Grant County
PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT
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Meeting Minutes

Priest Rapids Fish Forum

Wednesday, September 02, 2009
9:00 – 3:00
Grant PUD SeaTac Office

Technical Members

Stephen Lewis, USFWS
Marcie Mangold, WDOE
Tom Dresser, GCPUD
Ben Lenz, GCPUD
Patrick Verhey, WDFW
Bob Dach, BIA
Mike Clement, GCPUD

ATTENDEES:

Brad James, WDFW (on phone)
Molly Hallock, WDFW
Patrick Verhey, WDFW
Mike Clement, GCPUD
Ben Lenz, GCPUD (on phone)
Debbie Williams, GCPUD
Brian Nass, LGL
Marcie Mangold, WDOE (on phone)
Bob Rose, YN (on phone)
Keith Hatch (on phone)
Ross Hendrick, GCPUD
Kevin Malone, Facilitator

Meeting Minutes

I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Attendees introduced themselves around the table and on the conference line.

II. **Agenda Review** – No additions were made to the agenda.

III. **Action Item Review** - All action items were reviewed.

IV. **PRFF Protocol Discussion**

A Discussion and proposed Vote on Protocols – No discussion or vote took place because of the lack of a quorum.

V. **White Sturgeon Update** - FERC approval hasn't been received yet, so field work (Section C of Plan) will be moved to 2010. FERC approval was received for the Native Resident Fish Management Plan on Monday, August 31, 2009. In order of submission, Grant PUD anticipates that the White Sturgeon Management Plan should be next

up for approval. Via Web Ex Conferencing, Lenz and Clement shared video of their trip to the White Sturgeon facility in Cranbrook, B.C. Approximately one million eggs were taken during the 2009 spawning season in B.C. Grant PUD staff will be visiting the facility again during the various life cycles and invited PRFF members to attend. Juvenile releases happen in the spring, with spawning taking place mid June to the end of July. Disease issues, and how to handle them were discussed. Biosecurity precautions were followed diligently at the facility.

VI. **Aquatic Invasive Species (AISP) and Shallow Water Monitoring Plan (SWMP)** - Hendrick provided an update on the AIS and Shallow Water Monitoring Plans. The second preliminary draft of the AIS was sent to WDOE and WDFW on September 01, 2009. After consultation with Washington Department of Ecology (WDOE) and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), PRFF members will be provided with a 30 day review period. The final report will be submitted to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and WDOE prior to March 31, 2010.

AISP - The plan covers education (with focus on recreational use), monitoring designed to help catch new species before they establish themselves (36 samples collected throughout each reservoir monthly for presence/absence of zebra/quagga mussel veligers, substrate monitoring, and shoreline/boat launch AIS plant surveys), and rapid response (pro-active approach; coordination with WDFW/WDOE).

SWMP – Hendrick explained that main purpose today's presentation was to provide PRFF with an opportunity to discuss and provide input on selection of sampling locations, based on past studies. Hendrick explained that past (1999-2002) water quality monitoring efforts have provided a good picture of Dissolved Oxygen (DO), pH, and water temperatures in each reservoir. These locations were selected by the Limnological Solution Working Group during the re-licensing period, based on available information on habitat use. These locations are also well-mixed, which is in-line with WDOE's water quality standards (which state that samples taken for compliance purposes should be taken from well-mixed portions of the river). Hendrick suggests that in order to gather direct comparisons with historical data and to remain within well-mixed portions of the river, the same monitoring locations be used for the SWMP as in the 1999 - 2002 studies. Mangold stated that WDOE will be checking to make sure the SWMP sampling locations are in well-mixed portions of the river, in accordance with WDOE water quality standards.

Lewis asked clarifying question regarding the purpose of the SWMP in relation to the Bull Trout Management Plan (BTMP). Hendrick noted that the SWMP is not specifically intended to meet the BTMP water quality monitoring components, as the fixed-site monitoring stations

(which collect data year-round) will be used for that purpose as identified in the BTMP.

Hendrick will begin preparing the draft SWMP using the same locations used in the 1999 – 2002 studies, with the goal of sending it out for PRFF review by November 01, 2009. I f members have areas other than those discussed in today's presentation that they would like to have monitored, he asked that they be emailed to him prior to the next meeting on October 07, 2009 along with support of the rational (biological or other) behind the request.

VII. **Pacific Lamprey Study Plan**

A **Group Discussion of any items related to the 2010 Adult Lamprey Evaluation prior to drafting of Final Study Plan** - Nass explained that PRFF member's comments have been incorporated into the Pacific Lamprey Study Plan (PLSP).

Members discussed objectives of the study and tagging alternatives. Rose would like to understand the behavior of fish as they approach and enter the fish ladder, and questioned if flow reductions would make a difference.

The primary goal of the study is to tag 300 fish to evaluate fish ladder improvements and determine passage efficiency. If more fish are trapped, Nass explained that they would also be tagged. Half Duplex Pit-tags will be used for the study, with new detection arrays being placed in the fish ladders. Grant PUD will also be tagging lamprey with acoustic tags to evaluate the lower PRD fishway and to see if changes to the ladder operations have improved since the 2001 – 2002 studies.

Rose explained that because JSAT tags are being used to tag fish at Bonneville Dam, he would like to monitor those fish as well. The Yakama Nation has 95 radio tags that could possibly be used for lamprey tributary behavior studies. Rose would like to coordinate use of the radio tags if anyone has ideas of how to use them. Nass noted there is no intention to install radio tags in lamprey at Priest Rapids (PR), or to monitor fish that have been tagged with them other than monitoring HD PIT-tagged fish that were tagged by the COE downstream. Rose asked that all other fishways in the Priest Rapids Project (Project) also be monitored for lamprey passage. Clement noted that all 6 fish ladder entrances are identical and because the PRD left-bank entrance receives the highest amount of lamprey activity, that is the location which will be monitored. Previous studies provided information that suggests that fish readily approached and entered fishway entrances at both Wanapum and Priest Rapids dams.

Acoustic tags being used for the lamprey study are left over from the salmonid spring study. A tag battery life test has been conducted and will be approximately 21 to 25 days.

An acoustic telemetry study will be conducted at the PR left bank junction pool.

Members discussed the following contingency plans if there is a low run year. Structure passage efficiency - video, entrance to exit – HD PIT, junction pool use - Acoustic, and nighttime flow reductions. Nass questioned what the committee would want to achieve by implementing nighttime flow reductions. He explained that Grant PUD is addressing lamprey passage in the lower fishway by modifications to the fishway.

Fish ladder outages will start in mid - November. If so we need to know any requested changes before then. Plan to move ahead with testing things, we will continue to move ahead with this plan, and any adjustments would be made on the fly, stated Nass.

Rose suggested that acoustic tag receivers be placed at the exit of the fishway to determine if fish go into the turbines and back through the Project, or continue up stream.

The plan is to trap lamprey every night until the target sample size is collected, then traps will be pulled. In an effort to minimize recapture there is no plan to sample the run.

Rose suggested that an alternative strategy to fish collection be considered. Because lampreys travel through the Project from August to October, Rose questions if fish trapped at the beginning of the season might be different than fish trapped later in the season. Could changes in water temperature change a lamprey's performance, size, and metabolical capabilities? Clement cautioned that as soon as the water cools off, the fish stop moving and begin over wintering and could possibly not move through the fishway at all. Rose asked that different strategies be added to the study proposal. Clement suggested that Rose provide some alternate strategies for the group to discuss but that because this is a passage study, we should try and select fish earlier in the run that are more representative of actively moving and migratory fish. Fish later in the run, would be more likely to be representative of fish that are preparing to over winter, thus, we would potentially not be able to monitor or measure there passage.

Fish count discrepancies between PR and Rock Island Dam were discussed. Fish counting methodologies and differences between PUD's is a concern. Rose suggested that a mobile tracker be included in the Study Plan, so that when acoustic

tags leave the Project, the ability to track them upriver remains. Clement stated that can be included in the study, but reminded members that it's difficult to track fish in noisy area's. As soon as crowders are installed, lamprey will have no other way to get through the fishways but through the video count stations. That should make counts in the Project extremely accurate. The release of acoustic tagged fish in pulses of 3 might give a more efficient with mobile tracking, suggested Rose.

Because tracking fish after they leave the Project is outside the original scope of work, Nass and Clement will have to discuss this issue further. Clement thought that a boat survey of the reservoir could possibly be conducted to monitor the acoustically tagged lamprey. Rose noted that he would like to have the ability to extend the nature of the study. Clement suggested that Bob provide this in more detail for future discussions.

VIII. **Next Meeting**: October 07, 2009, Grant PUD Natural Resources Office, Ephrata, WA.