



Grant County
PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT
Excellence in Service and Leadership

**Priest Rapids Fish Forum
Conference Call**

**Wednesday, 7 October 2020
9:00 – 10:30 a.m.**

FINAL MINUTES

PRFF REPRESENTATIVES

Steve Lewis, USFWS
Ralph Lampman, Donella Miller, YN
Pat Wyena, Wanapum
Jason McLellan, Kirk Truscott, 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
Doris Squeochs, Wanapum
Chris Mott, Grant PUD
Erin Harris, Grant PUD

Ralph Lampman, YN
Patrick Verhey, WDFW
Laura Heironimus, WDFW
Jason McLellan, CCT
Tracy Hillman, Facilitator

Action Items:

- Tracy Hillman will discuss the proposal to suspend juvenile sturgeon acoustic telemetry studies in the Priest Rapids Project Area with Donella Miller, who was unable to attend the PRFF meeting in October.

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** - Tracy Hillman welcomed everyone to the call and participants introduced themselves.
- II. **Agenda Review** - Members reviewed and approved the October agenda.
- III. **Approve August Meeting Notes** - Draft August Meeting Notes were reviewed and approved.
 - A. **Review Action Items from the August Meeting**
 - 1. Chris Mott will provide the locations where egg mats collected white sturgeon eggs within the project area. **This information will be included in the annual report from Golder.**
- IV. **White Sturgeon Management Plan**
 - A. **Update on Juvenile Rearing** – Chris Mott said there was no new information on juvenile rearing at the Yakama Nation Sturgeon Hatchery.
 - B. **Update on 2020 Juvenile Index Monitoring** – Chris Mott reported that juvenile index monitoring started on 28 August and ended on 6 October. Chris said they struggled with smoke, COVID restrictions, and boat issues this year. Nevertheless, they were able to complete the monitoring work in the project area. He said one boat worked within Priest Rapids Reservoir, while two boats worked in Wanapum Reservoir over a 3 to 4-week period. He said he does not have final numbers, but they captured about 200 sturgeon in Priest Rapids reservoir, which is an increase compared with previous years. Blue Leaf fished lower Wanapum Reservoir (between Sunland and Wanapum Dam) and noticed a small decrease in overall catch in that area. Golder fished the mid to upper reservoir and observed a small increase in catch there. Chris remarked that given the various issues they had to contend with this year, it was a successful effort overall. He added that they (Grant PUD) captured 42 fish on two lines, which was a first. He noted that there were high densities of juvenile sturgeon in the Wanapum tailrace. The annual report, which Golder is preparing and should be available early next year, will have more details about the sampling effort.
 - C. **Future Monitoring and Evaluation Work** – Chris Mott reported that Grant PUD is currently evaluating the 2021 M&E schedule, which includes juvenile sturgeon acoustic tagging. Chris said they have ten years of acoustic telemetry data and the current schedule is to repeat telemetry work every third year. Next year (2021) would be the next year for acoustic telemetry work. Chris added that the ten years of telemetry data consistently show the same results regarding movements and behavior of juvenile sturgeon in the project area. That is, there is little to no variation in movement and behavior patterns of tagged sturgeon within the project area. Therefore, Grant PUD questions the need to continue to conduct telemetry studies on a three-year basis. Chris made it clear that Grant PUD is not saying they do not want to conduct telemetry studies. Rather, they would like to conduct the studies when there is a need to do the study. At this time, the movements and behavior of juvenile sturgeon are well understood based on the ten years of telemetry work. Importantly, Grant PUD intends to scute mark and PIT tag every juvenile sturgeon released into the project area. These data can be used to further inform movement and entrainment of juvenile sturgeon. Chris asked the PRFF whether or not they have concerns with postponing telemetry work until there is a need to do so.

Doris Squeochs asked if Grant PUD would be out of compliance with the management plan if they do not conduct telemetry work on a three-year cycle. Mike Clement said they would not be out of compliance if the PRFF agreed to conduct telemetry work on an as needed basis. Laura Heironimus asked if receiver arrays would be maintained in the project area even though no fish would be tagged with acoustic tags. Chris said there are no arrays currently in the project area. Arrays would be installed if the telemetry study occurs next year. Laura asked how many tags are currently active in the project area. Chris said the tags have a three-year life span. Thus, there are probably few if any live tags currently in the

project area. Mike agreed and said it is unlikely there are active tags still operating in the project area. He believes they have all expired. Mike added that a lot of the information gleaned from acoustic tags can be picked up from PIT-tagged fish. He said entrainment can be estimated based on detection of PIT tags downstream of the project area.

Mike asked Jason McLellan to summarize the telemetry work occurring in Lake Roosevelt. Jason said the telemetry program in Lake Roosevelt currently includes tracking about 100 adult sturgeon that were tagged with ten-year acoustic tags (earlier work used four-year tags). He said they have tracked the fish for a long time. They are using 2-D and 3-D tracking to better understand fine-scale habitat use during spawning and rearing. He said in 2010, they suspended telemetry in the US portion of the study area. This is because they answered their research questions. They do maintain their telemetry arrays because some tags remain active and they need the arrays to monitor other tagged fish species (e.g., kokanee, rainbow trout, Chinook, and burbot). He added that Canadian researchers are currently starting another study that evaluates the movement, habitat use, and behavior of older hatchery sturgeon (>10 years old) in the system. They will also conduct juvenile tagging studies to determine the capture efficiency of sampling gear. As for continued telemetry work in the Priest Rapids project area, Jason said there is no need to continue telemetry work unless there is a specific need for it. Monitoring should not be conducted for the sake of monitoring but rather to address specific questions. At this time, there are no specific questions that justify an ongoing telemetry study in the project area.

Before the next PRFF meeting, members will consider the proposal to suspend acoustic telemetry work in the project area, unless there is a specific need for it. During the November meeting, members will decide whether to suspend telemetry work.

D. Other White Sturgeon Items – None.

V. Pacific Lamprey Management Plan

A. Update on Adult Trapping – Mike Clement said they trapped 354 adult lamprey at Priest Rapids Dam during the eight-week collection period. Trapping began on 21 July and ended on 9 September. Mike reminded the PRFF that there were two, four-week trapping periods. During the first four-week trapping period, Grant PUD collected adults for the Douglas PUD program. Douglas PUD picked these fish up at Priest Rapids Dam. During the second four-week collection period, adults were collected for the Grant PUD program. Although Grant PUD collected these fish for their program, they provided the fish to Douglas PUD after transporting them to Kirby Billingsley Hydro Park, which is upstream from Rock Island Dam. Thus, all fish collected during the eight-week period were translocated upstream from Wells Dam as part of the Douglas PUD program. He noted that 25% of the fish were released into the Okanogan Basin by the Colville Tribes. Mike said the collection of 354 adults represented about 28% of the total lamprey run at Priest Rapids Dam during the eight-week period. He said this capture rate is similar to previous years. Mike indicated that all the fish were tagged by Douglas PUD before the fish were released.

Tracy Hillman indicated that the topic of “all” adult lamprey collected at Priest Rapids Dam being released upstream from Wells Dam was discussed during the September Rocky Reach Fish Forum (RRFF) meeting. Tracy said Chelan PUD made known that they were not comfortable with all adult lamprey trapped at Priest Rapids Dam being translocated upstream from Wells Dam. This not only affects Rock Island and Rocky Reach Dam counts, but it potentially reduces escapements of adult lamprey into the Wenatchee and Entiat rivers and into the Rocky Reach project area. This is especially a concern during low adult lamprey run years. Tracy said the RRFF would like to be included in future discussions regarding translocation if all adult lamprey captured at Priest Rapids Dam will be released upstream from Wells Dam. Ralph Lampman said the four-year plan is to translocate 500 or

more adult lamprey upstream from Wells Dam each year. Ralph said they would like to translocate as many adult lamprey as possible to help recolonize lamprey upstream from Wells Dam.

Ralph asked Mike if any adult lamprey can pass Priest Rapids and Wanapum dams undetected. Mike responded it is unlikely any lamprey can pass undetected. At most, it would be well less than 1%. The counts within the fishways are expected to be nearly 100%. RD Nelle suggested that members of the RRFF, who are not members of the PRFF, be included when we discuss how many lamprey collected at Priest Rapids Dam will be translocated upstream from Wells Dam. Members present agreed.

- B. **Other Pacific Lamprey Items** – RD Nelle shared information on the 4th annual lamprey information exchange webinar series, which is scheduled to occur the second Tuesday of each month, January through June 2021 (see Attachment 1). The purpose of the webinars is to share and exchange lamprey information with lamprey enthusiasts. Topics include cultural significance of lamprey, lamprey ecology and ecosystem services, juvenile lamprey migration and passage, lamprey electrofishing and capture techniques, learning from sea lamprey research and experience, and lamprey diversity. The Pacific Lamprey Technical Workgroup is hosting the monthly webinar series.

VI. **Other Discussion Topics:**

- A. **Western Ridged Mussel** – RD Nelle reported that the western ridged mussel (aka Rocky Mountain ridged mussel) has been petitioned for listing under ESA. He asked if anyone has information on the distribution or abundance of the mussel to please provide that information to him or the USFWS.

VII. **Next Meeting: 4 November 2020**

Attachment 1: Lamprey Information Exchange Monthly Webinar Series

4th Annual Lamprey Information Exchange Monthly Webinar Series



Save the 2nd Tuesdays in 2021 for Lamprey!

This year the Pacific Lamprey Conservation Initiative's (PLCI) 4th Annual Lamprey Information Exchange is going virtual!

Throughout the first six months of 2021, PLCI's Lamprey Technical Workgroup will be hosting a monthly webinar series on the second Tuesday of each month from 11:00am - 1:00pm Pacific Time.

Join your fellow lamprey enthusiasts as we kick this series off on January 12, 2021 with a special event that will include a tribal keynote address and further explore the cultural significance of lamprey, as well as outreach and community engagement.

2021 Monthly Lamprey Information Exchange Webinar Schedule (all times in Pacific)

Cultural Significance of Lamprey & Importance of Outreach

- January 12, 2021 from 11am - 1pm PT

Register: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/347850704526782223>

Lamprey Ecology & Ecosystem Services

- February 9, 2021 from 11am - 1pm PT

Register: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4251893238341247757>

Juvenile Lamprey Migration & Passage

- March 9, 2021 from 11am - 1pm PT

Register: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6874913466331160333>

Lamprey Electrofishing & Capture Techniques

- April 13, 2021 from 11am - 1pm PT

Register: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8556551629828551181>

Learning from North American Sea Lamprey Research & Experiences

- May 11, 2021 from 11am - 1pm PT

Register: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3297111425641152013>

Diversity in Lampreys: Within-Species and Across Species

- June 8, 2021 from 11am - 1pm PT

Register: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2300533877434323725>

please note, participants will need to register for each webinar separately