

PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee Meeting
Thursday, December 16, 2010
Cedars Inn, East Wenatchee, Washington

Attendees

PRCC HSC Members

Bill Gale, USFWS
Craig Busack, NMFS (via phone)
Russell Langshaw, (alt) GCPUD (via phone)
Keely Murdoch, (alt) YN
Todd Pearsons, GCPUD
Tom Scribner, YN (via phone)
Mike Tonseth, WDFW
Kirk Truscott, Colville Confederated Tribes

Others

Pat Burdick, GCPUD
Paul Hoffarth, WDFW (via phone for part of meeting)
Ian Hunter, GCPUD
Mike Kaputa, Chelan County (via phone for part of meeting)
Shannon Lowry, GCPUD

Elizabeth McManus, Facilitator
Andy Chinn, Facilitator

Actions

1. HSC will consider a potential site visit to Chief Joseph Hatchery; CCT will update the HSC when enough physical infrastructure has been developed to make a site visit worthwhile.
2. Grant PUD will provide updates on water rights applications and strategies, and NPDES status and strategies, for Dryden and Carlton Ponds.
3. The JFP will work on a No Net Impact (NNI) recalculation and implications for greater clarity around Chelan County's fish requirements at Dryden and Carlton Ponds. The JFP will also look at the boundaries of the Hanford Reach population, for greater clarity around fish distribution.
4. NOAA Fisheries will check on review status and timing of the Wenatchee Basin HGMPs.
5. NOAA Fisheries will circulate BPA's power and marking analysis work; NOAA Fisheries and Grant PUD will work to develop a draft path forward on marking.
6. WDFW will circulate its data from previous overwintering work in the Methow Basin.
7. WDFW will update the HSC on the Agency's property purchase at Libby Creek.
8. WDFW will check on the timing for the written report from sampling at the OLAFT.
9. Grant PUD will continue to investigate options for a reliable water source at Carlton Pond.

Decisions

- A. Approved the October meeting summary and November conference call summary
- B. Approved the Okanogan summer Chinook APP

Meeting Summary

I. Updates and Review of Meeting Summaries

- A. Update from the Production Advisory Committee** – During 2009, Yakama Nation implemented a 500,000 eyed-egg fall Chinook program to begin transition from the use of Little White River stock in the Yakima River to using Priest Rapids Hatchery stock. For the next stage of the transition, WDFW and

Yakama Nation reached consensus that 1.7 million Priest Rapids Hatchery eggs could be taken, incubated to eyed-egg stage, then moved down to Prosser. The Yakama Nation will meet with Grant PUD in January to discuss whether additional fish could be accommodated at the Priest Rapids Hatchery.

- B. Update from the Fall Chinook Working group** – Phase I studies are underway.
 - C. October and November Summaries** – The HSC reviewed the draft October meeting summary and November conference call summary and approved both documents, as amended.
 - D. Other Updates**
 - USFWS staffing changes: Kate Terrill has replaced David Morgan at USFWS - Leavenworth, and all USFWS representatives are now based out of the Leavenworth Office.
 - During 2010, all HSC-approved SOAs were held for PRCC approval before receiving a numerical designation. This process will change in 2011. SOAs will be given a tracking number when the initial draft is distributed to the HSC. We hope this will facilitate tracking.
- II. Okanogan Summer Chinook APP** – The most recent APP for Okanogan Summer Chinook was distributed to HSC members prior to the meeting.
- A. Voting on Okanogan Summer Chinook APP**
 - HSC members voted to approve the Okanogan Summer Chinook APP.
 - B. Path Forward and Next Steps**
 - Grant PUD will forward the approved Okanogan Summer Chinook APP to FERC by February 1st.
- III. Status Update on Grant PUD Hatchery Activities**
- A. Presentation from Grant PUD** – Grant PUD provided a summary of 2010 work and accomplishments in the hatchery program. The presentation included a summary of HSC-approved SOAs, hatchery planning documents, and facility design status (including BODs for the White River and Nason Creek facilities - the two summer Chinook BODs are not yet complete due to engineering obstacles around the intake, and effluent treatment). The presentation also entailed a summary description of environmental assessments for the Grant PUD’s various fish programs, including numbers of fish released and dollars spent on release, M&E activities, and 2010 PUD-funded studies. Of particular note on the fish releases/dollars chart was that Grant PUD invests 40% of its resources in the White River program. The presentation concluded with a summary of expected activities in 2011. HSC members provided the following comments on the presentation:
 - CCT noted that Phase II construction at the main Chief Joseph Hatchery facility is underway, including installation of a coffer dam. The group discussed a future visit to the site.

- Committee members asked for an update on the Dryden Pond work. Grant PUD is studying three options for an intake at Dryden Pond: 1) An infiltration gallery across the river, 2) use of a bank side intake, and 3) a gravity-fed canal. WDFW commented that the gravity-fed canal option as a potential intake at Dryden Pond raises some concerns around transmission of water-borne fish pathogens.
- WDFW also noted that there is reportedly an old well shaft on the top bench at the Dryden Pond site that could potentially be utilized as a water source at the site.
- Yakama Nation expressed concern with the length of time required to obtain water rights, especially given the current uncertainty around the Dryden project. Yakama Nation also requested additional information on the “Environmental Assessments” chart where it indicated that the assessment was not available.
- HSC members discussed re-calculating the NNI for Dryden Pond in order to increase the certainty around the numbers to be used in the design process – current design estimates are using the current fish numbers, which are expected to decrease when NNI is recalculated.

B. Path Forward and Next Steps

- HSC members will discuss the NNI recalculation for Dryden Pond at the next JFP meeting.
- Grant PUD will provide an update on the status of all their pending environmental assessments/permits.

IV. Proposal for Summer Chinook at Methow Hatchery

A. Status of Proposal – The HSC’s primary concern around Grant PUDs proposal for rearing and overwintering summer Chinook at the Methow Hatchery is the potential superimposition of both hatchery origin and natural origin spring Chinook spawning nests. USFWS also is concerned about the impact of a temporary weir on bull trout.

B. Discussion of Proposal for Summer Chinook at Methow Hatchery

- NOAA Fisheries commented that since Spring Chinook are a listed species and any action involving summer Chinook in the Methow Basin would potentially cause a direct take. In order to evaluate the risk, the expected take must be evaluated, followed by consideration of the impact on the population’s recovery potential.
- Yakama Nation note that long term production in the upper Methow should be considered; currently 80% of spring Chinook in the area are hatchery origin, but the ratio of natural origin fish to hatchery fish could evolve over time. Additionally, the high density of hatchery-origin spawning fish in the Methow might suggest that further crowding should be avoided. If the HSC decided to pursue the Methow hatchery option, Yakama Nation would advocate clearly defined red flags with respect to redd super-imposition and competition, with a well-developed backup plan.

- WDFW provided a synopsis of one year of data from work during the mid-1990's (a period of low spring Chinook abundance in the Methow). WDFW overwintered summer Chinook at Methow Hatchery and transferred them to Carlton Pond for two months. For the overwinter group that was transferred to Carlton Pond in the spring, 91% of the carcasses were recovered below the acclimation site, meaning only 9% of the fish went above Carlton Pond. Based on available data, if summer Chinook are released directly from the Methow Hatchery, at least 24% of the fish would return to that point.
- USFWS reiterated its concerns about the effect of a temporary weir on listed bull trout and spring Chinook, and added that 2 - 3 years of data would be needed from a pilot study before any conclusions about impacts could be drawn. As such, USFWS advocated considering another site with fewer potential impacts.
- Grant PUD commented that Carlton has a number of characteristics that make it uncertain for future acclimation, including the migration of the river channel and the need for more proven and reliable overwinter water sources. Grant PUD reiterated its interest in use of the Methow Hatchery given its proven, reliable water source, staff on hand, and potential of running the discharge channel for adult management, if risks can be mitigated adequately.
- HSC members discussed the merits of examining other acclimation sites for summer Chinook. The primary drawback to beginning the process of developing a completely new site is the amount of time necessary. One potential new site is a land parcel at the mouth of Libby Creek that WDFW is currently in the process of purchasing.

C. Path Forward and Next Steps

- WDFW will circulate its available data on overwintering at Methow Hatchery and transferring fish to Carlton Pond.
- Grant PUD will re-assess its previously developed plans for acclimation at Carlton Pond and check on the feasibility of engineering a more reliable water source during the low water periods of the fall and winter.
- HSC members will review the spawning distribution M&E objectives during the January or February meeting to ensure there is agreement on the goal (e.g., full mirroring of natural spawning or something closer to 80% the same).

V. Fall Chinook Issues

- A. Update on OLAFT Work** – Trapping at the OLAFT concluded on November 12th, and broodstock spawning at Priest Rapids Hatchery also recently finished. For the 715 PIT-tagged fish, WDFW has begun analyzing migration. 48 of the fish either lost their tag or fell back and 41 have passed Wells Dam. 1 fish went over the lower Methow array, and it is unknown if any fish went into the Okanogan because it is not wired. Otoliths were collected from age 2 and 3 fish.
- Of the 715 released back into the ladder at the OLAFT, 667 have been detected above Priest Rapids.

- Of the 667 detected above Priest Rapids, 250 are over Rock Island Dam.
- Of the 250 over Rock Island Dam, 162 are over Rocky Reach.
- Of the 160 fish over Rocky Reach, 41 have gone over Wells.

The data indicate that a relatively high percentage (35%) of PIT-tagged fish have gone over Rock Island Dam. Next year will be more indicative because the lethal sample will contain the age 4 component. WDFW expects to have an OLAF report by February, but timing of the report will ultimately depend on when scale samples are returned to the Agency.

B. Discussion of Draft Document on Fall Chinook Marking/Power Analysis – The HSC reviewed the draft document on fall Chinook marking/power analysis. The document was identical to a document distributed prior to the November conference call, with the addition of a hypothetical figure to show the number of marked fish needed, given sample size and effect size. WDFW commented that the agency typically samples approximately 10% of total escapement; collecting over 20% of total escapement is challenging.

- NOAA commented that Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) performed an extensive power analysis at different mark rates, with the conclusion that unless a sampling rate is extremely high, mark rate must be high. This information will be distributed to the HSC in hopes it can aid in developing a marking strategy for Fall Chinook.
- CCT noted that the draft document assesses increases or decreases in PHOS, rather than identifying the level of marking required to identify specific PHOS and PNOB values.
- Grant PUD commented that lacking the context of an objective and a statistical test, a precise estimate of PHOS does not provide significant value. For example, if a PHOS of 80% is determined for Priest Rapids in a given year, what is the long-term meaning and how does that compare to other objectives in the M&E plan?

C. Path Forward and Next Steps

- The HSC will continue to reflect on how to arrive at a recommended mark strategy at Priest Rapids Hatchery to the PRCC and discuss again during the January HSC meeting.

VI. Contingency Planning for Acclimation Based on the White River SMP Situation

A. Update from Chelan County – Mike Kaputa from Chelan County joined the meeting via phone to provide the status on the update to the County's Shoreline Master Plan (SMP) and Grant PUD's request for exemptions for White River activities. Previously, Chelan County issued two exemptions for certain of the White River program activities, one of which covered activities at McComas to install the net along the riverbank. The other exemption covered activities at the Tall Timbers property. When Chelan County issued the exemptions, it was with the understanding that the activities under the exemptions were

temporary; however, in the County's view Grant PUD's proposed facilities under its request for new exemptions to support 2011 acclimation, in particular the temporary tanks, appear more permanent. Additionally, because Chelan County's existing SMP prohibits aquaculture activities in a natural shoreline environment, the County's view is that previous exemptions for Grant PUD's activities likely should not have been issued. Chelan County is in the process of updating its SMP, including the definition of aquaculture activities, and the updated SMP is scheduled for completion at the end of 2011. Mike provided the following additional points in response to HSC questions and comments:

- Exemptions are defacto permit categories that are issued administratively, without a public comment process.
- Chelan County typically does not make planning decisions based on the likelihood of a legal challenge; the County, and the Planning Director, feel that the requested activities under the requested exemption do not fit. Some of the discussion around permitting and other technical questions perhaps did not get as much attention as they should have when the original exemptions were issued.
- Shoreline rules dictate that if any part of a proposed project is within the shoreline jurisdiction, then the entire project is considered to be in the shoreline jurisdiction.
- Chelan County's understanding, based on limited review, is that federal agencies are generally reluctant to make a determination contrary to state or local rules.
- Chelan County understands that not all activities fit within existing regulatory definitions; however, from a land-use perspective the County felt that Grant PUD's activities met the basic definition of aquaculture as described in the SMP. The County is sympathetic to the fish recovery goals in the White River but feels unable to allow the exemptions given the SMP's rules and definitions.
- Chelan County did not offer an opinion on Ecology's likelihood of enforcing a violation of SMP rules.
- Chelan County's decision can be appealed to the Shoreline Hearings Board; however, the Board hears cases from across the state, and in the County's view, they would likely interpret the rule very narrowly.
- Grant PUD proposed a conditional use permit, but Chelan County felt that such a permit would only be permissible if the proposed activity were not covered under the existing SMP.
- Chelan County considered amending the existing SMP to change the definitions and process so that Grant PUD could receive a permit for 2011. However, there were several problems with this approach, including the length of time for changes to work through the local and state-wide review processes and the number of additional entities that would require consultation to address the amendment.

B. Discussion of Contingency Planning for White River Acclimation

- Grant PUD has received a letter from Chelan County expressing concerns around the request for SMP exemptions but to date has not received a formal denial.
- During Grant PUD’s discussions with Chelan County, Chelan County commented that, because they are in the midst of updating their SMP, they are particularly reluctant to endorse any activities that could be perceived as contrary to existing rules.
- Grant PUD is examining its remaining options for 2011 White River acclimation, including the use of available capacity at the Tall Timbers side-channel, the net at the bridge site, and the net pens to try to salvage data collection and maximize fish acclimated on White River water. One option (allowed by Chelan County) is to locate the net pens closer to the White River, within the White River plume, in order to improve the fish imprinting signal. Grant PUD is also investigating the availability of federal or state lands, since they are governed by different authorities. As a last resort, Grant PUD is considering acclimating the fish in the tanks using water from Lake Wenatchee.
- USFWS remarked that a statement of support for Grant PUD’s request for exemptions should come from the JFP, since it is composed of the state, federal, and tribal agencies responsible for oversight of the White River program.

C. Path Forward and Next Steps

- Grant PUD will follow up with Chelan County on a detailed explanation of the County’s rationale for denying the requested exemptions.
- Keely will contact Julie Morgan to request a placeholder on the agenda for the next Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB) meeting to discuss this issue.
- The JFP will discuss potential actions to take in support of Grant PUD’s exemption requests at its next meeting.

VII. Other WR and Nason Creek Updates and Status Issues

- A. 2011 Marking** – WDFW reported a potential issue with the proposed schedule for 2009 brood year PIT tagging; the tagger proposes marking in July, which is likely not optimal for fish size and run timing.
- B. Path Forward and Next Steps**
- Grant PUD, WDFW, and USFWS will follow up to ensure that PIT tagging for the 2009 brood is performed with sufficient timing to allow for an April release.

VIII. Wrap-Up / Next Steps

- A. Next Meeting:** Thursday, January 20, 2010 at 9:00 A.M. – Cedars Inn
- B. Potential January/February Meeting Agenda Items**

- Update on water right applications for Carlton and Dryden Ponds and NPDES status and strategy
- Discussion of the M&E objectives and whether the hatchery fish distribution should “match” the natural distribution.
- Update on the Yakama Nation smolt trap and Coho program
- 2011 White River acclimation