



Grant County **PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT**

Priest Rapids Fish Forum

Wednesday, 6 January 2016
Grant PUD Wenatchee Office
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
MEETING MINUTES

PRFF Representatives

Stephen Lewis, USFWS
Bob Rose, YN
Doris Squeochs, Wanapum
Jason McLellan, CCT
Mike Clement, Grant PUD
Orlene Hahn, Grant PUD

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

Attendees

RD Nelle, USFWS
Doris Squeochs, Wanapum (via phone)
Pat Wyena, Wanapum (via phone)
Jim Powell, BCAHS (via phone)
Jason McLellan, CCT (via phone)
Patrick Verhey, WDFW
Pat McGuire, WDOE (via phone)
Tracy Hillman, Facilitator

Steve Lewis, USFWS
Chris Mott, Grant PUD
Chad Jackson, WDFW (via phone)
Mike Clement, Grant PUD
Bob Rose, YN (via phone)
Kirk Truscott, CCT (via phone)
Tom Skiles, CRITFC/CTUIR (via phone)

Action Items:

1. PRFF will review the draft report titled, "Pilot White Sturgeon Larvae Collection in Bonneville and The Dalles Reservoirs, Columbia River, 2015" and provide edits/comments to Chad Jackson by 29 January 2016.
2. Mike Clement will summarize results contained within the draft 2015 lamprey monitoring report and share those results with the PRFF before the Pacific Lamprey Subgroup meeting on 19 January 2016.

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Agenda Review:

A. Additional agenda items – No additions were made to the agenda.

III. Meeting Minute approval – 4 December 2015 Meeting Minutes were reviewed and approved.

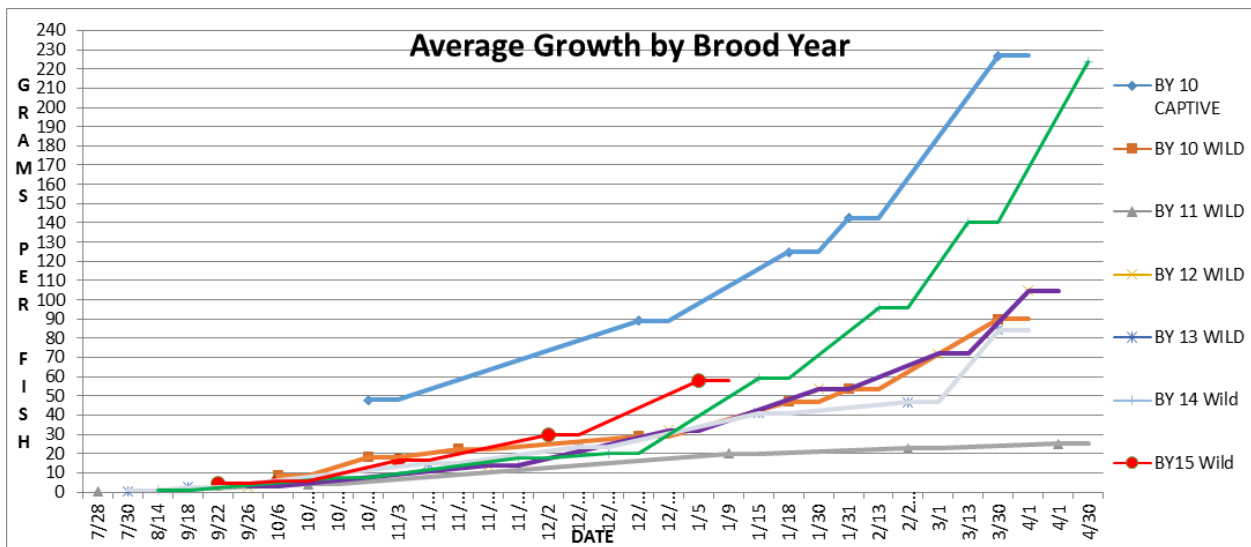
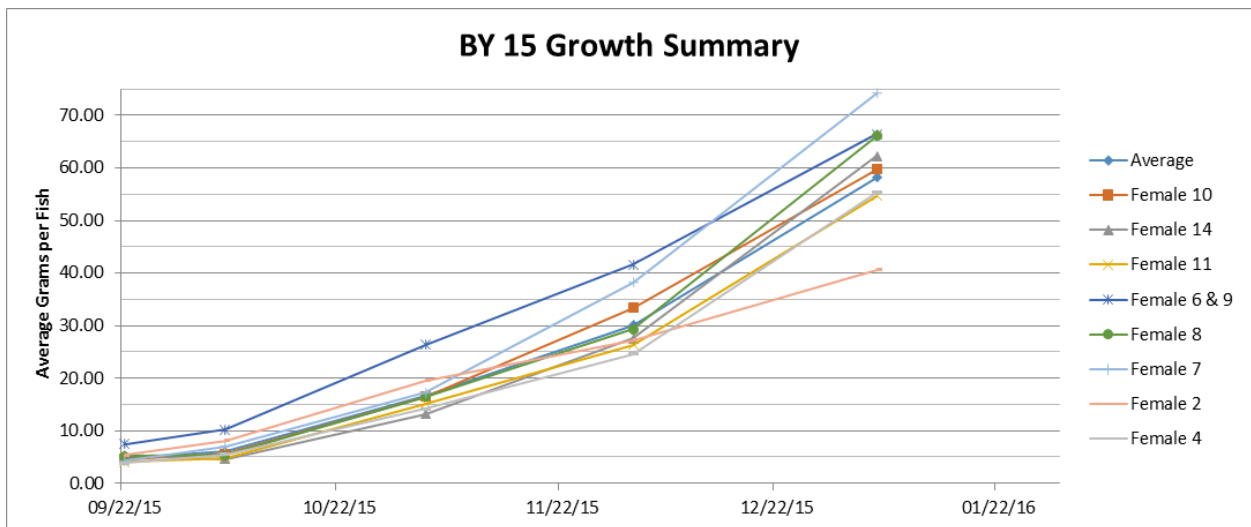
A. Review Action Items from December Meeting.

1. Hillman will compile responses from the Technical Members and send them to the participating members for review. **Complete**
2. Technical members will review their responses to the Policy Representatives and send their edits to Hillman. **Complete**
3. Hillman will try and secure responses from YN and CRITFC, who were unable to participate in the PRFF meeting. **Complete**
4. Hillman will then send responses to the Policy Representatives by Monday, 14 December. **Complete**

IV. Update on White Sturgeon Management Plan (WSMP)

A. Update on Juvenile Rearing – Chris Mott gave an update on juvenile sturgeon rearing at Marion Drain. He indicated that fish are growing and doing well. Chris shared the following table and figures with the PRFF.

Date	10-1		10-2		10-3		10-4		10-5		10-6		10-7		10-8		BY'15 Average	
	WF-10		WF-14		WF-11		WF-6 & 9		WF-8		WF-7		WF-2		WF-4			
	fish/lb	G/fish	fish/lb	G/fish	fish/lb	G/fish	fish/lb	G/fish	fish/lb	G/fish	fish/lb	G/fish	fish/lb	G/fish	fish/lb	G/fish	fish/lb	G/fish
9/22/15	97.77	4.64	84.50	5.37	113.29	4.01	61.20	7.42	88.94	5.10	105.95	4.29	83.73	5.42	117.91	3.85	94.16	4.82
10/6/15	81.40	5.58	97.50	4.66	93.10	4.88	44.60	10.18	84.10	5.40	65.00	6.98	56.00	8.11	82.00	5.54	75.46	6.02
11/3/15	27.50	16.51	34.60	13.12	30.00	15.13	17.20	26.40	27.50	16.51	26.40	17.20	23.22	19.55	32.10	14.14	27.32	16.62
12/2/15	13.60	33.38	16.50	27.52	17.20	26.40	10.90	41.65	15.50	29.29	11.90	38.15	16.70	27.19	18.50	24.54	15.10	30.07
1/5/16	7.60	59.74	7.30	62.19	8.30	54.70	6.84	66.37	6.87	66.08	6.12	74.18	11.18	40.61	8.20	55.37	7.80	58.20



B. Update from Policy Representatives Meeting – Tracy Hillman said that the Policy Representatives met on 17 December 2015. Tracy reviewed the topics addressed by the Policy Members.

1. Policy members listened to a presentation by Larry Hildebrand on results of modeling sturgeon population growth within the project area. During the policy meeting, Larry described the assumptions of the model, data used to populate the model, and the adult capacity estimates from Bonneville Reservoir. Most Policy members supported the use of the model as a tool to identify juvenile release numbers. Some members, however, questioned the use of Upper Columbia data in the model.
2. Policy members reviewed the ecological concerns identified by the Technical members. In short, they all agreed that ecological interactions will occur; however, they did not all agree with the importance of ecological interactions. That is, some members believe ecological interactions will be far more important than other members believe.

3. Policy members reviewed the ranked concerns from the Technical members. Again, the Policy members disagreed on the importance of ecological concerns. Most members believe that ecological concerns are important and should be considered in identifying future juvenile release numbers.
4. Policy members reviewed the methods identified by the Technical members on ways to reduce sturgeon numbers within the project area if numbers exceed carrying capacities. Most members agreed that harvest is an appropriate method to reduce numbers of sturgeon within the project area.
5. Policy members reviewed the larvae collection sites identified by the Technical members. They supported the list provided by the Technical members.

As directed by the Technical members, Tracy said he asked the Policy members the following questions. Below are responses from the Policy members.

1. Please provide an example of supplementation or hatchery releases of an apex predator that have had no negatives ecological effects on an ecosystem.

Policy members responded that this is an unfair question, because there will always be an effect. The question is how large or severe will be the effects. Policy members differ on the severity of the ecological effects.

2. Are there any examples of a negative impact that have been effectively managed back to a desirable condition for the species that were affected?

Policy members indicated that density dependence was detected in Bonneville pool. Managers reduced the minimum length limit in the sport fishery and altered catch quotas to focus more removal on smaller juveniles. This had the desired effect of reducing density dependence. It took about three years to notice the response. Other examples include northern pikeminnow removal, Arctic char removal in Alaska, and Kamloops trout and lake trout removals. Some members pointed out that successful suppression efforts are massively huge and expensive. It was also pointed out that potential prey species include listed fish or species of concern. This is a serious element to keep in mind when considering the risks.

Tracy indicated that Policy members will develop an SOA or SOAs by Thursday, 7 January. They will hold a conference call on Friday, 15 January to vote on the SOA(s). If the Policy members cannot reach consensus on an SOA, the issue will be elevated to Washington Department of Ecology for a final decision.

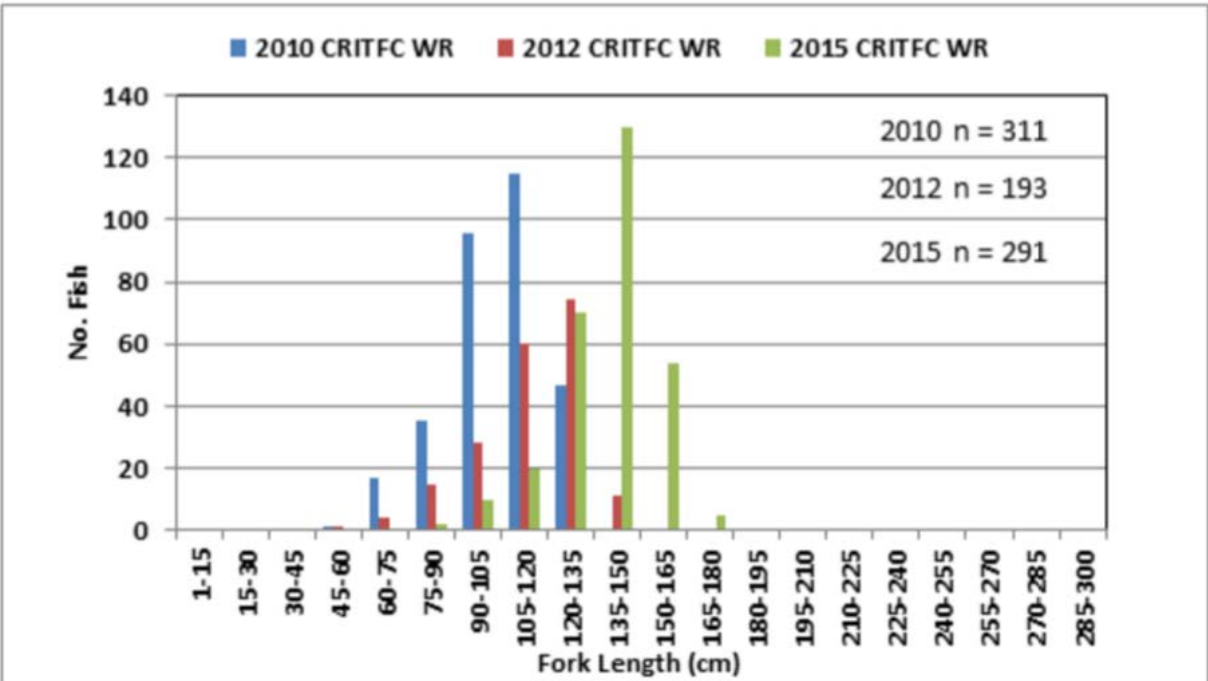
- C. **Monitoring Updates** – Chris Mott indicated that analysis of adult sturgeon data is complete and a draft monitoring report should be available soon. Chris shared the following table with the PRFF.

Numbers of Grant PUD hatchery sturgeon, CRITFC hatchery sturgeon, and wild sturgeon captured during adult index monitoring in Priest Rapids and Wanapum project areas in 2015.

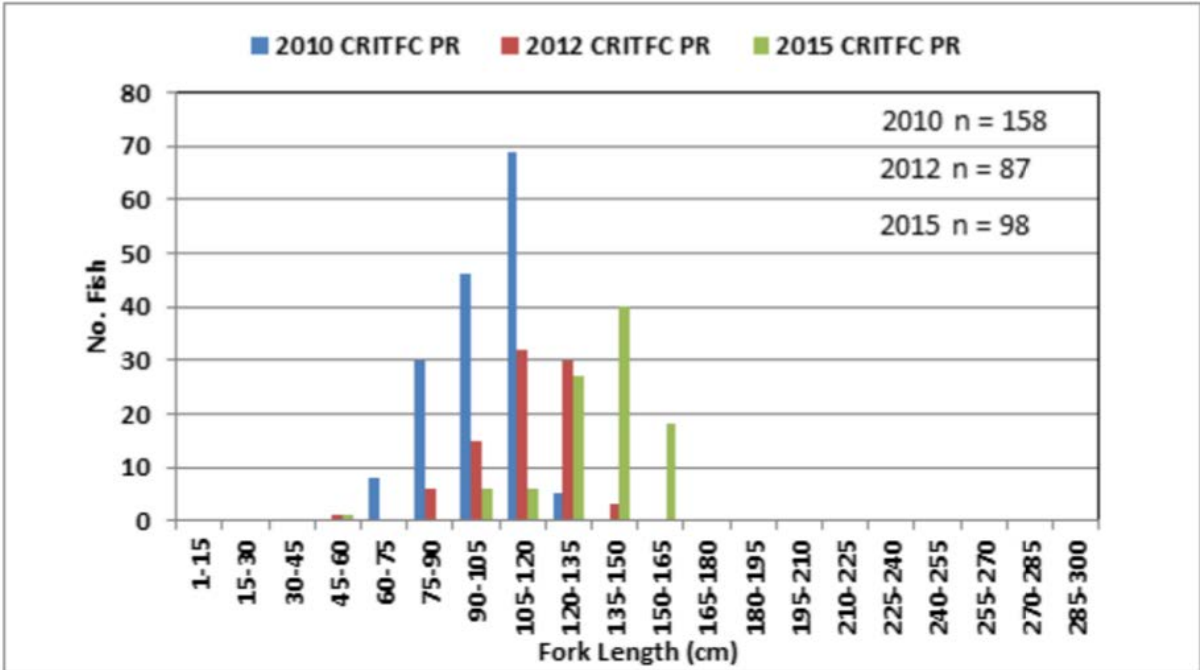
Project	H-123LAD	H-CRITFC	Wild	Grand Total
Priest Rapids	24	100	3	127
Wanapum	51	297	57	405
Total	75	397	60	532

Chris indicated that the data in the table were based on two sampling sessions: 9-19 September and 6-15 October. Sampling occurred within 96 sites per session. Chris shared the following figures that show the size structure of sturgeon sampled during adult indexing.

Wanapum:



Priest Rapids:



Chris said the monitoring report should be available around mid-January. Finally, he indicated that Grant PUD will do a three-day side-scan pilot study on 9-11 February. Data from the pilot study will be reviewed and analyzed in March and April.

Chad Jackson provided a brief summary on a pilot study conducted by WDFW in 2015 to investigate sturgeon larvae collection in Bonneville and The Dalles reservoirs. He said the study was funded by Grant PUD and Chelan PUD. The objectives of the pilot study were to: 1) identify larvae collection sites within Bonneville and The Dalles reservoirs downstream from known sturgeon spawning locations; 2) determine larvae capture rates by reservoir and collection site; 3) evaluate daytime versus overnight net sets; 4) measure debris loads for the different set types; 5) estimate collection effort required for future years; and 6) if feasible, experiment transporting and culturing larvae.

Chad indicated they fished for 1,150 hours but only collected six larvae. He said two issues likely contributed to these results. First, they were challenged by the rough water and powerful upstream winds common to the Columbia River Gorge that limited the number of locations judged safe to successfully deploy nets without entangling in the vessels propeller. This issue is something that can be addressed with structural modifications to the davit arm. Second, river discharge and water temperatures during 2015 in this section of the Columbia River were unusually low and warm because of the drought. Chad believes this may have altered normal spawning activity, resulting in female sturgeon either delaying or abandoning spawning during the sampling period. Chad recommended continuing the study under normal river conditions before the Forums recommend eliminating this section of the Columbia River as a productive source of sturgeon larvae for supplementation programs.

Tracy indicated that the draft report was sent to the PRFF for review on 29 December 2015. Comments are due to Chad on 29 January 2016.

D. Other White Sturgeon Items – None.

V. Update on Pacific Lamprey Management Plan (PLMP)

A. NNI Update (No Net Impact): Tracy Hillman said the Pacific Lamprey Subgroup will meet on 19 January 2016 at Grant PUD in Wenatchee and on 4 February 2016 at Chelan PUD in Wenatchee.

Update on Adult Passage and Tagging Studies: Mike Clement had no new information on adult tagging results. He indicated that Grant PUD will repeat tagging studies in 2016 to evaluate adult lamprey passage through the left-bank adult fish ladder at Priest Rapids Dam. Mike said Rod O'Connor will present 2015 results to the PRFF during the February or March meeting. Mike stated that he will provide a brief summary of findings from the draft monitoring report to the Forum before the Pacific Lamprey Subgroup meeting on 19 January.

Mike noted that Grant PUD has dewatered the right-bank fish ladder at Priest Rapids and the left-bank fish ladder at Wanapum. He said Grant PUD will dewater the left-bank ladder at Priest Rapids during mid-February. He will schedule a fish ladder tour in late February. The preference is to tour the Priest Rapids left-bank fish ladder. The tour date will be confirmed after the ladder is dewatered.

B. Other Pacific Lamprey Items – None.

VI. Next Meeting – 3 February 2016 at the Grant PUD Natural Resources Office in Wenatchee, WA.