

MEETING

Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee

Wednesday, April 28, 2010

9:00 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/ Teresa Scott, WDFW

Jim Craig, USFWS
Tom Dresser/Curt Dotson, GCPUD
Carl Merkle, CTUIR
Denny Rohr, Facilitator

Attendees: (*Denotes PRCC member)

Bryan Nordlund, NMFS*
Bob Rose, YN*
Jim Craig, USFWS*
Mickey Fleming, CD Land Trust (on phone)
Skyler Street, GCPUD
Rochelle Polacek, WDFW
Jill Hardiman, USGS
Debbie Williams, GCPUD

Jerry Marco, CT* (on phone until 12:00)
Teresa Scott, WDFW*
Scott Carlon, NMFS*
Curt Dotson, GCPUD*
Dave Burgess, WDFW
Katrina Simmons, WDFW
Tim Counihan, USGS
Denny Rohr, Facilitator

Action Items:

1. Rohr will send a reminder of the FCRPS tour on May 12th.
2. Dotson will work with Burgess and Grant PUD operators on development of a BRZ work plan for 2010.
3. Burgess asked that a meeting be set to discuss 2010 fishing collection efforts by the District's NPM Removal group.
4. Fleming will send CDLT conservation easement documents to Rohr.
5. Dotson will put a sentence in the SOA stating the PRCC reserves the right to review and revoke Fish Mode privileges and also priority of units that go out of Fish Mode. Dotson will redistribute the SOA after revisions are made.

Decisions:

1. All PRCC members approved Concept #1 of the PR Tailrace Pumping Plan (LA-403), that was presented at the meeting.

Final Meeting Minutes

- I. **Welcome and Introductions:** Rohr welcomed PRCC members and guests.
- II. **Agenda Review:** Because Grant PUD is setting the bar for fish passage on the Columbia River, Rose reported that members of the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) will be touring Priest Rapids and Wanapum dams on May 12th and invited PRCC members to join the tour. **Rohr will send a reminder of the FCRPS tour on May 12th.**

- III. **Action Item Review:** All action items identified during the March PRCC meeting have been completed except for action item #5, Ferguson's White River Acclimation Report, which should be distributed within the next 30 days.
- IV. **Coordination of trip to Iowa:** PRCC members will travel to Iowa the week of May 17th to view the 1:20 sectional Priest Rapids Bypass model. Jacobs Engineering, Priest Rapids Bypass design team trip notes from February were distributed and uploaded to the PRCC website. Participants from Grant PUD's upper management attending the May trip will include: Dawn Woodward, Hydro Director, Chuck Berry, Assistant General Manager, Rex Buck, Jr, Wanapum, and Kevin Marshall, Engineering Manager. No commissioners will be attending.
- V. **Update Presentation: WDFW/USGS NNI Predator Program:** Tim Counihan and Jill Hardiman, USGS, Dave Burgess, Rochelle Polacek and Katrina Simmons, WDFW presented 2009 findings and 2010 plans for the ongoing NNI Predator Index study.

Counihan explained that efforts to catch fish with tangle nets were unsuccessful. In 2009, a total of 13,745 fish were captured via electrofishing. Of those, 2,362 were northern pikeminnow (NPM), 530 smallmouth bass (SMB), 39 walleye, and 3 channel catfish (CC). The average length of NPM caught was smaller than those caught in the past, but numbers remain high. No NPM that were tagged and released for a mark/recapture study were recaptured. The average sizes of NPM caught by Grant PUD set line were smaller than those caught by USGS/WDFW. Juvenile NPM beach seining efforts by Grant PUD have been effective. It is believed that smaller NPM equate to less predation on salmonid smolts. NPM stomach content showed a low frequency of salmonid content. Because most NPM stomach content is mush, salmon bones must be separated out to be identified. The NPM density index shows that the greatest densities found were in the tailrace boat restricted zone (BRZ) of the dams. Counihan explained that it appeared that there was not a lot of salmon predation by NPM found during the predator study.

Counihan stated his skepticism of the results because of the inability to sample the BRZ adequately. **Dotson will work with Burgess and Grant PUD operators on development of a BRZ work plan for 2010.** The tailrace and tailrace BRZ were identified by Burley and Poe as "predation hot spots" and USGS/WDFW believe this to still be the case.

Of the 530 SMB that were collected, those 70 mm and greater were looked at. Most SMB were seen in the BRZ area as well as the mid-area of the PR reservoir. Dotson explained that 2008 acoustic data showed that a large number of tagged smolts were lost in the PR reservoir. Dotson questions if SMB in this area could be why steelhead survival estimates are low. The most significant part of a SMB diet is small fish and crayfish. Counihan explained that they were largely unable to catch crayfish in the Project, which is unusual. The consumption index shows that the PR forebay, BRZ, and mid-reservoir have the largest SMB consumption rates.

Only 39 walleye were collected. A larger percentage of salmon were seen in the walleye's diet. Counihan questioned the most effective way to catch walleye, because tangle nets weren't an effective method.

Channel catfish were captured at the mouth of Crab Creek. The average weight of a CC in the Project is 6-8 lbs. Some CC as long as 1.5 to 2 feet have been seen.

Bioenergetic modeling for NPM is in progress by USGS.

2010 Plans: Continuation of electrofishing sampling, discontinue tangle net use. Reformulate strata to include tailrace and forebay areas near, but not in the BRZ. Work to get into BRZ areas more consistently for sampling. Discontinue netting efforts as they were ineffective at capturing significant numbers of fish, and focus on anglers to catch walleye.

Counihan expressed the importance of establishing a predation baseline for the Project. Rose said he was pretty comfortable with where the NPM study is at, and he would like to enhance the other two species (SMB and walleye) as well. Rose said he wants to make sure the predator program makes up the difference of the performance standards because that's what the No Net Impact (NNI) Fund is for. Consistency and statistical rigor will help the PRCC in the future. Counihan recommends a third year be added to the predator study in an effort to collect environmental variables. An update will be provided to the PRCC by the USGS/WDFW team sometime in the fall.

Members agreed it wasn't important for USGS/WDFW to stay consistent with Burley and Poe efforts. A more comprehensive collection effort will be done through out the entire Project. Grant PUD sampling efforts within the NPM Removal program could be added to the effort of the NNI Predator Index study by providing additional information (i.e. diet, etc.) on NPM removed. Burgess suggested that Grant PUD should start taking NPM weights, gonads, and scales in addition to lengths already being taken when NPM fishing. Burgess said that it would be beneficial to keep the same data for all SMB also caught. Gonad data was provided from USDA fishing efforts one time last summer. **Burgess asked that a meeting be set to discuss 2010 fishing collection efforts by the District's NPM Removal group to talk about the additional data request.**

Rose questioned if NPM stomach content should continue to be looked at, and asked if other fish stomachs should be examined. Counihan explained that the benefit of sampling is to provide and assess predation into the future. He suggests they take what Burly and Poe did in order to provide a framework to assess predation. Counihan would like to examine the stomachs of NPM in the BRZ.

Use of NNI Funds to evaluate or explore the possibility of a fishing tournament for NPM or Walleye was discussed, as well as just hiring people to catch NPM, SMB and walleye. Burgess explained that the average amount of fish caught during a two day SMB or walleye fishing tournament at Banks or Moses Lake can be upward of 500 fish. Burgess reported that a walleye fishing club in Ellensburg has agreed to provide data for any fish they catch in the Project. In an effort to find out how many walleye are in the Project, members discussed tagging walleye for a fishing derby.

Rose asked, "At the end of this study, can we make recommendations to the smartest fishing strategies in order to bring projects into performance standards?" He explained that NNI funds were designed as incentive for Grant PUD to achieve survival standards by 2013. Rose wants to focus NNI funds on predation work and asked if more money is needed to address the important questions. Counihan replied that adding a third year to the study would be most beneficial. It would allow data collection of environmental conditions that fish experience. Counihan went on to say that they would like to come back in 4 to 5 years to see if fishing programs made a difference to the predation issue. PRCC members will discuss and define the predation study path forward.

- VI. Follow up Discussion Regarding Tall Timber Ranch Conservation Easement Funding:** During the February PRCC meeting, members approved funding of \$55,000 from the NNI Fund for a conservation easement at Tall Timber Ranch (TTR), as long as acclimation activities are not precluded from being conducted on the conservation easement. The Chelan-Douglas Land Trust (CDLT) is the Project Sponsor, with 85% of the total funding for the conservation easement is coming from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB).

Questions remained regarding the boundaries of the proposed conservation easement plus identification of possible acclimation sites on the TTR property. Accordingly, Rohr asked Mickey Fleming of the CDLT to join the meeting by conference phone to discuss the outstanding questions. Fleming joined the meeting (via phone) at 1:30 p.m.

Fleming explained that the CDLT has discussed the conservation easement with the TTR for two 20 acre parcels that will protect over 9,000 lineal feet of waterfront.

Members reviewed a map provided by Rohr of the proposed conservation easement area at TTR. Fleming explained that the CDLT charter allows for limited recreational use by TTR, but eliminates any development of hardened structures within a conservation easement. The CDLT was told that TTR planned on having an acclimation facility on other parts of the TTR, but not in the conservation easement area. Fleming said there is no specific language precluding acclimation on the property, but CDLT understood that TTR didn't plan for acclimation to be part of the conservation easement area. The CDLT charter minimizes human activity, vehicular use, and construction of new buildings on all easement property. The CDLT has already approved the conservation easement as proposed. Fleming noted her concern that funding by the SRFB may be jeopardized because acclimation had not been discussed when the SRFB funded this proposal. PRCC members stated they did not want to preclude acclimation options from future enhancements if they were appropriate for selected sites.

Fleming explained that the TTR board will meet on Saturday, May 18th to address this proposal. The current schedule anticipates a June 30, 2010 closing date. Fleming doesn't know if TTR would extend that date or not. Fleming questioned if acclimation sites outside the conservation easement have been discussed. Rohr requested a copy of the conservation easement, and **Fleming agreed to send one.**

After the phone conversation with Fleming, Dotson mentioned that Grant PUD staff and Rohr would be on-site at TTR the latter part of the week and would be able to look at the different pieces of TTR property being discussed (in regards to acclimation possibilities) and report back to the PRCC with their findings. The topic will receive further review and discussion at the next PRCC meeting in May.

VII. Discussion: White River Activities

A. April 20th Working Group Meeting: Members of the White River Working Group (WRWG), stakeholders, and interested private citizens visited the East Bank Hatchery to view different vessel types that are being discussed for over-winter acclimation in the White River. Dotson explained that the PRCC Hatchery Sub Committee (HSC) and WRWG are discussing different ideas as to what they would like to see in the White River. Rohr explained that the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board (UCSRB) is helping to facilitate policy questions amongst the WRWG, HSC, and public. Members working with the UCSRB include, Julie Morgan and Derek Van Marter (UCSRB), Paul Ward (Yakama Nation), Ron Walter (Chelan County Commissioner), Dennis Beich (WDFW), and Tom Dresser (Grant PUD). It is the hope of this group to have all entities in agreement prior to attaining permits for the project.

VIII. Follow Up Discussion of Sub-Yearling Chinook: Dotson will provide a white paper summarizing the Sub-Yearling workshop to members by June. Dotson reported that he's had some dialog with Chelan PUD, but not Douglas PUD. Nordlund reported that Douglas PUD hopes to learn more about sub-yearling life history via PIT-tag detectors located at the Rocky Reach dam collector. The hope is to learn if sub-yearlings are reservoir fish or just migrating through the Project? The US Army Corps of Engineers will be holding a sub-yearling workshop in Hood River, Oregon on May 26-27th. Dotson plans on attending.

IX. Fry Conversion Discussion: Dotson explained that during discussions regarding the fall Chinook HGMP, the Hatchery Subcommittee (HSC) has questioned if the 1,000,000 fall Chinook fry that are to be released annually into the Wanapum and Priest Rapids reservoirs should be converted to smolt. Because this requirement is part of the Salmon Steelhead Settlement Agreement (SSSA) (Section 9.5, see below), Grant PUD believes this issue should be addressed at the PRCC or PRP

Policy Committee level, instead of taking place in the HSC, which is the technical body of the PRCC.

Rose suggested that this issue be talked about in the Fall Chinook Work Group (FCWG) because they deal directly with impacts to flow fluctuations in the Hanford Reach, and are currently drafting the Hanford Reach Study Plan which includes monitoring fry as part of a body count that will be conducted. The Hanford Reach Fall Chinook Protection Program Agreement will be re-opened in 2014. Because of that, Rose advocates that if a problem is seen with flow fluctuations, fry should be converted to smolt to increase the chance of getting something out of it.

A fry to smolt conversion metric has not been developed, and members questioned if a fry to smolt conversion would constitute reopening of the SSSA. Rose and Carlon thought that because of adaptive management language in the SSSA, a reopener would not be necessary. Rose suggests PRCC members discuss this topic with their agencies FCWG representative. Rose proposed to keep this on the agenda, but have it more in the FCWG purview than the PRCC. The PRCC was okay with the “fry to smolt” discussion taking place in the FCWG, but with the understanding that any decisions regarding this issue would come out of the PRCC or PRP Policy Committee forums.

Salmon Steelhead Settlement Agreement, Section 9.5: *As a part of its overall Fall Chinook Protection Program, Grant PUD currently produces and will continue to produce 5,000,000 fall Chinook sub-yearling smolts annually at the Priest Rapids Hatchery, subject to adjustments pursuant to Section 9.2.2 (Periodic Review and Adjustment), above. These 5,000,000 fish fulfill Grant PUD’s mitigation requirements for spawning areas inundated by the Project reservoirs. As compensation for passage mortality, Grant PUD shall provide facilities necessary to produce an additional 1,000,000 fall Chinook sub-yearling smolts (plus an additional 10% capacity allowance to provide flexibility). To accommodate this additional production, Grant PUD will rear these fish at Priest Rapids Hatchery. In addition, to compensate for the impacts of flow fluctuations within the Hanford Reach and to take advantage of the available rearing habitat within reservoirs, Grant PUD shall implement a program to produce and release up to 1,000,000 fall Chinook fry annually into the Wanapum and Priest Rapids reservoirs. Grant PUD shall, in consultation with the PRCC Hatchery subcommittee, update the existing Hatchery and Genetic Management Plan (HGMP) for approval by the Parties. Grant PUD shall, in consultation with the PRCC Hatchery subcommittee, develop a monitoring and evaluation plan to assess the effectiveness of the fall Chinook propagation program at meeting the objectives developed by the Parties and consistent with the monitoring and evaluation plan described below in Section 13.1.4.*

- X. (Possible) Action Item: PR Tailrace Pumping Plan, LA-403:** Grant PUD engineer, Skyler Street, gave a PowerPoint presentation describing modifications to the Priest Rapids Tailrace Pumping Plan and the concept Grant PUD recommends. Grant PUD’s preferred concept includes the installation of a gravity supply to the right bank fish ladder which routes water from the forebay into the right bank Attraction Water Supply (AWS) pool. This supply would be designed to provide full attraction (977 kcfs) water flow, up to 5% exceedance flow, for the right bank fish ladder. It would also establish a design goal to reduce or eliminate flow from the GIG during normal river operations, up to the 5% exceedance flow, and add two additional pumps to the current left bank pump house. The total flow from the pumphouse (5 existing and 2 new pumps) would provide enough attraction water to maintain one foot differentials at all three fish ladder entrances up to the 5% exceedance flow. The pumphouse would be the primary AWS. Both AWS pools would remain connected by the cross conduit. Efficiency, temperature or other biological aspects could be factors to determine which source would be used. During an emergency shut down of the pumphouse, the right bank AWS pool can be isolated from the left bank, and the right

bank gravity supply could be used to keep the right bank ladder within criteria. This proposed plan meets needs for independent AWS systems and adds operational flexibility at the lowest technical risk.

Keeping ladders independent of each other was an important factor of the PRCC, and this concept would allow that. Submission deadline of the plan, timeline, and drawings to FERC is October 16, 2010.

Street explained that fish are kept out of pumps used at the left bank pumping station by the sweeping velocity, up to 14 feet per second, but that it is also screened with 7/8" trash rack screen. Nordlund said he tends to be over cautious regarding screening intakes in general, but felt that even though a finer mesh might potentially entrain fewer fish, he would be concerned with the potential for screen operational and maintenance issues affecting the reliability of the ladder water supply because of the potential for screen damage in high velocity flows. Nordlund told of a trash rack study conducted in California where salmon fry and smolts were released in a channel with a 1.5 ft/s approach velocity, and series of different trash rack gratings. The study showed that grating with a 3" spacing kept more than 90% of juvenile salmonids out in a confined channel, and he expects that entrainment would be even further reduced if fish were in an unconfined channel. Because of the high velocity sweeping flows parallel to the trash rack at PR, Nordlund believes the 7/8" grating will be alright, and very likely would have less entrainment of fish and provide a much safer passage corridor compared to the current gravity intake gate conduit. **All PRCC members approved Concept #1 of the PR Tailrace Pumping Plan, LA-403.**

- XI. **Update: 2010 Fish Spill Operations:** Spill started April 22, 2010. Dotson reported that the sockeye runs have been large. Steelhead survival study tagging will start today, and tomorrow for sockeye.
- XII. **Follow Up to Fish Mode Operations Request from K. Nordt, Director of Power Management, GPUD:** Dotson presented a draft Statement of Agreement (SOA) regarding fish mode (FM) operations previously proposed by Grant PUD, and a spreadsheet regarding survival rates. During the March PRCC meeting, members identified concerns they had with this proposal. After speaking to Kevin Nordt, Dotson answered PRCC concerns. Prioritization of turbines to be used during FM can be outlined by the PRCC in the SOA. The survival model, using 100% mortality, and 50% mortality, that Dotson ran for the PRCC, showed that impacts to dam passage survival rates were minimal in all three study cases run. **Dotson will put a sentence in the SOA stating the PRCC reserves the right to review and revoke Fish Mode privileges, along with a unit priority list for leaving Fish Mode. Dotson will redistribute the SOA after revisions are made.**
- XIII. **Update to PR Hatchery Fish Marking Dispute:** Rohr reported that the fish mass-marking dispute has been addressed and resolved. He asked Bill Tweit (WDFW) to send a letter stating such.
- XIV. **UPDATES:**
 - A. **Record of the PRCC Studies and Reports:** Nothing new was posted to this report.
 - B. **Committee Reports:** Rohr distributed hard copies of the committee reports.
 - C. **Investigation of Wanapum Northern Pikeminnow Fishing Derby:** Rohr will continue to review the concept with committee members.
- XV. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**
 - A. **February 24, 2010 minutes** - Approved
 - B. **March 24, 2010 minutes** - Approved

XVI. Next Meeting: May 26, 2010; Grant PUD in Eastern Washington. Location to be determined.