Grant County
PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT
*Excellence in Service and Leadership*

# Priest Rapids Fish Forum
# Conference Call

**Wednesday, 5 August 2020**
**9:00 – 10:30 a.m.**

## FINAL MINUTES

PRFF REPRESENTATIVES

| | |
|---|---|
| Steve Lewis, USFWS | Patrick Verhey, Laura Heironimus, WDFW |
| Ralph Lampman, Donella Miller, YN | Breean Zimmerman, WDOE |
| Pat Wyena, Wanapum | Aaron Jackson, Carl Merkle, CTUIR |
| Jason McLellan, Kirk Truscott, CCT | Keith Hatch, BIA |
| Mike Clement, Chris Mott, Grant PUD | Tom Skiles, CRITFC/CTUIR |
| Tracy Hillman, Facilitator | Erin Harris, Grant PUD |

ATTENDEES

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|---|---|
| RD Nelle, USFWS | Ralph Lampman, YN |
| Mike Clement, Grant PUD | Patrick Verhey, WDFW |
| Tom Skiles, CRITFC/CTUIR | Breean Zimmerman, WDOE |
| Chris Mott, Grant PUD | Steve Lewis, USFWS |
| Erin Harris, Grant PUD | Tracy Hillman, Facilitator |

Action Items:

- Chris Mott will provide the locations where egg mats collected white sturgeon eggs within the project area.

I. Welcome and Introductions - Tracy Hillman welcomed everyone to the call and participants introduced themselves.

II. Agenda Review - Members reviewed and approved the August agenda with no additions.

III. Approve July Meeting Notes - Draft July Meeting Notes were reviewed and approved.

A. Review Action Items from the July Meeting

1. 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. Completed.

IV. White Sturgeon Management Plan

A. Update on Juvenile Marking/Tagging and Release – Chris Mott reported that crews from Grant PUD and Blue Leaf PIT tagged and scute marked juvenile sturgeon on 7 July at the Yakama Nation Sturgeon Hatchery. Only juvenile sturgeon to be released in 2020 were tagged. These fish were from the one maternal group that tested negative for 12N (spontaneous autopolyploidy). Chris said a total of 681 juvenile sturgeon were released into the project area on 23 July; 420 were released into Wanapum reservoir at Frenchman Coulee and 261 were released in Priest Rapids reservoir near the tailrace of Wanapum Dam. Fish were healthy and averaged 1.5 fish per pound. No sturgeon died, but one fish shed its PIT tag.

B. Update on Juvenile Rearing – Chris Mott indicated he has no recent update on juvenile sturgeon rearing at the Yakama Nation Sturgeon Hatchery. He believes all fish are doing well.

C. Juvenile Index Monitoring in 2020 – Chris Mott reported that Grant PUD and Golder/Blue Leaf will conduct juvenile sturgeon index monitoring this year. Grant PUD will begin monitoring on 31 August, while Golder/Blue Leaf will start on 8 September. They will use three boats, one in Priest Rapids reservoir and two in Wanapum reservoir. Index monitoring will take about three to four weeks to complete. As in past years, they will use standardized methods and gear. This allows for comparison of results among years and among project areas.

D. Other White Sturgeon Items – Chris Mott informed the PRFF that Golder conducted egg-mat sampling in the upper portion of Wanapum reservoir and collected over 1,600 eggs from three different spawning events. Spawning started when water temperatures reached 15°C. Chris said spawning was interrupted when temperatures dropped to about 14°C, but then resumed when temperatures increased. He said some incubator mats collected 300-400 eggs. None of the eggs had hatched by the time the incubating eggs were returned to the river substrate. These data indicate that natural spawning occurs within the project area. Chris said Golder will provide information on specific locations where eggs were collected. He noted that they have documented natural production every year they have conducted the study. As a result, a few years ago, the PRFF agreed to reduce the frequency of the egg-mat study from every three years to every five years. The next sampling event will be in 2025.

V. Pacific Lamprey Management Plan

Update on Adult Trapping – Mike Clement reported that Grant PUD is currently in week three of trapping adult lamprey at Priest Rapids Dam and they have successfully trapped a total of 40 adult lamprey to date. Mike said this represents about 8% of the run at Priest Rapids Dam (i.e., ~500 adults counted at the dam and 40 of them collected). He added that the daily counts of adult lamprey passing the dam have been relatively low; however, he expects numbers to increase. Mike noted that Douglas PUD picked up the fish at Priest

Rapids Dam and transported them and released them in the Columbia River just downstream from the mouth of the Methow River. Grant PUD will continue trapping adult lamprey for another five weeks (for a total of eight weeks of trapping). Mike stated that the projected total run size at Bonneville Dam is about 30,000 adult lamprey. Ralph Lampman added that the peak run in the lower Columbia River has passed.

Steve Lewis asked where translocated lamprey are being released and whether there is a biological rationale for the selection of release locations. Ralph reported that 75% of fish from the Douglas PUD program will be released in the Columbia River near the mouth of the Methow River and 25% of fish will be released at several locations in the Okanagan River basin (e.g., Omak Creek, Salmon Creek, Similkameen River, etc.). No fish will be released in the Methow River basin this year. Ralph added that the rationale for the translocation effort is to increase lamprey production upstream from Wells Dam, where there is currently few adult lamprey.

Mike Clement asked whether there is any attempt to monitor the success of the translocation effort. Ralph indicated that they are monitoring lamprey presence/absence using eDNA sampling (they are evaluating both eDNA concentration and rate). They are also conducting electrofishing surveys to determine juvenile production, which Ralph said is increasing in tributaries indicating successful natural reproduction of translocated adults. Ralph also indicated that they will be evaluating the presence of lamprey pheromonal bile acids and will compare those results with eDNA sampling. The presence of lamprey bile acids may help guide adult lamprey to locations upstream from Wells Dam.

A. Other Pacific Lamprey Items – None.

VI. Next Meeting: 2 September 2020