



FINAL MEETING MINUTES

Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee

Wednesday, June 27, 2007

9:00 – 11:30

PRCC Committee Members

Scott Carlon/Bryan Nordlund, NMFS	Jim Craig, USFWS
Jerry Marco, CCT	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
*Jerry Marco, CCT
*Jim Craig, USFWS
*Bob Rose, YN
*Carmen Andonaegui, WDFW
*Curt Dotson, Grant PUD
Denny Rohr, Facilitator
Julie Yount, Grant PUD:

Action items:

- A subcommittee will be set up to develop an RFP for evaluation of predation issues for potential study funded through the NNI fund. Meeting set for 9:00 July 9, in Ephrata, with a goal to have the final RFP complete by September.
- Rose requested a tracking spreadsheet for projects which have been *committed* from the NNI and Habitats Funds, not just spending.
- Marco requested PRCC reports to each of the subcommittees, much like their reports back to the PRCC, in order to encourage better coordination both ways.
- Dotson will gather information and report back to Nordlund on questions he had on the OLAFT regarding the picketed leads and the depression in the denile.

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Rohr welcomed participants. Introduction of Jim Craig, USFWS, replacing Brian Cates who has retired.
- II. **Approval/Finalize Meeting Minutes:** May 23, 2007 will be forthcoming (not yet distributed)

III. **Spill 2007 Update**

Dotson reported summer spill started on June 15. The summer spill program at Wanapum remains basically the same as spring program. Any additional spill due to inadvertent spill is causing TDG issues at Priest forebay. The Priest Rapids program for summer is generally the same as last year.

Dotson made the call yesterday to close spill at Priest for 6 hours due to reaching the low water level minimum (482.5 forebay elevation FERC minimum). This resulted in spill via the sluice only. Rocky Reach was also having difficulty, due to lack of water coming down from Canada. Dotson explained that generally reservoirs drop for the weekends, then refill occurs on Mondays, but this week the refill did not occur. Nordlund asked if migration patterns were considered when timing the 6-hour span. Dotson stated that generally nighttime was higher migration, although migration occurs throughout 24-hours. They did plan for being back up and operational before nightfall.

IV. Wanapum Future Unit Bypass Update

Construction is ongoing. Grant PUD is still looking at spring of 2008 for the project to be operational.

V. Update on 2007 PR Top Spill Behavior Study

Dotson reports the contractors are crunching numbers currently. A ballpark estimate looks very similar to 2006 study results. The three different sources of fish appear to have only slight differences in results. Fish handling was improved, transferring was modified this year with more water transfers rather than netting. Gatewell fish did well compared to Rocky Reach fish. Inadvertent spill this year was much less a factor compared to last year. Dotson indicates a draft report should be to the committee by August or September.

VI. PR OLAFT Update

Final approval is slated for the end of August. A contract change order is in process to take care of some requests by WDFW following a walk-thru. They will be on site again July 12 for another look. Final punchlists are being completed and it should be up and running in early July. August 30 is the goal for final contractor demobilization. Nordlund voiced a concern regarding the spreadable picketed leads. He would like to see this addressed at the top of the punchlist. He also asked if the trap will be operational during the YN and WDFW trapping operation. Dotson will have information to Nordlund on the leads issued via email.

Nordlund also had a concern on a dip in the water at the denile. Dotson indicates engineers have stated this pocket of water would not be an issue when the OLAFT is operational. Dotson will also double check this as well.

VII. Video Fish Counting (VFC) Update

Dotson reports the VFC program is going well at this time. A camera on the right bank failed in early June but was replaced the next day. A power failure on one of the DVRs occurred and an extra was not present, but this has been addressed. There remains a question regarding the number of jacks in Priest Rapids Project counts. Additional training for counting staff is occurring to establish better guidelines for adult/jack identification. There is a wider opening to the counting window and a depth issue which may be causing some of the discrepancy. Grant reports lower jack numbers than Chelan, but more adult numbers, so overall numbers are consistent.

The ultrasonic algae control device is working well. No ill effects have been noted on fish movement. We are not in the high algal growth timeframe yet and will continue monitoring the device performance.

VIII. Northern Pikeminnow Program Update

Dotson indicated 8,641 pikeminnow have been removed this year to date.

IX. Avian Predation Update

There has been noted increased bird movement. Stomach contents were evaluated on 318 birds resulting in 398 salmon identified. A tern rookery at the Potholes was evaluated and 16 acoustic tags were found in a 27 minute walkthrough.

X. Project Proposal – Predation Evaluation

WDFW would like to pursue NNI funding for evaluation of effects of predation on sockeye salmon and subyearling Chinook. Andonaegui distributed a Project Specification Sheet utilized by Habitat Subcommittee. She indicated that literature supports there is a degree of predation when habitat overlap occurs. Andonaegui would like to put out a request for proposals for study, using the spec sheet as a format, incorporating the four focal issues (Joe Miller assisted in putting this together). She is looking for funding for a 2008 study and requests the committee vote on agreement to put out an RFP for a predation study, so that at the July meeting the group could review the RFP.

Rose supports moving in this direction, that pursuing better information on predation is valuable. He suggested consideration of some alternatives, perhaps even having derbies with a few tagged fish to establish populations, offering \$10,000 prize money. He would like to have additional conversation on options. Is there another avenue to pursue improved survival? Could the proposed study be even more comprehensive? More discussion is needed before locking in one option.

Dotson points out we do not know the rate of survival for sockeye and subyearling Chinook. This statistic has not yet been established, so predation would be very difficult to measure. Grant is scheduled to do three consecutive years of survival studies, which are not slated to begin until 2009. Dotson agreed there is a need to establish predation rates. Grant has a great deal of experience with the RFP process. If a subcommittee was set up to evaluate RFPs, Grant would certainly wish to be a part of it. Past experience with the contractors who would likely respond would be vital information.

Nordlund asked if Grant has any data on Chelan sockeye passing the Priest Rapids Project. Dotson indicates he has some raw data, but does not have Chelan's permission for release of the information on their fish. They are working on a draft report. Nordlund indicates this data would be very valuable with relation to PRP passage. Dotson indicates we do have 2006 data, showing sockeye did quite well. Currently Grant only has impact capabilities on control of northern pikeminnow.

Marco states is a good idea to pursue something regarding predation, particularly in the Wanapum pool. He indicates there is still a need to look at smallmouth abundance, walleye, etc. Summer migrants are a particular concern to CCT. He points out that the regulations that could potentially be changed by WDFW would need to be supported by solid data, so studies to evaluate predation would be necessary.

Craig supports data collection, but questions how willing WDFW will be to use the data to make changes. He notes it would be a tough sell to the Game Commission for increase of fishing. Data would also be beneficial to establish timing.

Marco indicates the program should look at tying into FWIN program.

WDFW suggests going forward with an RFP, and the discussion necessary for development of the RFP will help formulate how the program should be modeled. She reviewed some of the abstracts presented to the committee members regarding former predation studies at John Day reservoir. Grant's one-year study on predation did show an increase in walleye catch, but they were limited by permit issues from better evaluating this.

Rose would like to establish a subcommittee and suggests Rose, Andonaegui and Dresser, at least, building on the spec sheet provided by WDFW.

- Would like to establish length of study, methodology, etc. Should be able to accomplish in one meeting.

- Would also like to see Grant back off past attitudes toward this issue and focus on scientific benefits to this type of evaluation.
- Would like to see additional WDFW staff more engaged with this project with more of the science group. Is WDFW truly looking to change walleye regulations?
- Would like to know if the NOAA Science Center would like to be involved.

If this can be accomplished, there is the potential to have an RFP together prior to the July meeting. Would having it finalized by the end of September, allow enough time for responses? Dotson states it would be possible to have them back by November. This allows enough time to contract by the beginning of 2008.

Dotson stated the questions need to be well defined. What impact does their diet have on survival, is it measurable? Can this be established? He does support having the subcommittee work on the RFP. He states that permitting needs to be a consideration and timing is a factor. Grant would prefer to be the permit holder, rather than having the contractor obtain permitting.

Rohr asked who would be willing to participate on the subcommittee.

Dotson indicated Grant would like to be on the "key issues" meeting. Craig would like to ask around within his agency to see who would have expertise. NMFS will abstain at this time, but will investigate if someone from the Science Center would participate. Rose will be attending. Marco will not.

Rohr summarized that a subcommittee will be established to develop an RFP for evaluation of predation issues for potential study with NNI funding. A meeting is set for July 9, 9:00 am, in Ephrata. The goal is to develop the final RFP by September.

XI. NNI Fund Discussion

Rohr distributed the Habitat Fund account balances to the group. He discussed differences of the three balances. Rose requested some sort of tracking for what type of funding has been *committed* from the NNI and Habitats Funds, not just spending. He indicates it is difficult to track which projects are being pursued by the subcommittees, and how the balances will be used.

Rohr suggested more combined meetings between PRCC, Habitat SC and Hatchery SC to improve communication and discuss coordination between projects which may affect these funds. It would be beneficial to see the "big picture" Dotson did wish to stress that the Hatchery and Habitat are SUB committees. Currently the Hatchery SC updates are quite lengthy, and questioned what more would be addressed at face-to-face meetings. Rohr indicated it would be more targeted to planning coordination, rather than reporting. Andonaegui would like to see direction on the plan for spending from the accounts. She does also support continuing with at least annual meetings, but encouraged better feedback to the subcommittees for follow-up on their actions, asking better questions and taking a better look at their actions.

Marco stated it would also be beneficial to have PRCC reports to each of the subcommittees, much like their reports back. Would encourage better coordination both ways.

Rose states needing a better plan outlined. He would suggest objective statements of goals for short-term (3 months, 1 year, 3-5 years). He would like such plan for each of the three committees.

Nordlund states the committees were designed around the four "H's". Habitat making up 2% lost at the project; Hatchery focused on 7% loss at the project, and the PRCC for the survival piece for the overall 22%.

XII. PRCC Hatchery SC Report (Russell)

Langshaw called into the meeting. He gave a quick update on the HGMP development and public outreach Working Group meeting. Andy Dittman came to the last Hatchery SC meeting and gave a report on homing fidelity on the YKFP program. Their results indicated it was

dependent upon the release site. Straying was outlined specific to the YKFP program, with a look at upstream acclimation, lower acclimation, and tributary.

HGMP development – The Hatchery Subcommittee was due to have comments in by last night. NMFS abstained from this review and the committee agreed this was acceptable on this first release.

The next public meeting was delayed from July 19 (original plan) to August 15. The Working Group agreed this was acceptable due to timing of the HGMP release and comment period.

Langshaw indicated the first Working Group meeting went very well. They discussed the lower White River site and a draft proposed facility design. They discussed options and necessary objectives and the required intake structure. A maximum of 10 cfs would be required. Rohr reviewed the list of those who participated (eight individuals).

Rose questioned the purpose of the Working Group. Langshaw stated it was intended to get input from the public on design and siting with a goal of an increase in open communication and better interaction with the public. The intent is to meet several more times as the program moves forward. The key is to focus on implementation, and not question the biology. Rose questioned if in Chelan County, where already a habitat subgroup has been established, if these new subgroups will start trying to set precedents. There is a concern there are specific individuals, but overall dialogue has been positive and beneficial.

XIII. PRCC Habitat SC Report (Ben)

Lenz called into the meeting and reported on the following projects:

- The Habitat SC approved funding of \$35,000 for a project assisting the Chelan (Cascadia) Conservation district on an irrigation diversion project in Monitor, Washington.
- Hardesty property – David Morgan is further investigating the ownership options (USFS title transfer) of this parcel on the Twisp River. The purchase, restoration and eventual resale of this property will be managed by the Methow Conservancy.
- Lower Nason Kahler Glen property – the committee approved making an offer for the appraised price of \$75,000. Owner will likely refuse.
- Godwin Parcel purchase and sale agreement is being finalized with Grant PUD lands staff.

XIV. Update on PR BiOp

Nordlund indicated that Carlon is not present today as he is working on the BiOp exclusively. July 9 is target date for release.

XV. Update on Hanford Reach

June 20 was end of emergence. Flows were very consistent this season, with only one exceedance. Has been a very good year for compliance. Weather cooperated quite well.

XVI. Review of Grant PUD FTP Site and Operations

Yount discussed limitations of the FTP site and redesign of the current website. Discussed holding drafts on the FTP, with all final documents posted to the website.

XVII. Next Meeting –

- Next regular meeting, Wednesday, July 25, 2007, 9:00 am, Grant PUD Seatac Office
- July 9, 9:00 am in Ephrata for working group on predation RFP development.
- Nordlund requested moving August meeting to August 29 to correspond to the HCP schedule. No objections.