

November 2009

**Public Meeting Invitation
White River & Nason Creek Programs**

**Wednesday, December 2, 2009
6:30 p.m.
Best Western Icicle Inn
505 Highway 2, Leavenworth**

Grant PUD is committed to working collaboratively with local community members while implementing the White River and Nason Creek spring Chinook salmon programs. This effort will be conducted in a manner consistent with other regional plans to restore endangered Upper Columbia River spring Chinook salmon.

Columbia River Fish Protection

A new 44-year license to operate the Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project was issued to Grant PUD by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on April 17, 2008. The license includes specific resource protection, mitigation and enhancement measures addressing the impacts of operating Wanapum and Priest Rapids dams.

As a community partner, Grant PUD actively participates in the regional goal for salmon recovery in the Columbia River Basin and is developing and implementing programs for spring, summer and fall Chinook, sockeye and coho salmon, as well as steelhead.

White River and Nason Creek spring Chinook salmon are important components of the Wenatchee Basin anadromous fish population. Anadromous fish such as the spring Chinook salmon live most of their life in the ocean and eventually migrate back to their freshwater birthplace to spawn. Both the White River and Nason Creek spring Chinook salmon are listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. Grant PUD's license to operate the Priest Rapids Project includes requirements to develop habitat enhancement and conservation efforts

for fish impacted by operation of Wanapum and Priest Rapids dams – even for populations that spawn far upstream of the project. The objective of these programs is to increase the number of White River and Nason Creek spring Chinook salmon that spawn in the Wenatchee River Basin's natural environment and, in time, restore healthy migratory runs to both waterways.

White River Spring Chinook

The White River spring Chinook salmon is a distinct component of the Wenatchee spring Chinook salmon population. Because the number of this fish population is critically low, Grant PUD is required to increase their abundance through artificial propagation.

Grant PUD's annual production goal is 150,000 White River juvenile spring Chinook salmon. Rather than building a full hatchery facility here, spawning, egg incubation and early rearing of juveniles will occur at the Little White Salmon National Fish Hatchery on the lower Columbia River near Stevenson, WA.

White River Activities

Grant PUD initiated 2009 monitoring and evaluation activities in the White River in March and continued through the fall. A rotary screw trap, located downstream of the Sears Creek Bridge, was used to count out-migrating juvenile spring Chinook salmon. Trapping at this location occurs each year from early spring to late fall.

In May 2009, approximately 110,000 White River spring Chinook juveniles were acclimated for eight weeks in Lake Wenatchee net pens.

Water quality monitoring found no impacts to phosphorus levels in Lake Wenatchee as a result of fish acclimation in 2009. The final Lake Wenatchee water quality monitoring report can be found on the Grant PUD Web site: <http://www.gcpud.org/resources/resLandWater/waterQuality.htm>

Grant PUD is currently launching a local input process to design a White River acclimation facility to be located near the intersection of White River Road and U.S. Forest Service Road 6500, directly downstream from the Road 6500 bridge. This fall, a contractor completed a bathymetry survey used for the design of a water intake and screen. The intent is to develop a site that blends into the natural environment, while meeting the program requirements and producing healthy juvenile White River spring Chinook salmon.

Test wells were drilled at the White River property in 2008 and 2009 to determine the quantity of available water. Water quantity assessments will continue in early 2010.

Grant PUD employees are collecting water quality data in the White River on a regular basis. This information will establish a baseline for further studies as the program develops.

Nason Creek Spring Chinook

Nason Creek spring Chinook are another distinct component of the Wenatchee spring Chinook salmon population requiring supplementation because their numbers are critically low. Grant PUD's annual production goal for Nason Creek is 250,000 juvenile spring Chinook salmon. Nason Creek-origin adults will be trapped and spawned to produce juvenile salmon for release back into Nason Creek.

Nason Creek Activities

Monitoring and evaluation activities in Nason Creek also continued through the fall. A rotary screw trap was operated upstream of the Nason Creek Campground to count out-migrating juvenile spring Chinook salmon. Trapping at this location occurs each year from early spring to late fall.

In 2008, Grant PUD purchased two parcels of property in the Nason Creek basin, located south of US Highway 2 between Coulter Road on the east and West Dardanelles Road to the west, and across the highway from the Nason Creek Rest Area. A complete hatchery facility is planned for the Nason Creek location. Test wells and preliminary environmental assessments have been conducted on the properties. Grant PUD employees are regularly collecting water quality, temperature and river stage data in

Nason Creek. This information is being used to establish a baseline for future studies.

Formal Plans

Under the new Priest Rapids Project license, Grant PUD is required to develop and implement Hatchery and Genetic Management Plans for White River and Nason Creek spring Chinook salmon. Both plans were approved by the Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee's Hatchery Subcommittee on August 20, 2009, and then submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in September. The plans will soon be posted to the NMFS Federal Register for public review. The comment period is expected to last 30 days. Submit comments on the NMFS Web site:

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

Mark the calendar and plan to attend the December 2 meeting in Leavenworth to learn more about the White River and Nason Creek spring Chinook salmon programs.

Information on the Nason Creek and White River programs and other fish protection programs supported by Grant PUD is available online at <http://www.gcpud.org/resources/index.htm>

Contact Grant PUD staff to ask questions about the White River and Nason Creek programs, the upcoming public meeting, or to place additional recipients on the mailing list:
email: fishandwildlife@gcpud.org
phone: (509) 793-1522