

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Discussion Continues on White River and Nason Creek Spring Chinook Dialogue Sought on Program Implementation

EPHRATA, WA – On Saturday, February 20 Grant PUD natural resources staff will continue discussions with area residents regarding spring Chinook salmon protection in the White River and Nason Creek. Those interested in salmon recovery planning are invited to attend the public meeting scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. in the Tumwater Room of the Best Western Icicle Inn located at 505 Highway 2 in Leavenworth.

Staff will discuss 2010 activity plans for the White River and Nason Creek area and share details of acclimation design options. Public input is a key feature in the design process for the White River acclimation facility, and citizen members of a recently formed White River Work Group will be introduced at the February 20 meeting. Design options for this location emphasize minimal impacts to the view and the flood plain.

A previous December meeting served to restart public dialogue on Grant PUD's efforts toward recovery of the endangered spring Chinook salmon. Grant PUD staff also shared plans to develop an acclimation facility rather than the originally planned hatchery near the White River.

"The management and staff of Grant PUD are committed to regional salmon recovery efforts," stated Commission President Bob Bernd. "We must protect several species through our license to operate the Priest Rapids Project. This includes fish that spawn far upstream of the project like the White River and Nason Creek spring Chinook salmon."

Restoring healthy migratory runs to both the White River and Nason Creek by increasing the number of spring Chinook salmon spawning in the Wenatchee River Basin is the objective of these Grant PUD programs.

The protection plans described for both species in Hatchery Genetic Management Plans (HGMP) are required of Grant PUD under the new federal license to operate the Priest Rapids Project. HGMPs are program-planning documents meant to establish scientifically based fish reproduction strategies for targeted species; in this case, White River and Nason Creek spring Chinook salmon, both of which are listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The National Marine Fisheries Service will soon open the draft HGMPs for public review and comment on their Web site:

<http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Salmon-Harvest-Hatcheries/Hatcheries/HGMPs-under-Review.cfm>.

For more information on the Nason Creek and White River programs, other fish protection programs supported by Grant PUD or to get involved with the process, please visit

<http://www.gcpud.org/resources/resFish/White%20River.html>, email fishandwildlife@gcpud.org or call (509) 793-1522.

Meeting Details:

What: Public Meeting on White River & Nason Creek Programs
Where: Best Western Icicle Inn
505 Highway 2, Leavenworth
When: Saturday, February 20, 10:00 a.m.

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Grant County Public Utility District is a Washington state municipal corporation that began electric service in 1942. Owned by the people it serves, Grant PUD generates and sells electricity to Grant County residents and millions of customers throughout Central Washington and the Pacific Northwest. The Priest Rapids Project, comprised of Priest Rapids and Wanapum Dams, produces nearly 2,000 megawatts of clean, renewable and reliable electricity – enough to supply a city the size of Seattle. A leader in science based technology; Grant PUD is committed to finding effective measures for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of salmon, steelhead and other natural and cultural resources.

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Cutline: A juvenile spring Chinook takes advantage of winter stream coverage before migrating downstream to the Pacific Ocean in the spring.



Cutline: A hatchery and acclimation facility is under consideration for Grant PUD property along Nason Creek (above), while only an acclimation facility is planned near the White River for juvenile spring Chinook salmon.