



Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee Meeting

FINAL APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 2, 2021

1:00 pm

ZOOM Webinar

PRCC Representatives

Scott Carlon, Justin Yeager (Alt), NMFS
Keely Murdoch, Brandon Rogers (Alt), YN
Chad Jackson, P. Verhey (Alt) WDFW
Curt Dotson, Peter Graf (Alt), GCPUD
Denny Rohr, D. Rohr & Assoc, Facilitator

Jim Craig, USFWS
Kirk Truscott, Casey Baldwin (alt), CCT
Tom Skiles, CTUIR
Erin Harris, Admin Ass't, GPUD

PRCC Meeting Attendees

Curt Dotson, GPUD
Scott Carlon, NMFS
Chad Jackson, WDFW
Tom Skiles, CTUIR
Quinn Peyton, RTR
Allen Evans, RTR

Keely Murdoch, YN
Denny Rohr, D. Rohr & Assoc, Facilitator
Erin Harris, GPUD
Jim Craig, USFWS
Kirk Truscott, CCT
Ken Collis, RTR

Decisions Made During Tuesday, March 2, 2021 Meeting

1. RTR Proposal of “**Avian Predation on ESA-listed Juvenile Salmonids on the Mid-Columbia River, 2021**” was approved for NNI Funding up to \$185,655.

Meeting Minutes

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Rohr welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the meeting.
- II. **Agenda Review** – No additions were made to the agenda.
- III. **BRIEF UPDATE of PRCC-BOR Activities** – Rohr received and sent the BOR 2020 Goose Island Report out to PRCC members. He also shared that BOR commented they are planning to provide monthly activities reports to the PRCC.

IV. **(Continued) DECISION ITEM – RTR Proposal “Avian Predation on ESA-listed Juvenile Salmonids on the Mid-Columbia River, 2021”.**

- A. Continued review and discussion with Real Time Research staff, including Fish Passage Center (FPC) Memorandum, dated February 19, 2021, regarding “eliminating Rock Island from the regional Smolt Monitoring Program”.

Allen Evans, RTR, thanked members who attended the meeting, and he also thanked them for sharing the FPC memo and their questions with RTR. Evans then reviewed the 2021 Avian Predation Project Proposal to provide information and address questions raised by committee members as well as from the FPC memo.

Skiles asked Evans to review the run-timing slide shown in his presentation. Evans said the slides show 15-20% predation rate and that “recovery rates “of PIT tags from bird colony sites are not the same thing as “predation rates”. Skiles also asked about “swamping effects” that a hatchery release might have regarding survival rates involving terns, as opposed to the more spread-out numbers of smolts in the river if you were looking at wild fish. Evans responded that there was a swamping signal present in the weekly predation estimates. Truscott commented on the survival histogram at Bonneville Dam which has a similar pattern with McNary Dam. Murdoch questioned why all the data is from 2012 and Evans responded that 2012 was the year of data that the FPC’s memo selected to look at and comment on the results. 2012 had a large predation rate that year, but RTR can look at other years for comparisons of predations rates and recovery rates if it adds value to the PRCC in their review of the FPC memo. Murdoch also shared in 2014, as a result of recalculation, many hatchery programs were significantly reduced and in some cases release locations changed, therefore it might be beneficial to look at more recent data. Murdoch commented hatchery steelhead could be confused with wild fish since wild x wild steelhead from the Wenatchee River are adipose and it would be helpful to show hatchery/wild fish difference. Murdoch asked if predation rates by origin (hatchery fish and wild fish) could be reported. Evans said they currently do report predation rates, with a separation between hatchery and wild fish, and this presentation today was brought together quickly so that data is not shown, however, RTR can get it if wanted. Evans shared that they look at both tagged and wild fish. Evans shared that they look at counts weekly rather than annually, as is what the FPC folks did. The reason for weekly is that you see differences, on a weekly basis, in predation rates (i.e. intensity of tern activity for feeding) as the dynamics change (i.e. increased number of terns at the colony, eggs hatch and young to now feed, baby terns increasing food demands as they grow, etc..). Murdoch asked that RTR include other factors that would affect survival.

Jackson also shared it appears there are differences in RTR’s data and data provided by others.

After discussion, committee members voted on the RTR proposal, including all tasks listed, for the total amount of \$185,655.00, and the proposal was **APPROVED with Murdoch abstaining from the vote**. Murdoch requested that RTR include in their 2021 analysis of predation rates a side-by-side comparison of results from tagging at the Rock Island bypass and passivity detected PIT tags from the Rocky Reach bypass. The committee discussed whether this would take a change of scope, but then agreed that the current scope of work, which includes \$6850 for RTR to 'provide technical assistance to GPUD and the PRCC in the development and adaptive management of short- and long-term plans to reduce bird predation on ESA-listed stocks from the mid- and upper-Columbia River' (Objective 4) might be used for this purpose.

V. Potpourri – Nothing added.

VI. Next Meeting – March 23, 2021, 1:00 pm, ZOOM Webinar Meeting.

Action Items from January 21, 2021 meeting

- Evans will send the Final Steelhead Survival Covariate Analysis Report to Rohr for distribution to committee members.