



Grant County
PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT
Excellence in Service and Leadership

**Priest Rapids Fish Forum
Conference Call**

**Wednesday, 1 July 2020
9:00 – 10:30 a.m.**

FINAL MINUTES

PRFF REPRESENTATIVES

Steve Lewis, USFWS
Ralph Lampman, YN
Pat Wyena, Wanapum
Jason McLellan, CCT
Mike Clement, Chris Mott, Grant PUD
Tracy Hillman, Facilitator

Patrick Verhey, Laura Heironimus, WDFW
Breean Zimmerman, WDOE
Aaron Jackson, Carl Merkle, CTUIR
Keith Hatch, BIA
Tom Skiles, CRITFC/CTUIR
Erin Harris, Grant PUD

ATTENDEES

RD Nelle, USFWS
Mike Clement, Grant PUD
Tom Skiles, CRITFC/CTUIR
Chris Mott, Grant PUD
Erin Harris, Grant PUD

Laura Heironimus WDFW
Patrick Verhey, WDFS
Ralph Lampman, YN
Donella Miller, YN
Tracy Hillman, Facilitator

Action Items:

- Chris Mott will coordinate with Blue Leaf and the Yakama Nation on marking and tagging juvenile sturgeon at the Yakama Nation Sturgeon Hatchery. Only fish to be released in 2020 will be marked and tagged.

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** - Tracy Hillman welcomed everyone to the call and participants introduced themselves.
- II. **Agenda Review** - Members reviewed and approved the agenda with no additions.
- III. **Approve June Meeting Notes** - Draft June Meeting Notes were reviewed and approved.
 - A. **Review Action Items from June Meeting**
 - 1. There were no action items from the June meeting to review.
- IV. **White Sturgeon Management Plan**
 - A. **Update on Juvenile Rearing** – Donella Miller reported that the fish at the Yakama Nation Sturgeon Hatchery (YNSH) are doing well. She said Chelan PUD recently transferred their portion of the fish from YNSH to the Columbia Basin Hatchery. This helped reduce rearing densities at YNSH. The fish to be released this year are rearing separately from the other fish, which will be released next year after 12N testing.
 - B. **Juvenile Marking and Tagging** – Donella Miller shared that marking and tagging has not yet happened because of Covid-19 restrictions. She said one of her staff recently tested positive for Covid-19. She noted that she followed and continues to follow Covid-19 guidelines including the use of PPE and staff working separately. She said these measures helped prevent the spread of the disease. She said they also use hand sanitizer and clean all common areas after each shift. Chris Mott said he will work with Blue Leaf on scheduling a time to mark the fish to be released this year. Donella indicated that they can mark the fish as long as they follow the Covid-19 guidelines at YNSH.
 - C. **Prorated Release Number for 2021** – Donella Miller shared that 3,000 juvenile sturgeon are on station. Of these, 670 will be released this year leaving about 2,300 fish to be released in 2021. She added that survival is very high and expects it to continue to be high. As a result of the high survival, she asked if there is a prorated release number for 2021. Chris Mott said he discussed this with Chelan PUD and the PUDs estimated a prorated 2021 release number assuming a first-year survival rate of 0.78 (which comes from the SOA). Applying this rate to the “target” release number (3,250) results in a prorated release number of 2,535 ($3,250 \times 0.78 = 2,535$). Because there are about 2,300 juvenile sturgeon on hand, which is less than the prorated release number of 2,535, all fish on station will need to be reared and released in 2021. Tracy Hillman added that some of the fish on station will be removed because of the presence of low levels of 12N within the family groups. If we assume a 3% loss from mortality and removing 12N fish, the total number released next year could be about 2,231 fish ($2,300 \times 0.97 = 2,231$).

Tracy asked members present if they approve holding and rearing the 2,300 fish on station for release in 2021. All members present approved holding and rearing the 2,300 at the YNSH. These fish will be released in 2021 after 12N testing.
 - D. **Other White Sturgeon Items** – Chris Mott reported that Grant PUD is undertaking sturgeon egg-mat collections within the tailrace of Rock Island Dam. They currently have about 1,500 eggs in the incubator. The collection of eggs will continue through 3 July 2020, resulting in a 14-day sampling period. Chris said he reached out to Douglas PUD and asked them if they would like some of the larvae. Douglas PUD is waiting to see how many eggs will be collected. Chris said if anyone is interested in these fish, they need to let him know as soon as possible. Chris said Golder is leading the egg collections.

Finally, Chris reported that they received their Coulter Counter. The unit will be set up and training will occur once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

V. **Pacific Lamprey Management Plan**

- A. **Adult Trapping in 2020** – Tracy Hillman shared an email he and Mike Clement received from Ralph Lampman regarding migration timing of adult Pacific Lamprey at Lower Columbia River dams this year. Based on Ralph's email, he is expecting peak passage to occur around the end of July or early August at Priest Rapids Dam. Therefore, he would like adult trapping to begin as soon as possible at Priest Rapids Dam. Mike indicated that they will trap for 8 weeks this year. Four weeks of trapping will support the Douglas PUD program and the other four weeks is for the Grant PUD program. Trapping crews will work four days per week, ten hours per day. Based on Ralph's calculations, members present agreed to start adult trapping on Monday, 20 July. Trapping will end during the second week of September. Adult lamprey collected during the first 4 weeks of trapping will be for the Douglas PUD program. Lamprey collected for the Grant PUD program will be released upstream from Rock Island Dam at Kirby Billingsley Hydro Park.
- B. **Douglas PUD Adult Translocation Plans** – Ralph Lampman reported that all adult lamprey collected during the first 4 weeks of trapping at Priest Rapids Dam will be used in the Douglas PUD program. Depending on the number of adults trapped during the first 4-week period, Douglas PUD may request that all adults collected during the 8-week period be translocated upstream from Wells Dam. The goal of the Douglas PUD program is to translocate 500 adults per year. Members of the PRFF had mixed thoughts on translocating all adults collected during the 8-week period upstream from Wells Dam. Most were supportive or neutral, while a few were concerned that translocating all trapped adults upstream from Wells Dam could affect recruitment of adults into the Wenatchee and Entiat rivers. Members decided to revisit this issue during the August meeting. By the August meeting, members will know how many adults will have been translocated during the first 2.5 weeks of trapping.
- C. **Mainstem RMU Web-Conference** – RD Nelle provided a summary on the Mainstem Regional Management Unit web-conference, which occurred last week. The focus of the call was on Army Corps of Engineers projects, including updates on current work and money available for lamprey studies. There is currently about \$200,000-\$300,000 available. RD indicated that the Regional Implementation Plan will be completed by 30 July 2020. He will share the plan with the Forum as soon as the plan is available.
- D. **Other Pacific Lamprey Items** – Mike Clement remarked that during past years, various entities PIT-tagged adult lamprey in the Lower Columbia River. He said these tagging studies were conducted to assess lamprey passage at hydroelectric projects. In the past, Grant PUD provided HDX PIT tags to the Warm Springs Tribes. He said he was unable to connect with anyone at the Warm Springs Tribe this year regarding PIT tagging. He asked if anyone will be tagging adult lamprey with HDX PIT tags this year. Ralph indicated that there will be no tagging studies within the mainstem this year. However, there will be monitoring within tributaries. Therefore, there is no need to operate HDX PIT-tag systems in the dams this year. Mike said he will shut down their HDX readers at Priest Rapids and Wanapum dams this year.

VI. Next Meeting: 5 August 2020