



MEETING

Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee

Monday, November 23, 2009

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 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/Curt Dotson, GCPUD

Carl Merkle, CTUIR

Denny Rohr, Facilitator

Attendees: (*Denotes PRCC member)

Bryan Nordlund, NMFS*

Bill Tweit, WDFW*

Jim Craig, USFWS*

Tom Dresser, GCPUD*

Kevin Nordt, GCPUD

Denny Rohr, Facilitator

Jerry Marco, CT*

Bob Rose, YN*

Teresa Scott, WDFW

Curt Dotson, GCPUD*

Debbie Williams, GCPUD (on phone)

Action Items:

1. Dresser will find out if License Article 401 (b) of the 2008 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) License will need to be amended if the Fish Mode Operations SOA proposal is approved.
2. Dotson will work with Nordt to draft a Statement of Agreement (SOA) outlining *Proposed Operations of the Priest Rapids Project in Fish Mode during High Flow Periods* for distribution to PRCC members prior to the January meeting.
3. Dotson will distribute the Draft 2009 Steelhead and Sockeye Acoustic Tag Survival Study Report in mid-December.
4. Rohr will distribute Rose's comments to the Draft 2010 Steelhead and Sockeye Acoustic Tag Survival Study Plan to members upon receipt.
5. Dotson will discuss Tainter Gate 22 operations with Skalski and email PRCC members with his response and include Skalski's response into the *Draft 2010 PR Steelhead and Sockeye Behavior Study Plan*.
6. Progress and Implementation and Fish Operations annual reports will be submitted to the PRCC on Jan. 06, 2010 for a 30-day comment period (comments due Feb. 04, 2010).
7. Rohr will discuss the White River Nason View Property NNI funding process with PRCC Habitat Subcommittee members.

8. PRCC members will let Dresser know within two weeks if they agree to accept an executive summary in place of a full report for annual reporting purposes.
9. Rohr will distribute electronically a copy of the current PRCC Studies and Reports.
10. Williams will re-distribute the October 28, 2009 PRCC meeting minutes to PRCC members for a two week review.
11. Williams will distribute the Aquatic Invasive Species Plan to PRCC members for informational purposes only.
12. Williams will coordinate HCP and PRCC 2010 meeting dates with Ali Wick, Anchor Environmental, and distribute to members.

Decisions:

1. PRCC members approved the *Draft Study Proposal for Evaluating Gatewell Slot Fish Retention Time at Wanapum and Priest Rapids Dams in 2010*.
2. PRCC members acknowledged and understood the reason that the Priest Rapids left bank fish ladder will not be brought back into service until April 7, 2010. PRCC asked for on-going updates regarding this schedule.

Meeting Minutes

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Rohr welcomed the Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee (PRCC) and asked PRCC members and visitors to provide self-introductions.
- II. **Agenda Review** – No additions were made to the agenda.
- III. **Action Items Review** – Rohr reviewed and provided updates to action items identified during the October 28, 2009 PRCC meeting.
- IV. **Fish Mode Operations** - Kevin Nordt, Director of Power Management with Grant PUD requested the ability to utilize the generating capacity in excess of the maximum operating limit established by “Fish Mode” (FM), for each turbine-generator, as Emergency Contingency Reserve (ECR) capability. Emergency Contingency Reserve (spinning reserve) is a NERC/WECC required service for the secure operation of the electric grid.

The current operational practice is to spill excess water during high flows in order to maintain the needed ECR capability and not exceed the 15.7 kcfs turbine flow established via “fish mode”. This “cushion” below the “15.7 kcfs fish mode ceiling” is to help maintain power system reliability

At the dams, FM operations are maintained for the duration of the spring and summer out-migrations for the survival benefit it provides. This request is only relevant if “rare contingency events” (RCE) were needed and river inflows to Wanapum are in excess of 125 kcfs. At high flows, the “excess spill” is reduced during these contingency events by allowing additional flow (above fish mode flows) to pass via

the turbines. A RCE is only allowed to last a maximum of 60 minutes, thus taking a turbine out of FM no more than 60 minutes per event. At low flows, it's not an issue, because of excess turbine capacity available at the dam.

Nordt explained that in order to provide ECR capacity, and still maximize the generating capacity of fish mode, it would need to be allowed to reside above the ceiling set by operating in fish mode. The only time ECR would be used is if another utility needed power because of an emergency. "Emergency" (a.k.a RCE) is defined as an unanticipated loss of generating unit; not a planned outage. Reserves can only be relied on for a maximum of 60 minutes and are intended to be a stop-gap to allow the utility enough time to make other arrangements for getting through the emergency loss of power generation, (starting the next operating hour).

Nordt was hesitant to predict the frequency that ECR might be used, but guessed that 3 events per high flow spring season, for a total of 180 minutes (maximum), was a possibility. Depending on a high water year, the window could be longer. Nordt noted that he hasn't seen 10 events in the recent past. Nordt stated that Grant PUD would like to have PRCC approval of ERC because the utility only has 10 minutes to respond in event of an emergency. Nordt was 95% confident that during 3,000 hours of fish spill, there is only a 3% chance this might happen.

Before implementation, Grant PUD biologists and Power Management staff would draft a plan outlining a priority scheme as to when and which turbine would be used. Engineers and biologist would educate dam operators of FM protocols prior to fish spill season. Grant PUD biologist would be notified by dam operators or engineers of an event after turbines have been placed back online. Biological impacts relative to the event would be determined. An incidence report will be provided to the PRCC within 5 days of the event.

Dresser will find out if License Article 401 (b) of the 2008 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) License will need to be amended if this proposal is approved. The 2008 Biological Opinion doesn't make any reference to turbines, but a conference to discuss this proposal should be scheduled with NOAA Fisheries.

Dotson will work with Nordt to draft a Statement of Agreement (SOA) outlining *Proposed Operations of the Priest Rapids Project in Fish Mode during High Flow Periods* for distribution to PRCC members prior to the January meeting. Nordlund reminded PRCC members that FM was part of the Biological Opinion that led to the license, and suggests that a Biological Evaluation be conducted to see if it's needed. If there are more than three occurrences (REC) in one season, PRCC members would meet to discuss future FM operations.

Dotson wanted PRCC members to understand that Nordt is only talking about less than 1% of the fish season. That 3 hours (as the example Nordt gave) out of 3,000 hours of “fish mode season” is 0.1% of the time.

Dotson and Nordt hope to have approval of the proposal by January to allow time to get ready for fish mode season.

- V. **Draft 2009 Steelhead and Sockeye Acoustic Tag Survival Study Report** – Dotson will incorporate comments received from PRCC members into the report. **Dotson will distribute the Draft 2009 Steelhead and Sockeye Acoustic Tag Survival Study Report in mid-December.**
- VI. **Draft 2010 Steelhead and Sockeye Acoustic Tag Survival Study Plan** - The *Draft 2010 Steelhead and Sockeye Acoustic Tag Survival Study Plan* proposal was distributed on November 01, 2009. Comments were received from Scott Carlon. Rose asked for additional time to review the plan. If he has comments, he will send them to Dotson by November 25th. **Rohr will distribute Rose’s comments to the Draft 2010 Steelhead and Sockeye Acoustic Tag Survival Study Plan to members upon receipt.** If Rose has no comments, PRCC members agreed to approve the plan.
- VII. **Draft 2010 Priest Rapids Steelhead and Sockeye Behavior Study Plan - Comments due by 12/18/09 (soft date).** Dotson explained that this study is a repeat of the *2009 Steelhead and Sockeye Behavior Study Plan* approved by the PRCC last year, with the exception of changing sluiceway spill. Based on survival estimates for the sluiceway passage route, the sluiceway will be “pinned” closed in the 2010 study and there will now be bottom-spill through Tainter Gate-22 (TG). Because TG 22 operational methodologies will be included in the *2010 Priest Rapids Steelhead and Sockeye Behavior Study Plan*, Dotson explained that if he gets a head nod from the PRCC on the plan now, he’s OK waiting until January or mid-February for the final decision on TG 22 operating protocols. (See discussion below under VII, A)
- A. **Options - Tainter Gate 22** - Dotson distributed a white paper outlining four *Priest Rapids Tainter Gate 22 Flow Options for the 2010 Priest Rapids Top-Spill Operations Configurations*. Members discussed pros and cons of the proposed options.
- No Flow passes through TG-22. Predation issues in slack water areas were a concern with this option.
 - 1.8 kcfs passes via bottom-spill. This option is the preference of the design team – same volume of flow through TG-22 as in past years, just from a different point in the water column.
 - 4.3 kcfs passes through both TG-21 and TG-22 via bottom-spill. This option was also acceptable by the design team.

- 6.8 kcfs passes through both TG-21 and TG-22 via bottom-spill. The design team didn't recommend this option – their concern is that now the amount of flow going through the top-spill test configuration is vastly changed, along with the source of flow through TG-22; making it much harder to determine what was a positive or negative influence for the 2010 operations if fish results are different from the 2009 season.

Rose suggested a fifth option, finding the behavioral difference between options 3 and 4. Dotson explained that the 2004 Wanapum Top-Spill study was conducted in a similar fashion to that proposed by Rose, and that Skalski approved of the method used then. **Dotson will discuss Tainter Gate 22 operations that Rose suggested with Skalski concerning needed sample sizes to make a valid determination and email PRCC members with his response and include Skalski's response in the *Draft 2010 PR Steelhead and Sockeye Behavior Study Plan*.**

Nordlund questioned if the dead zone created in the tailrace by TG 22 will be solved with any of the proposed options. Dotson suggested that when the 1:20 model in Iowa is completed, all proposed options be tested via dye and video taped to address Nordlund's question. Dotson hopes to have answers to PRCC member's questions by the January or February PRCC meeting. Results will depend on model construction schedule/completion.

- B.** The Downstream Passage Alternatives Action Plan; Progress and Implementation Plan, and the Fish Operations Plan are due to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) by February 15th. Dresser explained that he hopes to have the majority of Grant PUD's annual reports in PRCC member's hands for review by **Jan. 06, 2010 for a 30-day comment period. Comments are due on all annual reports by February 04, 2010.**

- VIII. Update: Draft Gatewell Exclusion Screen Testing Plan** - Dotson distributed the *Draft Study Proposal for Evaluating Gatewell Slot Fish Retention Time Study at Wanapum and Priest Rapids Dams in 2010*. A minimum of 240 steelhead and sockeye smolts will be acoustically tagged to evaluate how long salmonid smolts that find their way into the Bulkhead Gate Slot or Wheel Gate Slot at Wanapum and Priest Rapids dams stay in the slots, are delayed, or die while in the slots due to not finding their way out of the gate slot and back into the main flow of the river. The study will also help identify if it's truly necessary to install exclusion screens as mandated by the 2008 FERC License, Article 402, or if Gate Well dipping should continue if it's determined that fish spend minimal amounts of time in Gate Well slots.

Skalski has reviewed the proposed study and confirmed the numbers are solid. **PRCC members approved the *Draft Study Proposal for Evaluating Gatewell Slot Fish Retention Time at Wanapum and Priest Rapids Dams in 2010.***

- IX. **White River Nason View Property** - PRCC members did not approve No Net Impact (NNI) Funds being used to purchase this property, but were supportive of its purchase if the PRCC Habitat Subcommittee (HSC) agreed to use other Habitat Funds. There appears to be sufficient money in other Habitat Funds to cover the funds being requested. Rohr commented to members that the HSC approved the purchase contingent upon use of NNI Funds and receipt of funding by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB). Tweit explained that he spoke with Dennis Beich, WDFW HSC representative, and Tweit was comfortable with this proposal being sent back to the HSC unapproved. **Rohr will discuss the White River Nason View Property proposal with PRCC Habitat Subcommittee members.**

Comment was also made that Grant PUD will be holding a public meeting on December 02, 2009 at the Best Western Icicle Inn in Leavenworth, WA to discuss White River spring Chinook acclimation and supplementation matters.

- X. **Executive Summary of Avian Predation Annual Report** – Following up from the discussion at the October 28th PRCC meeting, Dresser distributed an executive summary that Grant PUD proposes be used for annual PRCC updates instead of the full reports previously provided because they are no longer required by FERC. Grant PUD staff would distribute the executive summary and could also provide a presentation to PRCC members if need be. A full report would not be generated as in the past. Because of the tie to the BiOp, **PRCC members will let Dresser know within two weeks if they agree to accept an executive summary in place of a full report for annual reporting purposes.**

- XI. **Review of Subyearling Workshop** - A Subyearling Workshop will be held at the SeaTac Radisson Hotel tomorrow, November 24, 2009 at 8:30a.m.

- XII. **Updates:**

A. **Record for the PRCC Studies and Reports** – Distributed and discussed by Rohr. **Rohr will also distribute an electronic copy of the PRCC Studies and Reports.**

B. **Discussion/Review regarding Updates of PRCC Subcommittees and Other Committees** – Rohr continued the discussion from the October 28th PRCC meeting and requested committee direction regarding this subject. After discussion, PRCC members directed Rohr to work with the other committee facilitators to enact a reporting process, and to have reports submitted to Rohr for distribution to PRCC members.

Accordingly, PRCC members directed Rohr to request facilitators from the PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee and PRCC Habitat Subcommittee to provide a one page written report monthly, and facilitators from the Fall Chinook Work Group, Hanford Reach Work Group, and the Priest Rapids Fish Forum (PRFF) to provide a one page written report quarterly. Additionally, while the PRFF is in the process of developing implementation plans, PRCC members requested that the PRFF submit reports monthly, instead of quarterly.

- C. **PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee** – No discussion took place.
- D. **PRCC Habitat Subcommittee (HSC)** - See discussion above under IX.

XIII. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- **October 28, 2009** - Nordlund questioned the percentage of PIT-tags found at the Potholes Reservoir tern colony because of a discrepancy in the minutes. **Williams will re-distribute the October 28, 2009 PRCC meeting minutes to PRCC members for a two week review.**

XIV. **Water Quality Update** - The *Wanapum Total Dissolved Gas Report* was distributed on October 25, 2009. Comments were due November 20, 2009. The *2009 Wanapum Future Unit Spill Season Report* was distributed for informational purposes only; no comments are required. The *Gas Abatement Plan* is under review with comments due by December 31, 2009. The 2nd draft of the *Aquatic Invasive Species Plan* was sent out for review by the PRFF with comments due from PRFF committee members by December 31, 2009. **Williams will distribute the Aquatic Invasive Species Plan to PRCC members for informational purposes only.**

XV. **Fish Ladder Update** - Dewatering of the Priest Rapids left bank fish ladder will take place after Thanksgiving and be out of commission until April 7, 2010 while lamprey passage modifications are performed. The ladder is usually watered on April 1st of each year (as required). **PRCC members understood the reasoning presented by Grant PUD regarding the need of some additional time (one week) due to on-going lamprey work in the ladders. PRCC members requested that Grant PUD continue to provide monthly updates to them regarding ladder work and its schedule (i.e. regarding possible impacts) for the fish ladders coming back into operation the first week of April.**

XVI. **Next Meeting:** The December PRCC meeting was cancelled with the understanding that Rohr will schedule a conference call if needed. **Williams will coordinate HCP and PRCC 2010 meeting dates with Ali Wick, Anchor Environmental, and distribute to members.**