

PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee Meeting

Thursday, October 22, 2015

Via Conference Call

Meeting Summary

PRCC HSC Members

Craig Busack, NOAA

Bill Gale, USFWS

Peter Graf, GPUD (alt)

Keely Murdoch, Yakama Nation

Deanne Pavlik-Kunkel, GPUD (alt)

Todd Pearsons, GPUD

Mike Tonseth, WDFW

Other Participants

Elizabeth McManus, Facilitator

Andy Chinn, Facilitator

Decisions

- A. HSC members approved the July and September meeting summaries as amended.

Actions

1. GPUD will contact DPUD to discuss permitting for YN activities at Goat Wall, specifically whether WDFW's proposed approach is sufficient to deal with the perceived risk.
2. GPUD will prepare additional data (e.g., PIT tag detections from volitional and forced releases and survival to McNary Dam) for discussion of Nason and Carlton release strategy during the November HSC meeting.
3. The HSC will review the Johnson et al. paper for discussion during the November HSC meeting.
4. HSC members will discuss the data needs for the life cycle model specific to the White River during the November HSC meeting.
5. WDFW will check to see if there is any historical White River data prior to 1958 (e.g., USFWS spawning ground surveys). (status: carried over from previous meeting summary)
6. WDFW will circulate a recent presentation from invasive species staff. (status: carried over from previous meeting summary)
7. WDFW will contact state invasive species staff to determine the timeline for development of a New Zealand Mud Snail protocol. (status: carried over from previous meeting summary)
8. CCT will circulate its Chief Joseph hatchery program workshop report with the HSC. (status: carried over from previous meeting summary)

I. Updates

- A. PAC** – ACOE is in the process of completing its EA and HGMP for Ringold and is on a timeline for submittal to NOAA in December.
- B. Fall Chinook Working Group** – The protection program began on 10/15. The first spawning ground survey at Vernita Bar was completed and the next survey will take place on 10/25. Reverse load factoring in Hanford Reach is underway.
- C. HCP-HC**

- PRCC members briefly discussed the issue of permitting at YN’s Goat Wall site during 2016 and how to address concerns about lack of permit coverage. GPUD expressed concerns about pressure for GPUD to accept perceived legal risks because of the long time that it has taken to secure Section 10 permits in the basin. The plan developed about a year ago was that the Yakama Nation would have its own Section 10 permit coverage by this time so that GPUD would not be exposed to the risk. A more complete summary of this topic is available in the October HCP meeting summary.

D. Next Steps

- GPUD will contact DPUD to discuss permitting for YN activities at Goat Wall, specifically whether WDFW’s proposed approach is sufficient to deal with the perceived risk.

II. Permit Updates

- A. Timing and Venue for Permitting Updates** – Rather than additional meetings outside of the regular HCP or HSC schedule, permit updates through the end of 2015 will occur during HCP-HC meetings as joint agenda items.

III. Meeting Summary Review

- A. July and September Meeting Summaries** – HSC members approved both meeting summaries as amended.

IV. Nason Creek Spring Chinook

- A. Volitional versus Forced Release** – The recent article by Johnson et al in NAJA found that fish released from Chiwawa through force performed better than volitionally-released fish. At Carlton Acclimation Facility most fish are force-released at the end of a volitional release period, meaning that release timing may not be optimal for fish performance. Because of this, GPUD suggested selecting a 2016 release date for the Nason and Carlton facilities that would improve survival. This would move the release date for Nason to the end of April (forced release) and for Carlton to the end of April (forced release), rather than mid-May (as was done previously). The current language in the Nason facility permit states that the default release strategy is voluntary unless another approach is better. The Carlton permit does not mention release strategy.
- NMFS noted that several staff members did not find the paper by Johnson et al convincing and that the more significant variable affecting survival was size difference.
 - GPUD commented that fish that are forced out of a facility might be larger due to the additional growth that occurs within the facility, but the size of voluntary-release fish is not under the facility operator’s control.
 - USFWS noted that voluntary releases are often a useful tool for assessing ecological risk and measuring the impact of residual fish through ecological interactions. However, if the intent is to push out non-migrants at the end of a voluntary release period and study whether the change in release strategy improves survival, USFWS

supports this approach.

B. Next Steps

- GPUD will prepare additional data (e.g., PIT tag detections from volitional and forced releases and survival to McNary Dam) for discussion of Nason and Carlton release strategy during the November HSC meeting.
- The HSC will review the Johnson et al. paper for discussion during the November HSC meeting.

V. White River Planning

A. Update on Data Needs – WDFW noted that the timing for a presentation on a White River-specific life cycle model is probably late spring or summer 2016. The modelers noted several data needs that would be useful:

- More robust parr tagging (similar to Chiwawa and Nason Creek); a parr abundance estimate would also help.
- Lake Wenatchee predation study
- Spawning habitat surveys, including investigation of causes for spawning distribution contraction – and possible solutions.

WDFW and Chelan County Natural Resources are currently developing a proposal for a 2-3 year Lake Wenatchee study of predator abundance, predator diet, and juvenile survival. GPUD questioned whether these data, particularly the parr data, were needed to address the key question about whether to restart a White River Hatchery program.

B. Next Steps

- HSC members will discuss the data needs for the life cycle model specific to the White River during the November HSC meeting.

VI. Nason Creek and White River Rotary Traps

A. Trap Interruption – Following up on an e-mail message to HSC members, GPUD noted that rotary screw trapping in White River and Nason Creek was suspended for approximately three days because of expired insurance documents to operate the trap but has now resumed.

VII. Wrap Up and Next Steps

A. Next Meeting: Thursday, November 16, 2015

B. Potential July Meeting Agenda Items

- White River 2026 planning
- Volitional versus forced release

Meeting Materials

The following documents were provided to HSC members in advance of this meeting:

- October meeting agenda
- PRH September 2015 M&E Update
- Article: “Adult Survival of Hatchery Spring Chinook Salmon Released Volitionally or Forcibly as Juveniles” (Johnson et al)
- September 2015 PUD Hatchery M&E Report
- September Nason Creek rotary trap report
- September White River rotary trap report