns to the Priest Rapids Hatchery are not projected to meet Grant PUD's mitigation requirements, stated Langshaw, noting that as of Oct. 24, 2007 only 16 percent of the required female broodstock has been collected. Grant PUD is requesting that the Priest Rapids right bank fish ladder be closed temporarily to allow collection of fall Chinook females at the left bank off-ladder trap (OLAFT). Carlon was notified in advance of the request and requested temporary (5-day) closure of the right bank, while conducting fish counts on the left bank to monitor potential delays to coho, steelhead and Chinook. Nordlund stated that counts at McNary Dam indicate the runs are slowing down, noting that a sports fishery for fall Chinook is currently open. Nordlund also questioned why so few females are being collected at the OLAFT. The OLAFT is only staffed between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. each day, stated Langshaw, noting that movement of adults could be occurring at a higher percentage outside of that time-frame. Nordlund asked if staff and operating hours could be increased, and whether methods could be altered to increase the capture of broodstock. Trapping of fall Chinook at Ringold Hatchery has also been mostly unsuccessful, noted Andonaegui. Members discussed the anomaly of this year's low number of returning fall Chinook. Marco requested further information on which fish species are being trapped at the OLAFT. Andonaegui noted the problem with operating the trap 24 hours a day is a lack of available experienced personnel for a second shift and noted that OLAFT staff believes significantly more fish are using the right bank ladder than the left bank ladder, noting the volume can be handled by existing staff if all fish are forced to move through the left bank ladder. Rose noted he is concerned with taking every female at the OLAFT, because there are other trapping alternatives. He also suggested a follow-up conference call providing fish counts during the right bank closure and a follow-up count after the right bank is re-opened. Marco, Rose and Craig noted their concerns with collection

of all non-fall Chinook females traveling through the left bank ladder. Members discussed whether the low return anomaly should be factored in to Grant PUD's inability to meet its mitigation requirements in 2007. Dotson noted that because the trap is only being operated for 12 hours, 7 days a week, all females will not be captured. Rose suggested projecting adult returns based on Bonneville counts before assessing the benefit of closing the right bank ladder. Nordlund also expressed concern with the handling of *all* fish if they are diverted to the OLAFT. **Members approved closing the Priest Rapids Dam right bank fish ladder for five days, starting Oct. 25, 2007. The right bank ladder will be re-opened on Monday, Oct. 29, 2007 and left open until results are evaluated by the PRCC on a conference call on Thursday, Nov. 1 at 8 a.m.** Dotson will determine whether enough suitable broodstock can be collected at Bonneville Dam to meet Grant PUD's egg mitigation requirements. The information will be distributed as soon as possible. Members also discussed why such a small number of fall Chinook females are being trapped at the OLAFT. Nordlund suggested investigating whether it is easier for the males to travel up the steep denil. Andonaegui noted that OLAFT staff have indicated that all fish are making it up the denil. Dotson noted that when the right bank is closed, gravity flow through the ladder will continue.

**IX. Video Fish Counting Report – No update.**

**X. Northern Pikeminnow and Avian Predation Programs Discussion and Report –**

Dotson stated that 694 pikeminnow were captured Oct. 9 through Oct. 15 and a total of 18,748 pikeminnow have been caught to date. A report will be available following completion of the 2007 effort. The avian control program was completed on Aug. 3. Dotson stated that gull wires are being installed at Priest Rapids Dam to address predation issues experienced during the 2007 fish outmigration period. Dotson distributed a gull wire installation plan. Members noted that the criss-cross array looked to provide greater coverage of the PR tailrace. Members discussed specifics of wire installation. Next year, two crews will be contracted for predation control at both dams, 7 days per week during the 2008 outmigration. Rose asked if installation of gull wires moves predation downstream. Dotson noted there is no data available to answer that question. Further discussion will occur.

**XI. Okanogan Spring Chinook SOA (added to agenda) –** Marco suggested discussion of the HCP Hatchery Subcommittee SOA, noting in the Priest Rapids Salmon and Steelhead Settlement Agreement, the PRCC is responsible for assessing hatchery compensation for Okanogan Basin spring Chinook in 2007. The Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT) is in the NEPA EIS/ESA consultation phase for Chief Joseph Hatchery. A Step 2 submittal package is going to the Northwest Power Planning Council (NWPPC) and Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP) in the next few weeks, but a decision won't be made until 2008. Once the NWPPC provides a green light to move forward to Step 3, the question on hatchery compensation needs to be resolved, stated Marco. Cost-sharing among the three utilities for CJH is being worked out through conceptual agreements, but because they are not yet finalized, a statement of agreement became necessary, noted Marco. CCT presented a statement of agreement to the HCP Hatchery Subcommittee last week. The SOA allows the addressing of hatchery compensation prior to the end of 2007, with establishment of the threshold population being addressed at a later date when the CJH Step 3 process begins and the cost-sharing agreement is finalized. Once the re-drafted HCP SOA is available, Marco will distribute it to the PRCC for further discussion. **The PRCC approved the delegation of the Okanogan Basin spring Chinook hatchery compensation assessment outlined in Section 12.2 of the Priest Rapids Project Salmon and Steelhead Settlement Agreement to the PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee. Once the assessment has been made, the PRCC will vote on approval prior to the end of the year to fulfill the requirement of the SSA.**

**XII. Information: Electro Anesthesia** – Dotson presented and distributed a video clip demonstrating use of electro-anesthesia in handling fish. The method is a potential alternative to use of chemical anesthetics (MS-222 or CO2). Andonaegui requested further information on where the method is used and its effectiveness.

**XIII. PRCC Hatchery SC Report –**

- **Summer Chinook** - Langshaw noted that the draft summer Chinook HGMP has been distributed to the PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee for a 30-day comment period, noting that an M&E plan is not yet included in the draft HGMP. Langshaw stated that the SSA does include a one-year deadline from signing for submission of a HGMP/M&E plan, noting that the draft M&E Plan for summer Chinook will be distributed in November. Feasibility of over-winter acclimation at Dryden and Carlton ponds is being researched.
- **Fall Chinook** - The PRH modification designs are nearing 90% completion (January-February 2008). A fall Chinook M&E plan is currently being developed by Grant PUD and WDFW staff. Redd location and fall-back are issues currently being discussed. An M&E discussion is being scheduled for November. The PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee recently discussed decision-making when it comes to Hanford Reach issues. Members agreed that anything operations-related is determined by the Hanford Reach Working Group, with all hatchery-related issues involved with fall Chinook decided on by PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee members.
- **White River/Nason Creek Spring Chinook** – The JFP is addressing several questions prior to submission of both HGMPs. The JFP discussion will likely delay submission of the HGMPs to NMFS by several months. A tagging protocol has been agreed-upon for BY07 White River spring Chinook. 10,000 fish will be PIT-tagged to evaluate fish will be acclimated and released from an upriver acclimation site.
- **PRCC Habitat SC Report** – Following prior approval from the PRCC Habitat Subcommittee, PRCC members approved Oct. 12, 2007 NNI funding for the McIntyre Dam Project Proposal contingent on NMFS' review of conceptual designs, a determination on who is responsible for O&M funding, and a written commitment from the Town of Oliver for installation of a permanent fish screen.

**XIV. Habitat Funds/NNI Fund Report** – Rohr distributed a Habitat Funds report.

**XV. Hanford Reach** – Grant PUD's proposed peaking operation experiment for 2007 was terminated due, in part, to low abundance, projected low flows, and disagreement on performance measures, stated Langshaw. Discussion of conducting the experiment in 2008 is ongoing.

**XVI. Updates and Discussion** - A White River spring Chinook program policy meeting request from Bob Bugert of Chelan-Douglas Land Trust resulted in a recent letter to NMFS and WDFW. Responses to the letter are being considered by those agencies. Rohr stated that the NNI funding protocols were handled well during the recent McIntyre Dam project proposal discussion, and noted that the PRCC Habitat Subcommittee has requested information on the predator study RFP (see item V above). Rohr stated he would send all agendas and minutes generated for each meeting to all three committees.

**XVII. Next Meeting: Wed, Nov 28, 2007, 9 – 3, Grant PUD SeaTac Office. The December 26 regular meeting date was moved to December 18 as a place-holder.**