



FINAL MEETING MINUTES

Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee

Wednesday, July 28, 2010

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Grant PUD SeaTac Office

PRCC Members

Scott Carlon, Bryan Nordlund, NMFS
Jerry Marco, CCT
Steve Parker, 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*
Teresa Scott, WDFW*
Jim Craig, USFWS*
Denny Rohr, Facilitator

Jerry Marco, CT* (via telephone)
Bob Rose, YN*
Curt Dotson, GCPUD*
Richelle Beck, D. Rohr and Assoc

Action Items:

1. Rohr to obtain White River Working Group meeting minutes to forward to the PRCC.
2. Rohr to contact Elizabeth McManus and discuss given the range of the run size, what number of fish marked would provide reasonable certainty to answer each of the 5 components in regards to the hatchery fish marking issue.
3. Rose and Dotson to send injectable tag information to PRCC.
4. Rohr to contact McManus regarding PRCC's request for final approval on the million fry issue.
5. Rohr will schedule an October presentation of USGS/WDFW for discussion of year 3 of the NNI Predator Index Study.
6. Dotson will distribute a new draft of the Subyearling white paper by August 18th for discussion at the next PRCC meeting on August 25th.
7. Rohr will contact Tom Carlson, PNNL, regarding a meeting schedule of the PRCC in September.
8. Nordlund to contact Cabela's to determine their possible interest in participating in a NPM fishing derby.

9. Rohr to contact McManus and discuss need to send SOAs to Rohr for distribution prior to any Hatchery SC action being taken.

I. Welcome and Introductions

- II. Agenda Review:** Agenda items were added to the discussion during the course of the meeting and are included under agenda item XIII.

III. Action Items Review: Discussion took place for the following action items -

- A. A document regarding acclimation site assessment in the White River is being drafted by Greg Ferguson, Sea Springs, and will be distributed to PRCC members when completed. Rohr asked if the WR acclimation site assessment is moving forward, and Dotson responded he understands the assessment has been put on hold for the time being. He explained the vast amount of activity occurring in the White River is mostly juvenile focused, and the PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee (HSC) and the White River Working Group (including public representatives) are working to develop the locations of, and designs for the White River program. The HSC presented an acclimation plan for White River spring Chinook last week. Rohr suggested the PRCC may find benefit from reviewing the meeting minutes from the White River Working Group and agreed to forward those to the Committee members.
- B. Rohr will schedule an email vote, or conference call if necessary, regarding the one year extension to the NNI Predator Index Study. This email vote did occur and the discussion at today's meeting took place under the affirmation of PRCC actions under agenda item IV.
- C. Rohr will contact PRCC members regarding a visit to PNNL to view barotrauma (pressure) modeling in July or August. The PRCC discussed this item under agenda item X.
- D. Dotson will send an electronic Word version of the draft Subyearling Chinook White paper to PRCC members. Dotson did send the white paper to committee members prior to this meeting, and the PRCC discussed the paper under agenda item VIII.
- E. Rohr will send Committee Reports electronically to the PRCC member. Rohr sent Committee Reports to the PRCC prior to this meeting.

IV. AFFIRMATION OF PRCC ACTIONS

- A. **Priest Rapids Bypass Design:** Rohr reminded the PRCC that the PR Bypass Design was approved by the PRCC at the June 23 meeting, and since that time Rohr has obtained approval from both Rose and Marco as well. Both Rose and Marco were absent from the June 23 meeting. Accordingly, the decision was affirmed at today's meeting as approved by all committee members.
- B. **SOA 2010-3, PR Hatchery Rebuild:** This SOA was approved on June 23, and Rohr received additional approval from Rose and Marco after the June

23rd meeting. Accordingly, Rohr received affirmation at today's meeting that all committee members have approved this SOA.

- C. **PR Hatchery Fish Marking – Statistical Power Analysis Assignment:** The Scope of Work that was discussed and approved at the June 23rd PRCC meeting was transmitted by Rohr to PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee facilitator McManus for delivery and discussion at the July 21st PRCC Hatchery SC meeting. Rohr had also contacted Rose and Marco and received their approval of the transmitted Scope of Work as well. At today's meeting, the PRCC discussed this issue in detail. The PRCC Hatchery SC had recently, during their meeting of July 21st, questioned how much flexibility they had to change the scope of work without elevating it to the PRCC. PRCC stated they are open to comments or suggestions for changes in the scope of work. Ultimately, they would like to be the final approval on all major changes to the scope. The PRCC then moved into a discussion on the scope of work itself. Concerns were expressed regarding the current analysis work only dealing with one of the five objectives. The PRCC felt the analysis should address all five. This then led into a discussion regarding how many fish should be marked in an effort to address all five objectives. Ultimately, what the PRCC wants to see is a recommendation from the Hatchery SC on the percent of marking needed to meet the requirements identified in the HGMP. The final decision on how many fish to mark will be made by policy level folks, with input from a Hatchery SC recommendation. Dotson stated they would need to start collecting broodstock this November for marking in April 2011. Rohr agreed to contact Elizabeth McManus and ask, "Given the range of the run size, what number of fish marked would provide reasonable certainty to answer each of the 5 components?" If the Hatchery SC cannot reach agreement for a recommendation, it may be necessary to have a joint meeting for further discussion. Rohr will follow-up with McManus and keep the PRCC advised.
- D. **SOA 2010-4, Emergency Contingency Exception from Fish Mode:** Rohr reminded the committee of their approval of this SOA on June 23, and a final copy was sent to PRCC members showing the final edits the committee members had agreed upon. Rohr also contacted Rose and Marco after the June 23rd meeting and received their approval as well. Accordingly, Rohr requested and received affirmation from the committee of their approval of SOA 2010-4.
- E. **WDFW/USGS NNI Predator Index Study – Addition of Third Year:** Rohr stated that after requesting a vote of the PRCC via e-mail on July 21, the group reached full agreement to support a third year of the NNI Predator Index study. Dotson discussed concerns with boats entering the boat restricted area to collect data for the first two years. Results seem to be showing small-mouth bass as a contributing factor in salmonid predation. It seems the bass are entraining through the system from lakes where they are planted and no one really knows at what rate. A bass entrainment study is being conducted in Banks Lake now and likely more information will soon follow. In the third year study, the PUD will be extending the data collection in the restricted areas in hopes of narrowing in on predation hot spots and gaining more bass data to answer these new questions. Dotson stated it is

likely that in the next year they will be asking WDFW for exemptions to go after other salmonid predators. Scott stated first the PUD would need to show bass as a problem. Rose added they would also need a firm baseline to know of progress or not downline. Rose stated he would like to help refine a table of contents in the final report of the NNI Predator Index Study (for the first two years of study) so there is a better idea of the scope needed for year three. Nordlund agreed with the idea. Rohr asked if the PRCC would like to have a presentation made of the results from the first two years. Dotson suggested an October timeframe so they can see what the last two seasons are showing and have a better sense of where they need to go in year three. The PRCC agreed, stating their preference that the presentation includes a current report and a proposal for consideration for year three.

V. Update/Discussion of the 2010 Steelhead and Sockeye Survival and Behavior Studies: Dotson provided the following preliminary information to the PRCC.

2010 Steelhead and Sockeye Survival Estimates (Preliminary)

	% Steelhead	% Sockeye
Priest Rapids		
Powerhouse	94.2	94.7
Top Spill	97.8	96.8
Total Dam	94.0	95.3
Wanapum		
Powerhouse	89.6	92.1
Bypass	99.0	98.6
Total Dam	96.1 (76.6 FPE)	95.8 (70.7 FPE)
Wanapum Pool & Dam	87.8	95.4
Priest Rapids Pool & Dam	90.1	96.9

The PRCC questioned the discrepancy between what should be 96.2% total dam survival at Priest Rapids for steelhead. Dotson explained the project total amount included 23 lost fish, which dropped the survival rates of other methods of passage down into the 70 percentile and consequently dropped the total dam survival to 94.0%. The draft report is expected to be in Skalski's hands by August 14 with hopes of having a draft report to the PRCC by October. Dotson noted that due to the cold spring, they are just now getting out into the bird colonies to look for tags. With the fish now being double-tagged, the data should be able to show how individually vulnerable sockeye and steelhead are to bird predation. The draft report should help guide committee discussion and decisions for next year's study. Nordlund noted they set a record this year for total spring Chinook, steelhead, and sockeye passage at Priest Rapids Dam. As of July 17, sockeye counts at Priest Rapids were 340,515 total (compared to 196K for the previous record). The spring Chinook run was 225%

of the 2009 counts and 160% above the 10-year average. Craig commented that a record was set at the USFWS hatchery in Leavenworth this year as well.

- VI. Presentation of Didson Camera Program:** Dotson stated he will present this item at the next meeting when more data is available (see agenda item VII).
- VII. Update of Priest Rapids and Wanapum Dams Exclusion Screen Study and Gatewell Retention Study:** Dotson stated he will present this item at the next meeting when more data is available. This presentation will be coupled with a presentation of the Didson Camera Program, as stated in agenda item VI above.
- VIII. Discussion of Sub-Yearling Chinook White Paper:** Dotson stated he e-mailed the draft white paper on sub-yearling survival studies prior to the meeting and had received no comments yet. Dotson clarified that one of the purposes of the white paper was to show that the technology for tags with long-term battery life is not yet available for conducting a full pool & dam survival study, although there are indications the availability may be close. Some members questioned the purpose behind the survival studies, and Nordlund provided that the studies are part of the terms of settlement for the license. The white paper is to give Grant PUD an opportunity to explain why they aren't moving forward with their part of the agreement. Scott suggested the paper include language up front explaining the reason behind the purpose of the survival study, and then go into the reasons why it won't work at this time. Craig suggested a conclusion or summary section would be helpful as well. Nordlund offered to draft the conclusion and Dotson accepted the offer. The PRCC then moved into providing verbal comments on the paper itself. Dotson agreed to the requested changes, including the addition of a section describing future plans. Rose suggested the study be deferred until an injectable tag is available, which is a concept tag already under design. Dotson agreed to send information to the PRCC on the concept tag. Dotson stated the Corps has been sending him information regarding their subyearling work. The white paper will continue to evolve as Dotson receives comments from PRCC members. The draft white paper will be re-submitted to the PRCC by August 18 to give members 1 week to review prior to the August 25 meeting.
- IX. Update of 2010 Fish Spill Operations:** Dotson explained that tainter gate 7 at Wanapum Dam has been experiencing gear box malfunctions. Grant PUD is requesting approval to shut down the Wanapum fish bypass on Aug. 5th for 6-8 hours in order to allow divers to remove hydrophones from the face of the dam so that the caisson can be moved through the BRZ to tainter gate 7. Dotson provided data taken from DART showing a rapid decline of subyearlings at Rock Island is currently taking place. The prediction is that 95% of the subyearlings will have passed by July 30, with a standard error of +/- 7 days. The reason for the urgency is to utilize the crews on this mechanical failure during fish spill season to allow time for the scheduled maintenance work on the spillway and fish ladders, which is done during the fall and winter months. All PRCC members agreed to the proposal as long as the subyearling numbers continue to decline and do not spike.
- X. Discussion/Scheduling of Tour of PNNL Pressure Modeling Activities:** The PRCC discussed various options and agreed to conduct the September 29, 2010 PRCC meeting in combination with a tour. Rohr will contact Tom Carlson of PNNL and discuss the scheduling details. Committee members will be kept advised.

XI. Discussion of White River Activities: Much of this discussion took place under agenda item IV (C), Fish Marking Update. White River activities, which are largely juvenile focused, include discussions regarding where best to install acclimation facilities and what type of structures to be considered. In addition, some adult studies are taking place, including adult tagging and genetic sampling. The PRCC Hatchery SC is heavily involved in the planning and implementation processes. A White River Action Plan was presented to the Hatchery SC by Russell Langshaw of GCPUD last week. A large group of interested parties in the region are also involved in the White River Working Group. The process is on a forward track and many feel the public involvement has been very positive and well received.

XII. UPDATES:

- A. **Record of the PRCC Studies and Reports:** Nordlund recommended the addition of Dotson's draft subyearling white paper be added to the document.
- B. **Committee Reports:** Rohr sent the Committee Reports to the PRCC via e-mail prior to the meeting. No additional discussion.
- C. **Discussion Regarding Investigation of Potential Wanapum Northern Pikeminnow Fishing Derby:** Rohr stated he had not moved forward with this item and that he was still looking for some PRCC guidance. When asked, Rohr did note that NNI funding is available for 2011 if that is the direction the PRCC wants to go. Rose suggested the PRCC members contact other entities for sponsorship, such as Cabela's, letting them know there is funding available and asking what it would take to get them involved in setting up a NPM fishing derby. Other suggestions were made, and PRCC members agreed to do some thinking about this item and come prepared to discuss a possible 2011 plan at the October meeting. Additionally, Nordlund agreed to contact Cabela's regarding their interest in participating.
- D. **Hatchery Sub-Committee Update:** Rohr explained that Grant PUD has been in discussion with the Hatchery SC regarding the use of Chelan PUD's Eastbank hatchery for adult holding, spawning, incubation, and over-wintering acclimation of Nason Creek and White River spring Chinook. Two SOAs providing details for use of the Eastbank hatchery have been prepared and approved by the Hatchery SC. Accordingly, Rohr asked if PRCC members are interested in giving final approval for these types of SOAs. Several members felt that the PRCC should only be involved if the Salmon and Steelhead Settlement Agreement mentions PRCC approval. Scott specifically stated her preference to remain in the background but be kept informed, letting the Hatchery SC make these decisions. However, she would feel most comfortable if the PRCC members could receive all SOAs from the Hatchery SC so there is an opportunity to discuss the SOA with their respective Hatchery SC representative before anything is officially approved by the Hatchery SC. Accordingly, Rohr was directed to request PRCC Hatchery SC facilitator McManus to send copies to Rohr when Hatchery SC members receive them so discussions can take place if necessary prior to any Hatchery SC action.

XIII. Other Additional Items

- A. **Five-Year Check-in on Survival Performance:** Dotson stated this issue has been on the back burner for 5 months or so and he would like to get discussions going. Several months ago, a subcommittee was put together to work on this. The assignment of the subcommittee was to develop an SOA for consideration, which is an interpretation and explanation of what the agreement says on this subject. Dotson wanted to give a heads up that he will be sending out an e-mail shortly to gather that group together.
- B. **Five-Year Check-in for Upper Columbia Basin:** Nordlund noted that September is the 5-year check-in for the Upper Columbia Basin. There will be some discussions and updates to the current survival estimates. Steelhead and spring Chinook will be the main focus of the conversations.
- C. **Conversion of Million Fry to Smolt Program:** Rose provided this as an FYI via Tom Scribner, Yakama Nation Hatchery SC member, who stated the Hatchery SC is looking for PRCC input on this issue. As part of the Settlement Agreement, Grant PUD is required to put a million fry into the system for mitigation purposes. Some members of the Hatchery SC are expressing concerns that putting a million fry into the system will merely feed predators. If that much effort is going to be put into it, why not generate a certain amount of smolts that would equal what would result from 1 million fry? The question is, if there was agreement to convert the 1 million fry to smolts, what is the survival rate from fry to smolt? Rose suggested the Hanford Reach Fall Chinook Group should be able to develop the best assumption for fry to smolt survival. Scott suggested they set a goal for adult returns from this exercise, then see how much money it takes to raise the million fry compared to smolts for adult returns and release that many smolts. Rose suggested they may consider renegotiating this piece of the settlement in 2014 when the Fall Chinook Protection Plan expires. In conclusion, the PRCC stated their desire to see what the Hatchery SC comes up with regarding this question before considering a PRCC final stamp of approval on how to handle this question. Rohr agreed to contact McManus regarding the PRCC's request for final approval. It is likely the PRP Policy Committee may also need to provide final approval, followed by a letter to FERC stating the agreed upon change to the program, depending upon if there is agreement to, in fact, convert fry to smolts. For consistency purposes, Marco also suggested someone review how a similar situation was handled 5-6 years ago when the Skaha reintroduction program need to convert fry to smolts.

XIV. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- A. **June 23, 2010:** The PRCC members requested more time to review the June 23 minutes before approving.

XV. Next Meeting: August 25, 2010, Grant PUD SeaTac Office