



MEETING

Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee

Wednesday, June 24, 2009

9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Grant PUD SeaTac Office

PRCC Members

Scott Carlon/Bryan Nordlund, NMFS
Jerry Marco, CCT
Bob Rose, YN
Bill Tweit, WDFW

Jim Craig, USFWS
Tom Dresser, GCPUD
Carl Merkle, CTUIR

Attendees: (*Denotes PRCC member)

Scott Carlon, NMFS*
Jim Craig, USFWS*
Tom Dresser, GCPUD*(on phone)
Dr. John Skalski, Univ. of Washington
Leah Sullivan, Blue Leaf Environmental
Mike Nicholls, GCPUD (on phone)
Dana Jeske, GCPUD
Denny Rohr, Facilitator

Bryan Nordlund, NMFS*
Bill Tweit, WDFW*
Curt Dotson, GCPUD
Mark Timko, Blue Leaf Environmental
Mike Clement, GCPUD (on phone)
George Thompson, GCPUD
Debbie Williams, GCPUD

Action Items:

1. Dotson will resend USGS/WDFW Predator Index, sampling block information timelines for spill closures to Tweit.
2. Dotson will send Tim Counihan, USGS, questions regarding the quantity of spill closures closure times during the out migration of sub-yearlings.
3. Nordlund, Tweit and Dresser will discuss Hanford Reach communication issues and protocols with their staff.
4. Dotson will look at hydrophone detection history to link survival rates vs. tags found at the avian colony at Potholes Reservoir, after tags are recovered in August.
5. Dotson will include histograms and members suggestions in the final draft of The Survival of Acoustic Tagged Steelhead Smolts Through the Priest Rapids Project by the July 22, 2009 PRCC meeting.
6. Dotson will ask Biomark to estimate Priest Rapids Dam sub-yearling detection efficiencies if a detection site is installed. Dotson will also ask Skalski for sample size needed if PIT tags were used for a sub-yearling survival study.

Decisions:

1. PRCC members approved Fish Ladder Modifications.
2. PRCC members agreed to hold their July 22, 2009 meet at Wanapum Dam.

Final Meeting Minutes

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Rohr welcomed the Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee (PRCC) and asked members and attendees to provide self introductions.
- II. **Agenda Review** – Nordlund asked that an update be given on the Hanford Reach Work Group and Future Unit In-fill project.
- III. **Action Items Review** – All action items were discussed and reviewed. Item #3, Proposed PRCC Predator Study, Wanapum Future Unit Fish Bypass (WFUFB) spill closures did not happen because of large quantities of inadvertent spill, and because of the need to maintain Hanford Reach flow bands. It takes approximately 90 minutes to close the WFUFB. Because sub-yearling out migration is 3 to 4 weeks behind schedule, with only 8% of subs (+- 10%) having migrated, Tweit questioned where the line should be drawn to ensure that objectives of the fish passage process are not eroded. It is expected that sub-yearlings will finish their out migration by the 1st part of September. PRCC members asked that the United States Geological Survey (USGS) re-evaluate the amount of closures needed to perform electro fishing for the predator study. **Dotson will resend USGS/WDFW spill closures sampling block information timelines to Tweit. Dotson will send Tim Counihan, USDS, questions regarding the quantity of WFUFB closure times during the out migration of sub-yearlings.**
- IV. **Hanford Reach Update** – Nordlund asked why two Hanford Reach Agreement flow band protection exceedance's occurred. Dresser explained that the first occurrence happened the first weekend (April 4-5, 2009) of flow protections, and was a Grant PUD operator error. The second exceedance occurred on April 24, 2009 when the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) left the system dry, based on expectations of the spill/TDG testing at Chief Joseph Dam. Dresser explained that protection flows will end today, June 24, 2009.

A meeting was held on May 18th to develop a plan to better coordinate water levels and communication amongst the Bonneville Power Association, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and Grant PUD.

Tweit and Dresser agreed that future flow band communications should be coordinated between Paul Hoffarth, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Russell Langshaw, Grant PUD, in the

Fall Chinook Work Group (FCWG) forum. **Nordlund, Tweit and Dresser will discuss Hanford Reach communication issues and protocols with their staff.**

Members discussed how to keep future violations to a minimum, and suggested that Grant PUD immediately notify all Hanford Reach Working Group members if an exceedance occurs.

- V. **Wanapum Future Unit In-Fill** – Nordlund questioned if concrete being installed for the Wanapum Future Unit In-Fill precludes another future unit fish bypass? Jeske explained that in order to meet the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) guidelines to protect Wanapum Dam from seismic activity, the future units would be filled with concrete, but that it wouldn't preclude a future fish bypass, if one were needed.

- VI. **Skalski's review of The Survival of Acoustic Tagged Steelhead Smolts Through the Priest Rapids Project** – Dr. Skalski gave an overview of the 2008 Steelhead Survival Study regarding premature tag failure identified by tag lot. He explained that tag lots of 2.5% failure rate or less seemed to stabilize the data (Table 3.1). He used acoustic and pit-tag detection data to reanalyze the acoustic data which showed the joint project survival to be identical between the two methods, thus giving validation to the Project survival estimate. 2008 steelhead survival rates at Wanapum Dam are .9584, and .8635 at Priest Rapids Dam for a total Priest Rapids Project (Project) survival of .8276. Dr. Skalski is confident that the .8276 project survival is accurate. He noted that survival at Wanapum is consistently higher than at Priest Rapids.

Mark Timko, Blue Leaf Environmental, noted that the largest percentage of data ever collected, was collected this year with only three hours of data lost. He explained that studies in the past years weren't controlling for an inconsistency of the tag manufacturing process. Tag distribution was randomized this year and distributed through out tag lots. Tags are now checked multiply times to assure working condition before being placed in fish, explained Leah Sullivan. When a tag is turned on, the tags to be used downstream were also turned on so tags are on the same amount of time, stated Timko. This is a change made from the 2008 to 2009 study. In 2010, Grant PUD intends to keep the sample size (approx 600 per site) the same. In order to randomize tags, they will be received before the study starts. Pit-tags will be incorporated into the acoustic tag to look at the avian component.

In 2008, 7.6% of the total tags used (adjusted based on tag detection deficiency – 12%) were found in the avian colony at Potholes Reservoir. The combo acoustic-pit-tag tracked which section of the reach fish were taken. Allan Evans, Real Time looked at data regarding the avian colony. **Dotson will look at hydrophone detection history to link survival rates vs. tags found at the avian**

colony at Potholes Reservoir. The bird array installed at Wanapum Dam should help preclude the predation in the Wanapum Tailrace. Low numbers of birds have been seen in the Project this year. The Potholes Reservoir tern colony has doubled in size this year, but they are not being seen in the Project. Staff from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) that typically haze birds have been fishing for northern pikeminnow because birds haven't been an issue this year.

Dotson will include histograms and members suggestions in the final draft of The Survival of Acoustic Tagged Steelhead Smolts Through the Priest Rapids Project by the July 22, 2009 PRCC meeting. A review period will be determined then.

VII. Wanapum Dam Gate Seal Investigation Presentation – Vote to Approve – Thompson explained that the PRCC had previously approved the installing of the new gate seals during routine maintenance of bottom seals of the tainter gates at Wanapum Dam.

Since that approval, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has determined that seismic issues need to be addressed. Seismic criteria ratings of the dams were changed from 0.1g up to 0.4g. After experts analyzed seismic data, they determined that a .8g rating should be applied to both dams in the Project. This would require re-building the present spill gates at the dams.

In early 2010, a FERC conference will be held with all of the Mid-Columbia dam operators. Hopefully, at that time FERC will have defined seismic criteria developed for operators to follow.

A proposal of investigation was provided to FERC to delay gate seal replacement until the ramifications to the spill way gates is determined. When the trunions are rehabbed, structural modifications will need to be done to the gates. A finite structural analyzes would be completed to determine where the high stress points are. The gate and gate arms would be reinforced. The gates could be painted at that time. It could mean a one to two year delay in the installing of the new gate seals. Grant PUD hopes to start in early 2012, instead of 2011.

VIII. Fish Ladder Modifications Presentation – Mike Clement and Mike Nicholls presented Fish Ladder Modifications to the Priest Rapids Fish Forum (PRFF) on June 03, 2009, Approval was granted by the PRFF. Nordlund has also reviewed and approved the designs. Nichols explained that plating will be installed 18" from all walls and through orifice openings to allow for better lamprey passage through the Fish Ladders. To allow for quick and easy installation during the standard ladder outage this year, all pieces will be pre-fabricated. Two adult lamprey studies will be conducted during 2010. At time of installation, Nicholls will ask Nordlund to shut the ladder down two weeks earlier than normal to allow for work to be completed on time. Video fish counting stations will also be modified for more accurate lamprey

counting. Video fish count station modifications made last year at Wanapum have been very successful. Nordlund doesn't believe modifications will have any negative affects to salmon and steelhead passage. The video fish counting station will be relocated to its original location.

Twit questioned the ongoing undercount of Jacks and other fish at the Priest Rapids (PR) video count station. Nicholls explained that lines will be put on the background of the window to allow for accurate fish lengths to be determined by counters. Twit noted that the total PR counts have been lower than Wanapum, which are more in line with Rock Island counts. Nicholls explained that the PR count station is located at the extension of an orifice opening where there is no overflow. Gaps larger than a ½" were closed to prevent fish from moving through the system without being seen by the camera. **PRCC members approved Fish Ladder Modifications.**

IX. PRCC Habitat Plan LA-(a) (3) Section 2.3 – Vote to Approve – PRCC members approved Section 2.3 of the Habitat Plan via an e-mail vote. The vote was affirmed at today's meeting by the PRCC.

X. Updates:

- A. Steelhead and Sockeye Acoustic Tag Studies** – All fish have been released, and data is now being analyzed. It was a very successful year. Because 50% of the sockeye captured had "gill mites", they were still used for tagging.
- B. Iowa Trip** – Dotson updated members on the itinerary of their July 14th Iowa Trip. Blue Leaf Environmental is gathering information to be discussed in Iowa.
- C. Sub-Yearling Pilot JSATS Study** – The first release in the Wanapum tailrace happened on June 16, 2009. Today is the last day of the study releases, with data collection from those releases going until the end of July. Last year's pilot sub-yearling study showed only 50% of tags released at Wanapum were seen in the PR forebay. Nordlund suggested Chelan, Douglas and Grant PUD's discuss future sub-yearling studies and use of JSAT tags.
- D. Biomark Site Visit** – On June 16, 2009, Biomark looked at the feasibility of installing a pit-tag detection system at the Priest Rapids Topspill Bulkhead. Biomark believes a pit-tag antenna system could be designed and fabricated for the Topspill. Grant PUD would like to look at JSAT information from this year's study before determining if a detection system is pertinent. He noted that there are a lot of unknown's at this time regarding how the system would work. Dotson wondered if there are methodologies that may be more suited to sub-yearlings. He suggested that concrete survival be looked at without the reservoir component. The top spill PIT tag detection device

would only detect a certain percentage of the PIT tagged population of fish. **Dotson will ask Biomark to estimate Priest Rapids Dam sub-yearling detection efficiencies if a detection site is installed. Dotson will also ask Skalski for the needed sample size of sub-yearlings if PIT tags were used to conduct a survival study of sub-yearlings..**

E. Predator Study – There is a very low bird presence this year through out the Mid-Columbia. The PR wire array is complete. 600 pikeminnow over 400mm length have been collected in the tailrace by rod and reel. This length is double what they are catching with set lines. Next year, set lines and beach seining will be used. Rod and reel fishing techniques will be used in the tailrace of each dam next year.

XI. PRCC Hatchery SC Updates – McManus will provide a PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee update to Rohr via email.

XII. PRCC Habitat SC Updates – Rohr provided an update of PRCC Habitat Subcommittee (HSC) business. The HSC committed \$100,000 towards the purchase of Department of Transportation property near Dryden, WA. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) want to acquire the property for public access, and work with the Yakama nation in regards to fish supplementation purposes. Work continues at McIntyre Dam and the Okanogan River Restoration (ORRI) Project. Members will conduct a site visit of the McIntyre Dam and ORRI Projects in September. Project proposals can be presented to the HSC at any time without a long proposal process.

XIII. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- **May 27, 2009** - Approved

XIV. Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 22, 2009, 9:00 – 3:00, Grant PUD SeaTac Office.

A. Discussion to meet at Grant PUD SeaTac Office or Wanapum Dam – **PRCC members agreed to hold their July 22, 2009 meet at Wanapum Dam.**