



Grant County **PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT**

Priest Rapids Fish Forum

Wednesday, 1 July 2015
Grant PUD Wenatchee Office

PRFF Representatives

Stephen Lewis, USFWS
Bob Rose, YN
Doris Squeochs, Wanapum
Jason McLellan, CCT
Mike Clement, Chris Mott, GCPUD

Patrick Verhey, Chad Jackson, WDFW
Pat McGuire, WDOE
Aaron Jackson, Carl Merkle, CTUIR
Keith Hatch, BIA
Tracy Hillman, Facilitator

Attendees

Patrick Verhey, WDFW
Pat McGuire, WDOE (via phone)
Jason McLellan, CCT (via phone)
Mike Clement, Grant PUD
John Monahan, Grant PUD
Jim Powell, BCAHS (via phone)
Chad Jackson, WDFW (via phone)
Tracy Hillman, Facilitator

Tom Skiles, CRITFC (via phone)
RD Nelle, USFWS
Bob Rose, YN (via phone)
Chris Mott, Grant PUD
Doris Squeochs, Wanapum
Donella Miller, YN (via phone)
Paul Grutter, Golder (via phone)

Action Items:

1. Tracy Hillman will share the Forums' questions on the use of the Ecopath with Ecosim model with Steve McAdam and Villy Christensen. Tracy will also set up a date for a conference call with Steve and Villy.
2. Tracy Hillman will share the themes (overarching questions) for the white sturgeon workshop with the policy representatives, and ask them for their feedback and specific questions to help guide the workshop. He will also ask them to identify which date for the workshop works best for them (2 Sept or 7 Oct).
3. Tracy Hillman will contact each of the outside experts identified by the Forums and see if they can participate in the white sturgeon workshop.
4. PRFF voting members will continue to seek responses from their policy representatives on the four policy-level questions from the Pacific Lamprey Subgroup.
5. Tracy Hillman will send Pacific Lamprey Subgroup members a doodle poll to identify meeting dates over the next three months.

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Agenda Review – The agenda was reviewed and approved.

A. Meeting Minute approval – 3 June 2015 – Reviewed and approved.

B. Action Items from June Meeting:

1. Chris Mott will contact Paul Grutter (Golder) to see if he can call into the next meeting to discuss the sturgeon population assessment work that will be conducted in 2015. **Complete; Paul joined the meeting via phone.**
2. Members of the PRFF will decide during the next meeting if juvenile sturgeon collected as larvae will be the primary fish for release into the Priest Rapids Project Area. **Complete.**
3. Mike Clement will check with Grant PUD legal staff to determine if surplus mitigation sturgeon can be released into areas outside the Project Area (e.g., Snake River or Zone 6). **Complete.**
4. The PRFF will identify what questions they have for the Canadian experts (Steve McAdam and Villy Christensen) on Ecopath with Ecosim. **Complete.** They will also identify what data are available to populate the model. **Complete.**
5. Tracy Hillman will contact the Canadian experts and identify what questions they have for the PRFF. **Complete.**
6. Tracy Hillman will identify major themes for the proposed White Sturgeon Workshop to be held in September. **Complete.** Tracy will then ask for comments and edits from the PRFF. **Complete.** Tracy will share the themes with the PRFF policy representatives and ask them for their feedback and questions to help guide the workshop. **Ongoing.**
7. Tracy Hillman will check with the RRFF to see if they agree with the sturgeon workshop process and schedule. **Complete; the RRFF agreed with the process and schedule.**
8. PRFF voting members will share the four policy-level questions from the Pacific Lamprey Subgroup with their policy representatives. Members will report their findings to the PRFF during the next PRFF meeting. **Ongoing.**

III. Update on White Sturgeon Management Plan (WSMP)

A. Update on Juvenile Rearing – Donella Miller reported that the juvenile fish are doing well and growing. The fish will be ponded next week. The fish are separated by families (85 half-sib families).

Chris Mott reported that larval collection was not very successful, potentially because of low flows and warm water temperatures. Chris indicated that they collected about 10 larvae. Donella concurred and said that they had a difficult time collecting larvae in the Bonneville Reservoir. She said they captured about 17 larvae, all of which were released back to the river. Paul Grutter indicated that they were able to capture sturgeon embryos downstream from Rock Island Dam using egg mats. A total of 500 embryos were placed into *in situ* incubators. He noted that by 28 June the embryos began hatching. They are hoping for about 100-500 larvae. They will next check the incubators on 6 July. Jason McLellan noted that they were able to capture about 26,000 larvae in the upper Columbia. About 20,000 larvae went to Wells and roughly 6,000 went to Kettle Falls.

B. Sturgeon Population Assessment in 2015 – Paul Grutter with Golder explained the sturgeon population assessment work that will occur in 2015. He stated that sturgeon will be collected and marked during 8-22 September. Recaptures will occur on 5-19 October. The work will include 182 overnight sets. There are 30 hooks per setline. Sets will be fished at depths greater than 10 m. About one-third of the effort will occur in Priest Rapids Reservoir and two-thirds in Wanapum Reservoir. Paul noted that 12/0 circle hooks will be used and therefore the smallest fish captured will be about 50 cm fork length.

C. Decision to Use Laval-Collected Sturgeon as the Primary Fish for Release – Tracy Hillman explained that during the last meeting, members of the PRFF questioned what happens if both broodstock and larval collections are successful and there is surplus production of juvenile sturgeon at Marion Drain. In this case, which fish are released into the project area?

Grant PUD proposed that larval-collected fish will be the primary fish for release and juveniles produced from broodstock collections will be used to backfill any gap needed to achieve the release goal of 0-6,500 fish. WDFW seconded the motion. Bob Rose asked that the motion be amended to include the ability to revisit the decision based on adaptive management. Following discussion, the PRFF voting members present approved unanimously the motion to use larval-collected fish as the primary stock for release into the project area, with juveniles from broodstock collections backfilling any gaps needed to achieve the release goal of 0-6,500 juveniles. This decision is subject to review based on adaptive management.

D. Release of Surplus Mitigation Juvenile Sturgeon – During the last meeting, Bob Rose asked if the Forum has legal mechanisms to release surplus mitigation fish into other areas, such as the Snake River or Zone 6 (between Bonneville Dam and McNary Dam). Mike Clement said that he checked with GPUD legal counsel and they indicated that the fish managers are responsible for any surplus production. That is, the fate of surplus mitigation juvenile sturgeon at Marion Drain is the responsibility of the fish managers.

E. Phase 2 Sturgeon Conservation Program (Ecopath with Ecosim) – Tracy Hillman said that he sent an email to Steve McAdam and Villy Christensen asking if they would be interested in working with the PRFF on estimating sturgeon carrying capacity within the project area. Recall that Steve and Villy are experts in the use of the Ecopath with Ecosim model. Tracy said that at this time he had not heard back from Steve and Villy. Tracy also stated that he sent the PRFF an email asking for questions to share with Steve and Villy. No one responded with questions.

Tracy asked the Forum to identify questions that he can share with Steve and Villy. The Forum identified the following questions (the list also includes questions from the RRFF):

1. Has the Ecopath with Ecosim model ever been used to estimate fish carrying capacity?
2. What data are needed to populate the model? *The Forums have sturgeon monitoring data, resident fish data, benthic invertebrate data, and water quantity and quality data.*
3. What level of certainty can we expect in estimates of carrying capacity?
4. How many years of data are needed to increase precision of estimates?
5. How important is movement of sturgeon into and out of the populations (i.e., violation of a closed population)?
6. Can carrying capacity be identified before monitoring detects density-dependent effects?
7. If suitable data are available, how long will it take to run the model and estimate carrying capacity for sturgeon?
8. Can the model highlight Pacific lamprey and sturgeon interactions?

9. Are there examples where the results from the model have resulted in management decisions?
10. What kinds of management questions can be addressed using the model?

Tracy will share these questions with Steve and Villy. Tracy will also see if Steve and Villy can conference with the PRFF and RRFF sturgeon subgroups on 21, 22, or 23 July to discuss the questions above.

F. White Sturgeon Workshop – Tracy Hillman said that he sent an email to the PRFF and RRFF asking them to provide feedback on the major themes (overarching questions) for the white sturgeon workshop. Tracy indicated that he received little feedback on the themes. He shared the following themes with the Forum:

1. Given that the required front loading of the project areas is complete, what guidance is given in the White Sturgeon Management Plans on future stocking efforts?
2. How will monitoring data be used to guide future stocking levels and is the current level of monitoring sufficient to identify density-dependent effects?
3. How do we estimate carrying capacity and how will it be used to guide future stocking levels?
4. If carrying capacity cannot be estimated for each project area within a relatively short period of time, what stocking strategy will be used in the interim?

Members reviewed the themes and made no changes or additions to the themes. They directed Tracy to send the themes to the policy representatives and ask them for specific questions associated with each theme. Members also identified the following outside experts as participants in the workshop.

1. James Crossman
2. Ray Beamesderfer
3. Paul Anders
4. Larry Hildebrand
5. Katie Jay
6. Andrea Schreier
7. Scott Blankenship
8. Mike Parsley
9. Steve McAdam
10. Villy Christensen

Tracy will contact the sturgeon experts and see if they would be willing to participate on a panel to answer questions from the policy and technical representatives. Finally, the Forum indicated that they would like to have the one-day workshop on the day of their regularly scheduled meeting in September (2 Sept) or October (7 Oct). Tracy will ask the policy representatives which day works best for them.

G. Other White Sturgeon Items – None

IV. Update on PLMP

A. NNI (No Net Impact) Update from Pacific Lamprey Subgroup – Tracy Hillman reported that during the last PRFF meeting, the Pacific Lamprey Subgroup asked voting members to share the following questions with their policy representatives.

1. Is there policy support for a proposed recommendation to establish an NNI account that will fund adult and juvenile NNI actions within and upstream from the Priest Rapids

Project Area? Grant PUD would provide annual contributions to the NNI account and may front-load the account to support the implementation of key projects. The account would be set up like the PRCC Habitat Subcommittee Fund and would be controlled by the PRFF. Thus, the PRFF would determine by consensus what projects would be funded and who would do the work. This proposal defers juvenile survival studies for the life of the license (39 years).

2. Is there policy support for proposed recommendation #1 with inclusion of juvenile survival studies? In this case, however, survival studies would be funded through the NNI Fund. That is, Grant PUD would contribute funds annually to the NNI account (as in #1) and those funds would be used to address both NNI actions and any future juvenile survival studies (under #1, funds would only be used for NNI actions; there would be no juvenile survival studies). The amount contributed to the NNI fund would be the same for both recommendations #1 and #2. That is, Grant PUD would not increase the annual contribution to the NNI account under recommendation #2.
3. Is there policy support for an annual contribution of about \$117,000 per year for the life of the license (39 years)? This contribution level was based on estimating the cost of a three-year juvenile survival study, and dividing that amount by 39 (the number of years remaining in the license). When necessary, an additional amount of about \$62,000 would be spent on adult trap-and-haul. This money would only be used for trap-and-haul to address adult NNI, and would not be available for other NNI actions if trap-and-haul is deemed unnecessary in a given year.
4. Finally, is their policy support for an NNI agreement lasting for the life of the license (39 years) with ten-year biological check-ins? For example, would the parties support recommendation #1 or #2 for a duration of 39 years? The biological check-ins would be used to guide what future actions would be funded with NNI money; there would be no adjustments to the annual contributions to the NNI account based on the biological check-ins (annual contributions would only be adjusted for inflation).

Tracy asked each voting member present to provide their findings.

WDFW = Because of schedules and time constraints, WDFW has no definitive responses to the questions. They would like to discuss these with the Yakama Nation.

WDOE = They also reported no definitive responses to the questions. They intend to discuss these with WDFW, Yakama Nation, and GPUD.

GPUD = They are ready to move forward with the proposed recommendations. They discussed these with FERC and FERC indicated that it would require a license amendment and a change to the 401 Certification.

Wanapum = No definitive responses to the questions.

Yakama Nation = They support the fish manager's proposal and the concept of an NNI fund. They would like to discuss this further with CRITFC and the Umatilla Tribes.

Umatilla/CRITFC = They support the concept of an NNI Fund, but noted that juvenile studies and the amount deposited in the NNI Fund is still under negotiations.

Based on the collective responses, members asked for more time to discuss this with their policy representatives.

Bob Rose asked that the PRFF Pacific Lamprey Subgroup reconvene to discuss the technical details of each objective (objectives were identified in Bob's spreadsheet). Bob stated that this may help policy representatives understand what they gain and lose in the negotiations. Members agreed and asked Tracy to send a Doodle Poll identifying meeting dates for the next three months. Because the objectives are identical in both the PRFF and RRFF, members asked Tracy to check with the RRFF Subgroup to see if they can meet jointly with the PRFF subgroup.

- B. Regional Monitoring** – Mike Clement reported that the Warm Springs Tribes will tag adult lamprey at Bonneville Dam in 2015. Mike also noted that they are seeing about 10-25 adult lamprey passing at Priest Rapids Dam daily. Grant PUD turned on the PIT-tag interrogation system during the first week of June (earlier than usual). So far, they have detected seven unique tags. Three ascended Wanapum Dam.
- C. Monitoring to Assess Lamprey Passage in Left-Bank Ladder at Priest Rapids Dam** – Mike Clement shared with the PRFF a draft study plan that will assess adult lamprey passage through the Priest Rapids left-bank fishway in 2015. A total of 125 adult lamprey will be tagged and released in the lower ladder. These fish, and any fish tagged downstream that move through the project, will be used to identify delays within the fishway. Mike indicated that the study will begin at the end of July or early August. Following discussion, the PRFF members present agreed unanimously to implement the study plan.
- D. Other Lamprey Items** – None

V. Next Meeting – 5 August 2015 at Grant PUD in Wenatchee, WA.