



Meeting Minutes

Hanford Reach Working Group

Friday, March 14, 2008

1:00 – 4:00

Douglas PUD – Wells Engineering Room

Technical Members

Scott Carlon/Paul Wagner, NMFS
Jerry Marco/Joe Peone, CCT
Steve Parker/Bob Rose, YN
Steve Hemstrom/Shawn Seaman, CPUD
Bill Tweit/Carmen Andonaegui, WDFW
Marcie Mangold, WDOE
Russell Langshaw/Dave Duvall, GCPUD

Don Anglin/Steve Lewis, USFWS
Mark Miller/Howard Schaller, USFWS
Scott Bettin, BPA
Bob Clubb/Tom Kahler, DPUD
Paul Hoffarth, WDFW
Stephen Brown/Tom Dresser, GCPUD

ATTENDEES:

Paul Wagner, NMFS (by phone)
Steve Hemstrom, CPUD (by phone)
Carmen Andonaegui, WDFW
Joe Skalicky, USFWS (by phone)
Dave Duvall, GCPUD

Don Anglin, USFWS (by phone)
Bob Clubb/Tom Kahler, DPUD
Paul Hoffarth, WDFW (by phone)
Russell Langshaw, GCPUD
Debbie Williams, GCPUD

Action Items:

- **HRWG members will e-mail official and alternate representative's names to Grant PUD.**
- **Langshaw will email the abstract "Can spawning period operations of Priest Rapid Dam, under the Hanford Reach Fall Chinook Protection Program Agreement, be adapted to increase operational flexibility for hydroelectric power production while maintaining adequate protections for this highly valued population?" to HRWG members.**
- **Andonaegui will email meeting protocol comments to Williams for incorporation into the final document.**
- **Grant PUD will draft a summary of past discussions after the last spawning experiment proposal was withdrawn.**

- **The HRWG requires the next HRWG meeting be mandatory in order to discuss and vote upon the spawning experiment.**
- **Grant PUD will e-mail a draft spawning experiment proposal to committee members two weeks prior to the next meeting.**

Decision Summary:

- **The HRWG requires the next HRWG meeting be mandatory in order to discuss and vote upon the spawning experiment.**

Draft Meeting Minutes

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Attendees introduced themselves around the table and on the conference line.
- II. **Agenda Review** - Langshaw asked for official and alternate representatives from each agency and tribe for correspondence purposes. **HRWG members will e-mail official and alternate representative's names to Grant PUD.**
- III. **Approval of Meeting Minutes** – Andonaegui, Anglin, and Lewis will review Feb. 01, 2008 minutes and provide edits to Williams for incorporation into the final meeting minutes. Approval of the February 01, 2008 meeting minutes will be asked for at the next meeting.
- IV. **Action Items Review** – Members reviewed action items.
- V. **Spawning experiment - Grant PUD will draft a summary of past discussions after the last spawning experiment proposal was withdrawn.** Duvall stated Grant PUD's proposal, a two peak flow regime remains the same as previously stated, and noting a majority of the concerns weren't with the proposal itself, but rather with what the criteria of success would be. The HRWG needs to establish what the goals of the spawning experiment are and determine how to measure the success, stated Anglin, noting they need to provide quality of conditions, or amount of spawning habitat, not just high elevation redds. Duvall commented that other issues and concerns such as Hanford Reach index sites in addition to the Vernita Bar work had been discussed in recent HRWG meetings and Grant PUD was not opposed to discussing these issues further in development of the proposal. Duvall noted that after looking at the Hanford Reach and Vernita Bar, there was very little high elevation spawning in the reach, except during the 2005 study. According to Battelle's work, little if any high elevation redds were found in the Hanford Reach and Hoffarth had seen little evidence with the exception of 2005, noted Duvall. The HRWG is bound to the language of the Hanford Reach Agreement regarding what alternate operations experiments can be done in the reach, stated Andonaegui. Members need to establish a list of goals to determine what can be done regarding the spawning experiment,

stated Anglin. Grant wants to do the peaking experiment, so they should draft the proposal, noted Andonaegui. Duvall stated HRWG members couldn't come to agreement whether to use redds at risk or the number of redds above 65 kcfs elevation. Skalicky questioned the long-term time line if ambiguous results are received and whether Grant PUD would propose multi-year experimentation. Duvall stated that Grant wouldn't necessarily propose anything further until results from the modified experiment were conclusive. Duvall stated Grant PUD didn't conduct the spawning experiment in 2007 because water conditions were not favorable and the number of spawners weren't conducive of a good evaluation, so the evaluation was postponed until 2008. All members are interested in understanding the effects reverse loading operations would have on production, and need to be willing to find ways that wouldn't have measurable or significant effects to production, stated Langshaw. NOAA and WDFW are willing to look at alternative ideas that won't hurt production, stated Andonaegui. Language in the Settlement Agreement states alternative operations can occur in 2005 and 2006, under certain conditions, but alternative operations would have to cease if excessive redds are found above a certain height, noted Andonaegui. If all signatories can not agree on the experiment, no matter how comprehensive or not comprehensive, if consensus can't be reached, no experiment will be completed, stated Andonaegui. Success criteria will always be the determining factor of success, stated Wagner. Grant PUD needs to assure that operations will be better from the fish perspective before Wagner can be convinced to authorize an experiment. Wagner stated the data set to be used was never determined, and questions if there is an escapement projection that everyone will feel comfortable with, noting the escapement forecast this year is again expected to low. Anglin questioned if it is worth the risk of doing any experiment. Duvall stated it is currently unknown and perhaps doubtful if Grant PUD would support an experiment if the forecast is below escapement levels and would review the most updated data before making a decision. Clubb suggests Grant PUD come up with an experiment premised on the acceptable level of return, and then finalize the decisions when more is known about the runs. **The HRWG requires the next HRWG meeting be mandatory in order to discuss and vote upon the spawning experiment.** Grant PUD will provide updates regarding redds at risk evaluations, the Sept. 2007 letters from NOAA and WDFW, and which part of the reach will be looked at. Escapement numbers must be met and will determine if the experiment can be conducted, stated Andonaegui. While looking at McNary escapement, relatively fewer fish stayed in the Hanford Reach, while more fish went up the Snake River and some passed Priest Rapids Dam, stated Andonaegui. Duvall noted that considerable fall back has been documented at Priest Rapids Dam using DIDSON, but wasn't sure if the fall Chinook are going into the hatchery, into the reach, or

ascending Priest Rapids again, and there was no way of determining the final fate of these fish without conducting a tagging experiment. Grant PUD would like to have the spawning experiment finalized by July or August. **Grant PUD will e-mail a draft spawning experiment proposal to committee members two weeks prior to the next meeting.** Assuming Grant PUD accepts all changes of the JFP letter, dated Sept. 21, 2007, Duvall questions if presenters of the document would be willing to move forward. Then Grant PUD would need to address those changes internally and then present the proposal back to the group. The committee members are still undecided as to how to consider success of the spawning experiment, stated Andonaegui. If consensus, and escapement can be reached, WDFW would support alternate operations, stated Andonaegui.

- VI. **Western Division AFS Presentation** - Russ Langshaw, Bob Mueller and Dave Duvall will be giving an oral presentation in May at the Western Division AFS meeting relating to protection flows, amount of water, and spawning escapement. **Langshaw will email the abstract “Can spawning period operations of Priest Rapid Dam, under the Hanford Reach Fall Chinook Protection Program Agreement, be adapted to increase operational flexibility for hydroelectric power production while maintaining adequate protections for this highly valued population?” to HRWG members.** After working to develop models to predict critical elevations, the only things that correlated well were spawning escapement and mean daily flows in November, stated Langshaw. The number of fish out there and the amount of water dictates critical elevations. Langshaw stated he is looking at ways to develop a model to predict escapement that could result in real time management. There is a benefit to understanding the relationship and using predictive information, having the correct bathymetry, estimating the number of fish that are trying to spawn in the reach, and predicting ways to refine operations in the reach, stated Andonaegui. Are there any other performance measures that will be considered other than redds at risk, questioned Skalicky. Langshaw isn't opposed to looking at other parameters; but the standard that Grant PUD is being held to is the new operation must be as good as or better than reverse load factoring, and redds on Vernita Bar are the only comparison we can make. Habitat models are all built on Reverse Load Factoring, stated Langshaw. Flat flows could be one treatment, a useful benchmark, noted Anglin, but questioned what fish would be used. With the volume of water coming downstream last fall, Grant PUD didn't have the water for much peaking so it could have been a flat flow treatment, stated Langshaw.
- VII. **Meeting protocols** - Grant PUD modified language of the Meeting Protocol document to better emulate the requirements of the Settlement Agreement. Interested parties and parties that are not signatories to the Settlement Agreement or Hanford Reach Fall

Chinook Protection Program Agreement, such as the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Department of Ecology, will not be included as official voting members, noted Langshaw. **Andonaegui will email meeting protocol comments to Williams for incorporation into the final document.** Meeting Protocol approval will be asked for at the next meeting

- VIII. **2007 Stranding Evaluations Report (USFWS)** - A presentation was given by Don Anglin, USFWS on the Effects of Hydropower Operations on Stranding/Entrapment Mortality of Fall Chinook Salmon in the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River – 2007. Anglin clarified data stated in the report to members. Dynamics between operations and fluctuations need to be better understood to move forward, stated Andonaegui. The HRWG needs to find ways to reduce the impact of what is happening in the Hanford Reach, stated Anglin. The final report should be published mid summer 2008, stated Anglin, noting he has submitted a manuscript from the spawning habitat analysis to the North American Journal of Fish Management.
- IX. **Next Meeting:** Next meeting TBD.