



Meeting Minutes

Fall Chinook Working Group

Monday, 8 March 2010
1:00 – 5:00 pm

Battelle
Wenatchee River Conference Room
Richland, WA

Technical Members

Paul Wagner, NMFS
Robert Heinith, CRITFC
Holly Harwood, BPA
Keith Truscott, CPUD
Bill Tweit, WDFW
Marcie Mangold, WDOE
Russell Langshaw, GCPUD
Steve Hemstrom, CPUD

Joe Skalicky/Dan Diggs, USFWS
Paul Ward/Bob Rose, YN
Brett Swift, American Rivers
Tom Kahler, DPUD
Paul Hoffarth, WDFW
John Clark, ADFG
Todd Pearsons, GCPUD

ATTENDEES:

Paul Wagner, NMFS
Bob Heinith, CRITFC (on phone)
Russell Langshaw, GCPUD
Joe Skalicky, USFWS (on phone)
Marcie Mangold, WDOE (on phone)
Alyssa Buck, Wanapum (on phone)

Bob Rose, YN
Geoff McMichael, Battelle
John Clark, ADFG
Paul Hoffarth, WDFW
Steve Hays, CPUD
Tracy Hillman, Facilitator

Action Items:

- 1. Russell Langshaw will provide the FCWG with the revised draft Flow Fluctuation Report before the April meeting.**
- 2. Bob Rose will provide an update to the FCWG on the possible use of WASCO Funds to support Hanford Reach Studies.**
- 3. Tracy Hillman will notify the HRWG that there will be a meeting on Monday, 5 April to discuss, among other things, the necessity of more intensive entrapment and stranding studies and the funding of these studies.**

4. **Tracy Hillman will revise the invitation letter to reflect the recommendations by the FCWG and submit it for review before the April meeting.**
5. **Geoff McMichael and Joe Skalicky will finish compiling information on fry entrapment and stranding and provide that information to the FCWG for review.**

Meeting Minutes

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Attendees introduced themselves around the table and on the conference line (see list of attendees above).
- II. **Agenda Review** – The FCWG adopted the proposed agenda.
- III. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**
 - February 02, 2010 – No draft meeting minutes were available for review. The FCWG will review the draft February meeting minutes in April.
- IV. **Review of Action Items** - Action items identified during the February meeting were reviewed and discussed.
 - #1 – Members will review the edits to the Draft Study Plan.
 - #2 – Members will provide Tracy Hillman with any information (data and reports) that they would like to share with the expert panel.
 - #3 – Members will review the draft invitation letter to the expert panel and send comments/edits to Tracy Hillman by Friday, 15 February.
 - #4 – Russell Langshaw will send the Draft Flow Fluctuation Report to the FCWG for review.
 - #5 – Members will compile a list of environmental factors that they believe should be included in the productivity assessment.
 - #6 – Joe Skalicky and Geoff McMichael will compile information on stranding studies conducted before the Hanford Reach Agreement.
- V. **Update on Flow Fluctuation Report**
 - A **Discussion** – Russell Langshaw indicated that the revised Draft Flow Fluctuation Report is nearly complete. The statistics are complete, but the figures need to be updated. Russell provided the FCWG with a copy of the Executive Summary to the draft report. Russell noted that he would provide the complete draft report to the group before the April meeting.

Russell Langshaw will provide the FCWG with the revised draft Flow Fluctuation Report before the April meeting.

VI. Study Plan

- A Use of NNI Funds** – Tracy Hillman reported that the PRCC invited him to their February meeting to discuss the draft study plan and to talk about the use of NNI funds to help support Hanford Reach studies. However, just prior to the PRCC meeting, members of the PRCC indicated that NNI Funds cannot be used to support Hanford Reach studies. Therefore, Tracy was asked not to attend the meeting.

Bob Rose noted that he and others will be on a conference call on Thursday (11 March) to discuss the possible use of WASCO Funds in supporting Hanford Reach studies. Bob stated that he will report back to the FCWG on their findings.

Bob Rose will provide an update to the FCWG on the possible use of WASCO Funds to support Hanford Reach Studies.

Russell Langshaw suggested that there may be ways to package Hanford Reach studies so that NNI Funds could be used to support certain studies. The focus could be on productivity studies and whether current protections could be modified to save water to benefit other Covered Species. Bob Rose indicated that was possible but was unlikely to build support for funding projects with NNI Funds.

- B Revised Study Plan** – Tracy Hillman informed the FCWG that the goal of the meeting would be to try and develop an accepted study plan supported by all members of the Working Group. Tracy began the discussion by asked when the Study Plan needs to be finalized and submitted to FERC. Russell Langshaw indicated that a final plan needs to be submitted by 30 July 2010. FERC has already approved the Draft Study Plan. Russell indicated that Grant PUD will not ask for any extensions.

Several members of the FCWG indicated that the current draft is not acceptable. Russell stated that consensus is not necessary; although Ecology prefers consensus. In the absence of consensus, Grant PUD may move forward with implementing the draft study plan until Ecology tells them to stop or Ecology can identify which studies should be implemented.

Joe Skalicky indicated that the USFWS submitted comments and would appreciate a response to their comments from Grant PUD. Joe stated that the USFWS cannot support the Draft Study Plan because additional field studies are needed, flow fluctuation language needs to be removed from the document, there is no discussion on ramping rates, and there is only one brood year

available to address flow effects under the agreement. The USFWS does support implementation of the studies identified under Phase I in the Draft Study Plan. In addition, the USFWS supports the CWT approach to estimate juvenile abundance and survival.

Paul Hoffarth reminded the group that 2010 should be used to plan the studies. Implementation should occur in 2011. Joe stated that field assessments will require at least three years.

Russell re-emphasized that the agreement is based on adaptive management and it is in everyone's best interest to develop and conduct robust studies.

Tracy Hillman indicated that there appears to be two key questions that need to be addressed: (1) what is the timeline for monitoring? and (2) what studies should be implemented?

Russell noted that the timeline depends on the study, but as much as possible needs to be done by 2014 (the re-opener). The adaptive management process will guide studies beyond 2014.

With regard to the second question, Joe Skalicky stated that the USFWS is fine with the studies proposed under Phase I in the Draft Study Plan, but the following additional studies should be included:

- 5.2 Evaluate the entrapment sampling efficiency and accuracy for juvenile fall Chinook.
- 5.3 Quantify the effect of flow fluctuations on stranding of juvenile fall Chinook.
- 5.4 Conduct controlled flow fluctuation experiments to identify specific flow bands and fluctuation magnitudes that entrap disproportionately large numbers of juvenile Chinook.
- 5.5 Develop an index sampling program including index sampling tools and methodologies that are statistically rigorous for estimating entrapment fates, the total number of entrapped fall Chinook, and juvenile Chinook mortality throughout the Reach and with adequate temporal resolution.
- 3.3 Determine the behavioral components of the spawning process for fall Chinook, and the physical conditions selected by spawners under "normative" (relatively stable) streamflow conditions to derive "true, baseline" habitat requirements.
- 3.4 Conduct a case-control spawning study under alternate or Agreement flow scenarios for comparison to the

results from the “baseline” spawning study to describe the relative effects of these scenarios.

- 7.2 Evaluate the feasibility and benefit of re-regulation of streamflows coming into the Priest Rapids Project to change the flow pattern downstream into the Hanford Reach for the benefit of both juvenile and adult fall Chinook.
- 7.4 Evaluate the effect of various ramping rates as they relate to the entrapment and stranding of juvenile fall Chinook.

Russell indicated that Grant PUD considers the controlled flow experiment a method rather than a study. Many of the studies listed could provide valuable information, but it is important that science guide which studies will be implemented. Grant PUD will not fund 5.5, 7.2, or 7.4. Proposal 5.5 for an index area is more appropriate to be funded under the Hanford Reach Agreement studies. Proposal 7.4 relates to ramping rates and will not be funded because ramping rate constraints are not feasible. The other studies (3.3, 3.4, 5.2, and 5.3), Grant PUD will not fund during Phase I, but would co-fund, if necessary, during Phase II.

Joe offered that if Grant PUD funds studies 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5 in full, the USFWS may not request that the other studies (3.3, 3.4, 7.2, and 7.4) be implemented in Phase I (Joe noted that although he was offering this compromise, he would have to get approval from his superiors). Russell indicated that he would have to run this by his managers. Bob Rose voiced his concern about negotiating studies on and off the table. He indicated that the Yakama Nation does not support these negotiations. John Clark was concerned about committing to particular studies prior to the productivity assessment because the commitment may be for unnecessary studies and may detract from necessary ones.

Joe Skalicky pointed out that because Hanford Reach fall Chinook are not ESA-listed, it is very unlikely that Ecology will be able to find additional funders. Thus, studies identified as “Co-fund in Phase 2 if necessary” in the Draft Study Plan will not be fully funded and implemented.

Bob Rose asked how Grant PUD decided that they would fund up to 20% of the “co-fund” projects. Russell showed figures from the updated Flow Fluctuation Report that indicate that Grant’s negative affect is in the highest constraint category, which is one of five (20%). The long-term frequency of that constraint category is about 25%. Thus, because their negative contribution to flow fluctuations in the Hanford Reach is about 20%, their funding contribution to some studies would also be about 20%.

Paul Hoffarth noted that the Draft Study Plan proposes to use the productivity assessment to help determine which studies should be implemented in Phase 2. However, it was unclear in the Draft Study Plan how or why certain studies were selected by the PUD to be co-funded in Phase 2 when there are no results available from the productivity study to guide which Phase 2 studies should be implemented.

Bob Rose and Paul Wagner asked that more information be provided on what exactly is going to be in the productivity study. Russell indicated that the draft approach being developed by Grant and Battelle will provide more detail on the productivity assessment.

Steve Hays questioned why stranding and entrapment studies (studies 5.2-5.4) were being considered in the FCWG when the signed Hanford Reach Agreement requires these studies. Steve suggested that the Hanford Reach Working Group (HRWG) should consider whether these studies are necessary. In addition, other entities that may be able to help fund these studies (upstream PUDs and BPA) are part of the HRWG.

The FCWG directed Tracy Hillman to set up an all-day HRWG meeting on Monday, 5 April. Paul Hoffarth noted that a HRWG meeting was overdue and that there are many items to discuss in addition to stranding and entrapment studies.

Tracy Hillman will notify the HRWG that there will be a meeting on Monday, 5 April to discuss, among other things, the necessity of more intensive entrapment and stranding studies and the funding of these studies.

The FCWG was unable to come to agreement on a Final Study Plan. Ecology will seek input from the HRWG and then make a decision on how to proceed.

- C Productivity Study (Expert Panel)** – FCWG members reviewed the draft invitation letter that will be sent to experts requesting their participation on a productivity panel. Members agreed that the current draft is too long and needs to be shortened to 1-2 pages. In addition, members present agreed that experts should (1) review the draft approach for assessing the productivity of fall Chinook in the Hanford Reach and (2) participate on a panel that will help fill in information gaps, develop ways to deal with uncertainties and assumptions, and help identify reference conditions or populations that can be compared with Hanford Reach productivity estimates. Although members present agreed to these tasks for the expert panel, edits from the USFWS indicated that they do not agree that the experts should help identify reference conditions or populations that will be compared

to the Hanford Reach population (note: Joe Skalicky was not available to participate in this discussion). Members directed Tracy Hillman to revise the letter and submit it to the FCWG for review.

Tracy Hillman will revise the invitation letter to reflect the recommendations by the FCWG and submit it for review before the April meeting.

- VII. 2011-2013 Stranding Studies** – Geoff McMichael and Joe Skalicky are compiling all the information and reports on fry entrapment and stranding studies conducted before the Hanford Reach Agreement. They will provide that information to the FCWG before the April meeting.

Geoff McMichael and Joe Skalicky will finish compiling information on fry entrapment and stranding and provide that information to the FCWG for review.

- VIII. Hanford Reach Work Group Meeting**

Activities – Russell Langshaw reported that protection flows for fall Chinook emergence started on Friday, 5 March.

- IX. Next Meeting:** Tuesday, 6 April at Battelle in Richland, WA. The HRWG will meet on Monday, 5 April at Battelle.