



Meeting Minutes

PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee

Monday, September 22, 2008

2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Conference Call

PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee Members

Kris Petersen, NMFS

Jerry Marco, CCT

Tom Scribner, Keely Murdoch, YN

Kirk Truscott, WDFW

David Carie, USFWS

Russ Langshaw, GCPUD

Carl Merkle, CTUIR

ATTENDEES: (*Denotes PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee Member)

Kris Petersen, NMFS*

Tom Scribner, YN*

Kirk Truscott, WDFW*

Debbie Williams, GCPUD

Rob Walton, NMFS

John Kerwin, WDFW

Russell Langshaw, GCPUD*

Denny Rohr, Facilitator

Action Items:

1. Langshaw will determine the age and productivity of females that remain on station at AquaSeed.
2. Scribner will contact Susan Gutenberger to arrange the fish health examination prior to the transfer.

Decision Summary:

- PRCC Hatchery Sub-committee members agree to the transfer of all White River spring Chinook broodstock to the Little White Salmon National Fish Hatchery.

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Attendees discussed White River spring Chinook transfer protocols developed by WDFW, the timeline of associated transfers, and the teleconference call with Per Heggelund, AquaSeed that will take place at 3:00, September 22, 2008 following this conference call.

PRCC Hatchery Sub-committee (PRCC HSC) members reviewed their perception of the process that resulted in a consensus based decision to transfer the White River spring Chinook captive brood from AquaSeed to the Little White Salmon National Fish Hatchery (LWSNFH) after being asked by the Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee (PRCC) to find an alternative rearing location that would have the capacity to rear all subsequent broodstock generations at one location. The technical members of the PRCC HSC felt that biological issues were never compromised in the decision to transfer the fish, and that the best available science was utilized during the decision making process.

The decision to move fish was the result of the HSC working together in response to the request from Grant PUD to find an alternative location. NOAA and WDFW clearly stated they wouldn't get involved in contract issues between AquaSeed and Grant PUD. NOAA noted the need to work collaboratively with all of the parties to make this program successful. Kerwin stated that Per Heggelund will come with expert testimony that the bulk of the population is healthy. John Morrison works part time for him and weighed in early on with his opinion.

An email sent to Rob Jones, NOAA from Per Heggelund, AquaSeed, stated that mortalities from the first fish transfer (June 30, 2008) were out of compliance with Grant PUD's section 10 permit and that effluent protocols were unfairly relaxed for the LWSNFH. It was determined that no single cause was attributable to the mortalities experience during the first fish transfer. Petersen stated that Bob Lohn, NOAA has supported the PRCC HSC technical decision to transfer the fish. The section 10 permit restricts mortalities to 5%. If that mortality level is exceeded, NOAA must be provided with a verbal and written explanation of what happened. Grant PUD and WDFW followed the protocol and provided NOAA with this documentation regarding mortalities associated with the first fish transfer. After receipt of the documentation, it is NOAA's role to determine if additional transfers can proceed. Concern was raised that even by conducting pilot transfers, mortality rates might not be kept to 5%, especially when older broodyears are transferred. **Langshaw will determine the age and productivity of females that remain on station at AquaSeed.** PRCC HSC members believe BY07 shouldn't pose any issues with the transfer, but that BY05 and BY06 possibly could.

Members discussed that the mortality of the BY 05 shouldn't have a huge impact to the program in 2008 because the majority of the mortalities were immature fish. Egg-take goals for 2009 are not likely at risk either because even after the mortality there were enough fish on station to produce the eggs required to meet the 150,000 smolt production. If the mortalities hadn't happened, fry would have to be released elsewhere, or raised and released as smolts.

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Scribner noted that LWSNFH has been raising fish successfully since 1968 and that concerns have been raised in the past that the aquifer at Rochester isn't suitable to raising spring Chinook. AquaSeed was required to treat their effluent because of the disease history of previous fish raised there. The prodigies of adults spawned were out of the Columbia basin and released into the coastal basin. Effluent treatment is not an issue at the LWSNFH because the White River and LWSNF are both within the Columbia Basin.

Petersen is comfortable with Rob Walton and Bob Lohn's involvement in the decision process and believes at all levels NOAA is providing a consistent message.

Susan Gutenberger, USFWS will examine the health of the fish prior to the transfer so the LWSNFH knows the quality of fish they are receiving. **Scribner will contact Susan Gutenberger to arrange the fish health examination prior to the transfer.** John Kerwin explained that the committee doesn't have a viable transfer permit because of mortalities during the first transfer, and that he will be out of the office until Thursday, September 25, 2008. Tom Scribner indicated that he would like the transfer to start on Friday, September 26, 2008. Fish should be taken off food at least 48 hours before they are transferred. Differences in water temperature between AquaSeed and LWSNFH are a concern to members. Water must be tempered to within 5 degrees during the transfer. AquaSeed ground water is typically 51 degrees. Average water temperature at LWSNFH is 43 degrees in November and 41 degrees in December. Truscott explained that running pilot transfers for each broodyear simultaneously would allow transfers to be completed before water temperatures drop at LWSNF if water temperature differential is perceived too great to address with tempering.