



Meeting Minutes

Priest Rapids Fish Forum

Wednesday, March 04, 2009

10:00 – 4:00

Grant PUD Natural Resources Office
Ephrata, WA

Members

Stephen Lewis, USFWS
Bob Rose, YN
Keith Hatch, BIA
Marcie Mangold, WDOE

Patrick Verhey, WDFW
Carl Merkle, CTUIR
Joe Peone, CCT
Mike Clement, GCPUD

Attendees

Patrick Verhey, WDFW
Keith Hatch, BIA
Bob Rose/Donella Miller, Yakama Nation
Blaine Parker, CRITFC
Larry Hildebrand, Golder Assoc.
Alyssa Buck, Wanapum
Ben Lenz, GCPUD
Ross Hendrick, GCPUD
Kevin Malone, Facilitator

Brad James, WDFW
Marcie Mangold, WDOE
Bob Heinith, CRITFC (by phone)
Joe Miller, Chelan PUD
Jim Powell, Freshwater Fisheries Society of B.C
Mike Clement, GCPUD
Keith Garner, GCPUD
Debbie Williams, GCPUD

Action Items:

1. **Mangold will draft a memorandum documenting BIA's voting membership status in the PRFF.**
2. **Williams will send SOA examples to members.**
3. **Williams will add a Decision Folder to the PRFF website.**
4. **Heinith will send his protocol edits to Williams for distribution to the committee.**
5. **YN, WDFW and WDOE will meet to discuss the White Sturgeon Management Plan.**
6. **Malone will speak to USFWS regarding their vote to file for an extension of the White Sturgeon Management Plan.**
7. **WDFW and Hildebrand will determine what the impact of taking 5 fish from the Wanapum Reservoir will be.**

8. Parker will review the AIS document and provide comments.
9. Hendrick will update PRFF members after the Aquatic Invasive Species meeting on Friday, March 6, 2009. He will notify the committee if Grant PUD will file for a FERC extension of time or not.
10. PRFF members were asked to prioritize what they want the committee to accomplish in the near future.

Decisions:

1. PRFF members agreed that all committee decisions should be documented with a memorandum, and that the memorandum include supporting rational for the decision.

Meeting Minutes

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Attendees introduced themselves around the table and on the conference line.
- II. **Agenda Review** – Malone reviewed the agenda, no additions were added.
- III. **Action Item Review**
 - A **BIA Request for Voting Status** – The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) was included as a voting member of the PRFF because of their fish management authority as stated in a letter provided to the Washington Department of Ecology (WDOE) by BIA. **Mangold will draft a memorandum documenting BIA's voting membership status in the PRFF.**
- IV. **PRFF Membership and Protocol Discussion** –
 - A **PRFF Protocols Review and Approval** – Attendees discussed protocols as they relate to meeting locations. Meeting protocols state meetings can be held at either the Grant PUD Ephrata or SeaTac offices, or other locations as determined by members. After discussion, the definition of consensus will remain as stated in the 401 Certificate. Rose questioned if PRFF members would like to use Statement of Agreements (SOA) to document decisions made by the committee. **Williams will send SOA examples to members. Williams will add a Decision Folder to the PRFF website. PRFF members agreed that all committee decisions should be documented with a memorandum, and that the memorandum include supporting rational for the decision.**

Heinith suggested agenda items be proposed by voting members, and that the time allotment to discuss items should be decided by the proposing members. He also recommended that Roberts Rules of Order be followed, and that motions are made, seconded, and discussed before a final vote.

Heinith will send his protocol edits to Williams for distribution to the committee. Heinith's edits will be discussed at the April meeting.

V. White Sturgeon Management Plan Review -

Review and comment on White Sturgeon Management Plan

Hildebrand and Powell answered member's questions regarding the White Sturgeon Management Plan (WSMP). Discussion topics covered were: age of fish at release, use of local broodstock vs. out sourcing, genetic diversity, sturgeon genetics, and plan review periods. Also discussed were sturgeon hatchery locations, predation programs, downstream movement, and regional coordination.

Lenz explained that the Yakama Nation (YN) and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) support filing an extension of time with FERC, but questioned the amount of time needed. Lenz made it clear that if an extension is filed, no field work will be completed in 2009. Grant PUD will not violate a FERC order by implementing any field work prior to FERC approval, explained Dresser. Grant PUD can't legally expend funds without FERC approval because it would be classified as misappropriation of public funds, noted Clement. From the prospective of the species, Hildebrand calculates that 12 sturgeons would be lost during a one year extension period. Hildebrand and Powell believe the level of urgency from a biological/technical standpoint is critical. Rose doesn't agree with Grant PUD's interpretation of the license, and believes there is another way to start 2009 field work without FERC's approval.

Lenz stated that Grant PUD does want to coordinate regionally on sturgeon issues and questioned the next steps to accomplish this task.

Clement explained that fish previously released into the Columbia are being caught in predation programs by Chelan PUD and Grant PUD. Miller noted that data regarding fish caught in these programs will be distributed soon.

Hildebrand will include in the plan data that shows fish that have gone downstream, the data will be qualified and quantified. FR2W receivers could be placed downriver of Priest Rapids Dam to collect this data.

The 401 Certificate outlines the plan review period. Hildebrand explained that after the first three years of baseline data collection, the plan should be reviewed and adjusted.

The Priest Rapids Hatchery site has been selected to locate the new sturgeon hatchery. 700 gpm of water is available for the

facility, noted Clement. Designs could move forward very quickly once the plan is approved, stated Hildebrand. Malone noted that a hatchery site location might be a policy decision that needs to be bumped up to the policy representatives. Rose suggested that the PRFF take an inventory of facilities that would meet the requirements of a sturgeon hatchery. Rose explained that the YN and Columbia Inter-tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) are still determining how their Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) obligation comes into play regarding sturgeon facilities.

Rose recommended that the YN, WDFW and WDOE meet within the next two weeks to discuss regional strategies prior to voting on the WSMP. Verhey concurred. **YN, WDFW and WDOE will meet to discuss the White Sturgeon Management Plan.** Once edits are made, their comments will be distributed to the PRFF. After their meeting, PRFF members will hold a conference call to vote either to send the WSMP to FERC, or to file for an extension. If agreement can't be reached on the WSMP, members agreed to file an extension of time with FERC. Dresser suggested that if an extension is filed, the cover letter explain the committee would like to have the plan expedited to allow for field work in 2009. All PRFF members agreed the committee's objective is to get the plan submitted by the April 17, 2009 deadline. **Malone will speak to USFWS regarding their vote to file for an extension of the White Sturgeon Management Plan.**

Brad James, WDFW explained that folks conducting the Hanford Nuclear Reservation (HNR) clean up have requested 5 sturgeon (4 to 5 feet in length) from the Wanapum Reservoir to be used as a control population for a Columbia River Toxin Study. The study will determine harm to sturgeon from contaminants of the HNR. Because the Wanapum sturgeon are upstream, they wouldn't have been impacted by toxins in the Hanford Reach (HR) or McNary Pool. WDFW provides technical backup to WDOE. WDFW requires a scientific collection permit for interaction with the HR cleanup. WDFW asked the PRFF for feedback regarding this issue. WDFW has requested that individual organs be sampled to gather more comprehensive data. PRFF members were concerned with taking sturgeon that are in their reproductive years. **WDFW and Hildebrand will determine what the impact of taking 5 fish from the Wanapum Reservoir will be.**

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Update – Hendrick explained that a draft AIS was distributed January 28, 2009 for a 30 day comment period. Comments were received from WDFW on February 02, 2009. Grant PUD, WDFW and WDOE will meet on Friday, March 6, 2009 to

discuss the plan in depth. WDFW's comments included a request that Grant PUD file for a one year Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) extension. Mangold noted that the 401 Certificate recommends an educational plan be included in the AIS Plan. **Parker will review the AIS document and provide comments. Hendrick will update PRFF members after the Aquatic Invasive Species meeting on Friday, March 6, 2009. He will notify the committee if Grant PUD will need to file for a FERC extension of time or not. If yes, Malone will ask the Voting Members to approve a motion to request the extension from FERC.**

Rose questioned if Grant PUD will implement any parts of the plan if it is deferred. Dresser explained page 68, 69, 70 and 71 of the FERC License states "Each plan shall be presented to the FERC Commission for approval prior to implementation. Dresser noted that if an extension of time is filed, letters or emails from PRFF members stating their support would be beneficial.

VI. Additional Items – Grant PUD would like to develop a five year work plan. **PRFF members were asked to prioritize what they want the committee to accomplish in the near future.** A bull trout hydrological monitoring plan is being developed between Grant PUD and USFWS. In order for Grant PUD to meet their April 17, 2009 deadline, it will be sent to PRFF members soon.

VII. Meeting Minutes

- February 04 will be posted to the website.

VIII. Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 01, 2009, Grant PUD Natural Resources Office, Ephrata, WA.