



Grant County **PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT**

Priest Rapids Fish Forum

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

9:00 – 11:30

Grant PUD (USBOR Building) Room 203

Audio: 1-800-977-8002 Bridge: 7422882

PRFF Members

Stephen Lewis, USFWS
Bob Rose, YN
Carl Merkle, Umatilla Tribe
Tom Dresser, GCPUD
Aaron Jackson, CTUIR

Patrick Verhey, WDFW
Keith Hatch, BIA
Pat McGuire, WDOE
Mike Clement, GCPUD
Jason McLellan, CCT

Attendees:

Patrick Verhey, WDFW
Bob Rose, YN
Aaron Jackson, CTUIR (via phone)
Tom Skiles, CRITFC
Kirk Truscott, Colville Tribe
RD Nelle, USFWS
Steve Lewis, USFWS (via phone)
Debbie Williams, GCPUD

Chad Jackson, WDFW
Doris Squeochs, Wanapum
Donella Miller, YN (via phone)
Jason McLellan, CCT (via phone)
Pat McGuire, WDOE
Rod O'Conner, Blue Leaf
Mike Clement, GCPUD
Tracy Hillman, Facilitator

Distributed Items:

1. Summary of White Sturgeon Stocking Numbers
2. Draft 2014 Bull Trout Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
3. Pacific Lamprey Management Plan Comprehensive Annual Report
4. WDOE Review and Approval – Pacific Lamprey Management Plan Comprehensive Annual Report
5. Aquatic Invasive Species Control & Prevention Plan Annual Report for 2013
6. RRFF-PRFF Workshop Notes – February 2014
7. White Sturgeon Management Plan
8. Responses from Sturgeon Experts
9. Adult Lamprey Passage Assessment using HD PIT 2010-2013 PowerPoint
10. Juvenile Lamprey Sampling in the Priest Rapids Project 2013
11. Sturgeon- Stock More or Less: What is the Difference?

Action Items:

1. Hillman will distribute the Adult Lamprey Passage PowerPoint and Update on Priest Rapids Fish Ladder Modification Presentation.
2. Rose requested that the Adult Lamprey Passage PowerPoint and Update on Priest Rapids Fish Ladder Modification presentation be provided again, so it can be discussed in-depth.
3. Hillman will distribute the Juvenile Lamprey PowerPoint.

Draft Meeting Minutes

A. Welcome and Introductions

B. Agenda Review – Wanapum Dam update

C. Action Items Review – February 5, 2014

1. Fish Ladder Tour is scheduled for 31 January 2014. Those planning to attend need to send Mike Clement a copy of their driver's license and date of birth for Grant PUD badge security purposes. **Complete**
2. Mike Clement will ask Jim Powell and Larry Hildebrand for suggestions on other experts who are members of the Sturgeon World Conservation Society that might be part of the expert panel. **Complete**
3. PRFF will provide names of other sturgeon experts to Tracy Hillman and Debbie Williams. **Complete**
4. Tracy Hillman will draft an objective summary of sturgeon issues and send it to the PRFF for review before sending it to the experts. **Complete**
5. Tracy Hillman or Debbie Williams will send a doodle poll to find a date for the combined PRFF and RFFF meeting in February. **Complete**
6. Mike Clement will check with Grant PUD's Power Management to see when juvenile sampling in Wanapum Reservoir can be conducted in February or March. **Complete**
7. Dave Knight will be the PRFF Policy member for WDOE.

D. Meeting Minutes Approval – January 21, 2014 – Approved

E. **Wanapum Dam Update** – February 26th, Grant PUD staff were notified that the forebay level would be dropped to 560' to investigate a potential failure at Spillway Monolith 4. Divers found a 65' long horizontal crack located just below where the pier nose sits on top of the monolith. After further investigations, FERC directed Grant PUD to lower pool levels to 543' to alleviate pressure on the spillway; the monolith moved back into position after water levels were lowered. The near-term goal is to raise the pool levels to 562' in order to allow for ladders at both dams to be watered and functioning properly. Rock Island Dam (RID) ladder entrances are approximately 10' out of the water. Because of the differential between the RID pool and tailrace, RID isn't able to generate power at this time. The Bonneville Power Administration, Chelan PUD, Douglas PUD, Grant PUD, and the Bureau of Reclamation, have coordinated efforts to assure that protection flows for fall Chinook in the Hanford Reach continue.

While reservoir levels are so low, Clement arranged for Blue Leaf Environmental to conduct juvenile lamprey sampling to determine presence/absence.

F. Update on Pacific Lamprey Management Plan

1. **Updates on Annual Report** – Comments received by Clement have been incorporated into the report. The report has been send to FERC.
2. **NNI Update** – The Yakama Nation, Grant PUD, and others will meet to discuss Pacific lamprey assessments and recovery actions for NNI. They will work to determine what the conceptual framework will look like. The overarching concept will allow for continued conservation geared toward natural and supplemental production of lamprey.
3. **Lamprey Regional Implementation Planning Process** – RD Nelle reported that no coordination meeting was held, but Rose assisted with development of a template for the Pacific Lamprey Regional Implementation Planning process that hopefully will be brought to the larger group by the end of April. RD Nelle will be sending out a Doodle poll to arrange a conference call meeting time.
4. **Adult Lamprey Passage Presentation and Update on Priest Rapids Fish Ladder Modification** – Rod O'Connor, Blue Leaf Environmental presented a PowerPoint presentation on Adult Lamprey Passage Assessment using HD PIT-tags. In sum, the study plan objectives are being achieved. The minimum fish passage efficiency and median travel times are within the range of previous years; although, passage efficiency is expected to improve through redetection of adult fish. The few adults that fell back usually re-ascended the dams and the addition of PIT-interrogation stations at the OLAFT at Priest Rapids Dam should assess the potential passage delay there. PIT readers operating at the entrances and exits of the ladders will evaluate winter movements. **Hillman will distribute the PowerPoint. Rose requested that this presentation be provided again, so it can be discussed in-depth.**
5. **Juvenile Lamprey Sampling** - Rod O'Connor, Blue Leaf Environmental presented a PowerPoint presentation on juvenile lamprey sampling along the margins of the reservoirs. Sampling so far indicates that juvenile lamprey are rarely encountered within the project operational zone. Work in 2014 will focus on sampling during lowest project operations. Crews are currently sampling along Wanapum reservoir now that the surface elevation is down to about 543 feet. **Hillman will distribute the PowerPoint.** Clement said that there have been visual observations of stranded fishes and ammocetes. The West shore of Wanapum Reservoir is not accessible by boat at this time but will be sampled when it becomes so. Blue Leaf Environmental has two crews electroshocking now and will be for the next week.

G. Update on White Sturgeon Management Plan

1. **Juvenile Rearing and Health at Marion Drain** – Juvenile sturgeon rearing at Marion Drain, Chelan Falls, and Wells hatcheries are growing at a normal rate. Samples of juvenile sturgeon from Marion Drain are being analyzed for Iridovirus in Olympia. Results should be available soon. Samples from Columbia Basin and Chelan Falls hatcheries have been analyzed and are negative for Iridovirus.
2. **Stocking Decision for 2014** – The PRFF discussed the results from the Juvenile White Sturgeon Workshop held in February and reviewed the suggestions from the outside experts. In addition, Larry Hildebrand gave a presentation on projected future abundances in the project area based on stocking 4,500 or 6,500 juvenile sturgeon assuming two different early survival rates (28% and 50%). Assuming the lower survival rate (28%), model results showed that both stocking levels will result in over 8,000 fish within the project area in a five-year period. Densities of sturgeon in the project area by the fifth year would be similar to or exceed densities reported in other areas in the Columbia River basin. Thus, the stocking of large numbers of juveniles into the project area will quickly result in exceeding the carrying capacity of the reservoirs.

The PRFF voted on the release of 4,332 or 6,500 juvenile sturgeon into the project area in 2014. Of the members present, four voted for 4,332 and three for 6,500. No members abstained. Based on this result, an impasse was declared, which initiates dispute resolution as defined in Article VI of the Final Priest Rapids Fish Forum Protocols

3. **WSMP Annual Report** – The 2013 White Sturgeon Management Plan Annual Report and the 2014 White Sturgeon Annual Work Plan will be submitted to FERC in two weeks. Comments to the Bull Trout Monitoring Report are due by March 20th.
 4. **Other White Sturgeon Items** – Broodstock collection will begin in June. Because of the issues at Wanapum Dam, some broodstock may need to be collected downstream from Priest Rapids or McNary dams. Sampling locations have yet to be determined or discussed. Juvenile releases will occur in mid-May.
- H. **Next Meeting** – The next regular meeting of the PRFF is scheduled for Wednesday, 02 April 2014 at Grant PUD's Natural Resources office.