



Grant County
PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT
Excellence in Service and Leadership

Fall Chinook Work Group

Tuesday, 17 February 2015

Grant PUD (USBOR Building)

Ephrata, WA

Technical members

Paul Wagner, NMFS
Jeff Fryer, CRITFC
Holly Harwood, BPA
Keith Truscott, CPUD
Bill Tweit, WDFW
Patrick McGuire, WDOE
Peter Graf, GCPUD
Steve Hemstrom, CPUD

Joe Skalicky/Don Anglin, USFWS
Paul Ward/Bob Rose, YN
Brett Swift, American Rivers
Tom Kahler, DPUD
Paul Hoffarth, WDFW
John Clark, ADFG
Todd Pearsons, GCPUD

Attendees: (*Denotes Technical member)

Peter Graf, GCPUD*
Paul Hoffarth, WDFW* (Phone)
Patrick McGuire, WDOE* (Phone)
Todd Pearsons*, GCPUD
Tracy Hillman, Facilitator

Russell Langshaw, Ecosyst. Insights (Phone)
Paul Wagner, NMFS* (Phone)
Ryan Harnish, Battelle (Phone)
Geoff McMichael, Mainstem Fish Res (Phone)

Action Items:

1. **Peter Graf will provide more frequent updates on the HRFPPA Periods and Flow Constraints.**
2. **Paul Hoffarth will provide the 2014 egg retention report to the FCWG/HRWG in late March.**

Meeting Minutes

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Tracy Hillman welcomed attendees to the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves.
- II. **Agenda Review** – The agenda was reviewed and approved.
- III. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**
 - The December Meeting Minutes were reviewed and approved.
- IV. **Review of Action Items** - Action items identified during the December meeting were discussed.
 - FCWG will review the draft Final Report and Implementation Feasibility Study/Implementation Feasibility Plan and provide comments to Peter Graf by Friday, 13 February 2015. **Complete.**
- V. **Update on Wanapum Dam Issues**

Peter Graf gave an update on the status of Wanapum Dam. Peter said that all fishway modifications have been removed and that Grant PUD is operating Wanapum Reservoir within a four-foot range between 558 and 562 feet elevations. Peter believes they will be able to achieve a normal operation level of 571.5 feet by mid-April 2015.

Peter indicated that 21 of the 35 tendons have been installed. Progress has slowed a bit because of the need to spill at Wanapum Dam as Columbia River flows have increased. Peter also commented that Grant PUD reopened specific shoreline locations on 7 January. Several shoreline areas remain closed.

Finally, Peter stated that the left-bank ladder at Wanapum Dam is fully operational and providing fish passage. The right-bank ladder is dewatered for annual maintenance.
- VI. **Final Report and Implementation Feasibility Study/Implementation Feasibility Plan**

Peter Graf indicated that he received comments from WDFW, USFWS, ADFG, CRITFC, NOAA Fisheries, Battelle, Mainstem Fish Research, and BioAnalysts. Peter indicated that he is in the process of compiling and addressing all the comments. He said that the comments generally followed common themes and there were no comments that could not be addressed or would require major revision of the final report. He noted that there was general consensus that the title needed to be changed, the technical reports supporting the final report needed to be accessible on the web, and that the synthesis section needed more clarity. With regard to the latter, Peter noted that there were conflicting comments. That is, some commenters indicated that the synthesis

section went too far in stating that the hydrosystem was benign or may have improved Hanford Reach fall Chinook productivity, while other comments stated that the synthesis did not go far enough in describing the benefits of the hydrosystem on fall Chinook productivity.

Peter indicated that the comments could be categorized into ten concerns:

- The final report needed to incorporate 2014 data to the extent possible. For example, the final report should include 2014 escapement and egg retention data.
- The productivity analysis needs editing and should include more information from the technical reports.
- There needs to be discussion on how the data/results from the technical studies will be used.
- The language in the synthesis section needs editing to improve clarity.
- It was not clear in the report when current effects from the hydrosystem were being compared to pre-hydro (i.e., before dams were in the system) and pre-Vernita Bar Agreement.
- The final report should include a link to a web site that contains all the technical reports.
- Given the recent high returns of fall Chinook to the Reach, discussion on redd superimposition needs to be more clearly described.
- The report needs to be careful when comparing results from different spawning habitat models. The results from the different models are not directly comparable.
- There was question about when the next productivity assessment should occur. The report indicated that the work should occur in 2018. Some commenters believe the work should be conducted in 2017. Grant PUD agreed to do the work in 2017.
- Some sections of the report need to be reorganized to reflect the life stages of fall Chinook.
- There was agreement among the commenters that the title should be changed to better reflect the content of the report.

Peter showed the table in which he is compiling comments and how Grant PUD is responding to each comment. The table identifies the commenter, the comment number, report section and paragraph, the comment, and Grant PUD's response to the comment. Peter said that he will work with each commenter to make sure that he addresses their concerns. Paul Wagner asked if the FCWG would have an opportunity to comment on the revised version of the document. Peter responded that the FCWG would not have another opportunity to comment on the

report. According to the 401 WQ Certification, Grant is required to incorporate comments to the draft and submit the final report to Ecology for review and approval within 60 days after the 90 day review period. As stated in the license, the final report must be submitted to Ecology and FERC no later than 17 April 2015. Peter said this is why he wants to work with each commenter over the next month on how Grant PUD intends to respond to each comment. No one voiced concern about not being able to provide another review of the revised draft document.

Given the timeline for submitting the report to Ecology and FERC, the FCWG agreed that their next meeting should be on Tuesday, 31 March. At that time, Grant PUD can give a brief overview on the final report and IFS/IFP.

VII. HRWG Activities

2014-2015 Protection Program Implementation – Peter Graf reported that fall Chinook post-hatch constraints are currently in effect. Fall Chinook emergence is predicted to occur around 28 February (the emergence date keeps moving earlier as water temperatures warm). Currently, flows are high because of drafting from Grand Coulee Dam. There have been no exceedances during the spawning or incubation periods. Peter said that all temperature and flow data are displayed in the Fixed Site Monitoring – Monthly Summary files on the Grant PUD Water Quality Website (<http://www.gcpud.org/naturalResources/fishWaterWildlife/waterqualityMonitoring.html>). The temperature unit tracking spreadsheet is found under “Fixed Site Monitoring – Monthly Summary.”

Peter indicated that he will provide more frequent updates on protection flows (i.e., HRF CPPA Periods and Flow Constraints). He will try to get another report out this week.

2015 Fall Chinook Run Forecast – Paull Hoffarth reported that they completed their fall Chinook run forecasts for 2015. He reported that the forecast for 2015 is about 900,200 adult fall Chinook to the Columbia River. The Upriver Bright forecast is about 500,300 adult Chinook. The Hanford Reach forecast is about 225,000 adults with half the run consisting of hatchery fish. The projected run in 2015 is the third largest on record (2013 and 2014 were higher).

2014 Egg Retention Report – Paul Hoffarth indicated that he will provide the 2014 egg retention report to the FCWG/HRWG in late March.

Hatchery Operations – Todd Pearsons reported that the Final 2013-2014 Priest Rapids Hatchery M&E Report was completed. He

indicated that he did not receive any comments from the FCWG/HRWG.

Todd said that the real-time otolith analysis conducted in 2014 during spawning at the Priest Rapids Hatchery was slower than anticipated. The purpose of doing real-time otolith analysis was to increase natural-origin fish in the broodstock. Given that otolith analysis could not keep up with the spawning process, they focused the analysis on males within certain ponds that tend to have higher percentages of natural-origin fish.

Todd also talked briefly about their experiment with an alternative mating strategy (i.e., one male crossed with four females). They ended with 139 one male by four female matings. The effects of the mating strategy will be monitored over the next several years.

2015 Northwest Scientific Association Annual Meeting – Ryan Harnish reported that the 2015 Northwest Scientific Association Annual Conference is taking place at Columbia Basin College in Pasco, WA on 1-4 April. The conference will examine *Past, Present, and Future Challenges to Natural and Managed Ecosystems: sagebrush, salmon, and syrah in a non-stationary environment*. PNNL is hosting a symposium on *Fish Passage and Salmon Recovery in the Columbia River Basin*. Ryan encouraged members to attend the conference and to submit a presentation. Abstracts are due by 28 February. Additional information on the conference can be found at: <http://www.northwestscience.org/2015meeting>

VIII. 2014 Return-Year Studies and Funding Opportunities

Geoff McMichael reported that his proposal on fall Chinook density and emergence timing that was submitted to the Northern Fund will likely be approved for funding (following the meeting, John Clark sent an email indicating that this proposal was indeed selected for funding). This study will examine the relationships among escapement, emergence timing, and size of out-migrants.

Geoff also said that his study on smolt predation was approved under the Letter of Agreement (LOA) Process. This work will occur within the Hanford Reach and McNary Pool in 2016.

IX. Future Meeting Schedule for the FCWG/HRWG

Once the Final Report and IFS/IFP are complete, there will be no need for the FCWG/HRWG to meet monthly. Therefore, the Working Groups decided to meet at least twice per year, once in March and again in October. These dates correspond to important HRF CPPA check-ins and reporting periods. That is, in March, the Working Groups will meet to discuss HRF CPPA check-ins and escapement/run projections. During the October meeting, the Working Groups will review and

discuss the HRF CPPA Annual Report and Hatchery M&E Report. The Working Groups will meet on the first Tuesday in March and October. This year, however, they will not meet during the first Tuesday in March. Rather, as described above, they will meet on Tuesday, 31 March 2015. The Working Groups will meet at other times if necessary.

- X. **Next Meeting:** The FCWG will next meet on Tuesday morning, 31 March 2015 at Grant PUD in Ephrata, WA.