



**Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee  
 FINAL Meeting Minutes  
 Tuesday, July 26, 2022  
 9:00 to 11:30 AM  
 DPUD Auditorium**

**PRCC Representatives**

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Scott Carlon, Justin Yeager (Alt), NMFS	Jim Craig, USFWS
Keely Murdoch, Brandon Rogers (Alt), YN	Kirk Truscott, Casey Baldwin (alt), CCT
Chad Jackson, P. Verhey (Alt) WDFW	Tom Skiles, CTUIR
Curt Dotson, Tom Dresser (Alt), GPUD	

**PRCC Meeting Attendees**

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Curt Dotson, GPUD	Keely Murdoch, YN - Absent
Scott Carlon, NMFS (Via zoom)	Jim Craig, USFWS
Chad Jackson, WDFW	Tim Taylor, GPUD (Via Zoom)
Tom Skiles, CTUIR - Absent	Erin Harris, GPUD
Kirk Truscott, CCT (Via zoom)	Bryan Nordlund, FPE (facilitator)

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**Decisions, Approvals and Action Items Made During July 26, 2022, Meeting**

**Action:** Curt Dotson will make updates to the survival study talking points list. Committee members should send any comments or additions to the list to Curt Dotson for future discussions.

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**Meeting Minutes**

**Decisions and Approvals Made During July 26, 2022, Meeting**

**DECISION:** No final decision or approvals were made during the July 2022 meeting.

I. **Welcome, Announcements and Introductions** – Bryan Nordlund welcomed all the attendees to today’s meeting and noted absent members.

II. **Agenda Review** – No additions were requested.

III. **Meeting Minutes Approval**

A. June 28, 2022, PRCC meeting minutes were distributed by Bryan Nordlund by email on July 11, 2022. Comments are due by August 11, 2022. May 24, 2022, meeting minutes have been approved by the PRCC and are ready for posting. Kirk Truscott noted that he abstained from commenting on the June minutes since he was not in attendance at the meeting.

IV. **Status of Actions Items from June 28, 2022, Meeting**

1. Bryan Nordlund to send committee members Keely’s edits to draft PRCC protocols document. **(Completed)**
2. Bryan Nordlund will send out the updated meeting location spreadsheet to committee members. **(Completed)**
3. Bryan Nordlund to send SOA 2018-01 and 2019-01 to committee members. **(Completed)**
4. Curt Dotson will add two or three sentences that describes each item in the survival study discussion bullet list and describe why Grant PUD has selected this method in past survival studies. **(Distributed at the July PRCC meeting)**

V. **2021 Fish Passage Operations Report**

A. ***Update on investigations for fish count discrepancy:***

Chad Jackson inquired about picketed leads “open time” at Wanapum and Priest Rapids Dam fish ladders. Curt Dotson answered that to date, the percent of time picket leads being open for debris flushing were 0.06% and 0.09% at Priest Rapids left and right bank count stations, and 0.2% and 0.08% at Wanapum left and right bank count stations. Curt continues to work with the fish counters and dam operators on fish count processes. Curt added that Grant PUD currently does not know the complete answer to count discrepancies between Priest Rapids and Rock Island Dams, especially concerning the recent sockeye counts seen at Wanapum Dam, but Grant PUD is doing the best they can to track issues down and make corrections as appropriate. He added that there has been issues with blank spots in the video records from the count cameras and are looking correcting this problem. Fallback does occur at both Priest Rapids and Rock Island Dams, and some of these fish probably go back up the fish ladder and are counted more than once. Chad Jackson added that it can take up to three days to complete a single days fish count, especially for involving the large

sockeye numbers recently seen. As such, Priest Rapids and Wanapum Dam fish counts are currently posted through 7/22/2022, roughly five days from today's date.

**B. Fish ladder inspections:**

Tom Skiles performs monthly ladder inspections at the GPUD dams for the fisheries agencies and tribes. Tom Skiles was absent from today's meeting and no update was provided on fishway operations.

**C. Fish spill updates:**

Spill season is underway. Curt Dotson shared that the spill programs are identical for the spring and summer outmigration. He added that in addition to fish bypasses being operated at both dams, additional spill (as inadvertent spill thru the tainter gates on the spillway) is taking place at the spillways due to high river flows.

**D. Fish counts for 2022 (April 15 – July 19)**

**(note: total spring Chinook counts have been corrected from the July agenda)**

Project/Life Stage	Spring Chinook (final)	Summer Chinook	Sockeye	Fall Chinook	Steelhead	Coho
Priest Rapids adults	21091	47461	551896		256	
Rock Island adults	22487	38736	455297		241	
Priest Rapids jacks	3329	662				
Rock Island-jacks	3509	1198				

**VI. Continuing discussion - Develop PRCC operations protocols (e.g., SOA development, timing, agenda items, presentations etc.)** – Committee members asked to wait to discuss this at the August meeting.

**VII. Continuing preliminary discussion - Survival study talking points.**

Curt distributed his update to the following bullet list, based on experience with previous survival studies.

- timing, species, life stage(s)
- future workshops needed?
- tag type
- standard to measure (combine projects? combine adult + juvenile?)
- accuracy/precision of data analysis
- fish source
- release points
- assessing tag and tagger effects detection points
- dealing with adverse river flow conditions
- plant operations

- achieving standard or not – path forward
- factoring in avian predation
- others, per PRCC discussion?

Curt Dotson handed out a working document that he created that added detailed descriptions and history on each bullet point (see attached at end of meeting minutes), and led a discussion with the PRCC. Scott Carlon said depending on the types of survival studies conducted, it could take quite some time for questions to be answered. Even though these studies are three years or more in the future, many topics need early discussion (example: fish source collection points). In addition, the PRCC felt that it was advantageous to get discussion of procedures in the administrative record, anticipating potential future turnover in PRCC membership because of agency changes and retirement of members.

The PRCC discussed ideas about study fish sources, development of study design, release strategies, potential paths forward from study results if survival standards are not met, combining study species, and correcting issue(s) identified by the study. The PRCC affirmed that it was important to replicate the run at large and natural conditions in the study design, at least to the extent possible.

Curt noted that many previous survival studies were conducted to identify fish behavior and migration routes, and it is not necessary to repeat these for future check-in survival studies. Those studies, (behavioral) were used in the design process for the building of the fish bypass facilities.

This is an ongoing discussion, and no decisions were made.

**Action: Curt Dotson will add more information to the survival study talking points, and this will be a working document as discussion progresses. He asked committee members to review and let him know about any additional talking points or questions to be discussed.**

## UPDATES

### VIII. Review of Outstanding NNI Funded Projects

- A. Lower Wenatchee Instream Flow Enhancement Project Phase II – (no updates)
- B. Avian Predation on ESA-listed Juvenile Salmonids on the Mid-Columbia River, 2022 (weekly updates provided by Grant PUD)
- C. Barkley Irrigation Company Permanent Point of Diversion - Completing Implementation of the Permanent Solution (Curt Dotson said that this contract is now closed, and the project is completed).
- D. Northern Pike Removal (2022-2024) – Contract is in place.

**IX. Sub-Committee Updates**

Bryan Nordlund has forwarded the latest subcommittee distributions he has received to date via email.

- A. Priest Rapids Fish Forum – A PRFF conference call occurred on July 6.
- B. Habitat Subcommittee – A HabSC meeting was held July 14
- C. Fall Chinook Work Group – The FCWG had no July meeting.
- D. Hatchery Subcommittee – The next meeting is scheduled for July 20, 2022.

**X. SOA(s) discussed in 2022**

<b>SOA number</b>	<b>Key words</b>	<b>Last Discussed</b>	<b>Status</b>
2021-06	Facilitator selection	January 25, 2022	open

**XI. Next Meetings**

The next PRCC meetings are scheduled for 9 AM on August 16 at DPUD auditorium and 1 PM on September 27 at Wanapum HB-107.

## I. Discussion - Survival study preliminary discussions.

Let's focus on fleshing out list from last meeting and prioritize discussions. Potential discussion points include:

- **timing, species, life stage(s)** – PRCC SOA 2018-01 states that “check-in” survival studies for the PRP will be every 10 years (an expansion from the original SSSA schedule of every 5 years), with the first studies (yearling Chinook, steelhead, sockeye) taking place in 2025/2026.
  - HCP allows for a “surrogate” species to be used in survival study check-in studies for all species.
- **future workshops needed?**
- **tag type** – Tag types that have been used in the past have been PIT-tags, radio tags, and acoustic tags (both JSAT and HTI) – each type of tag with its own set of pros/cons. Due to a variety of reasons, the region has been predominately using acoustic tags for looking at survival estimates within short sections of the river (i.e., a PUD's Project).
- **standard to measure (combine projects? combine adult + juvenile?)** - In the 2004 BiOp, under section 9.0 (Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives), part 9.1 (Performance Standards), Action 1 states:  
*“... The performance standard can also be accomplished as a composite; Grant PUD can compensate for a failure to achieve the performance standard at one of its developments by exceeding the performance standard at the other development...”*  
  
Grant takes this to mean that at the end of the day, the survival estimate that is used to determine if Grant has met its required performance standard is the survival estimate for the total Priest Rapids Project (aka RIS tailrace to the PRD tailrace). An example of this would be the 2017 survival study, which had only two release points – RIS tailrace and PRD tailrace – to fulfill the requirement of a “paired release study” and generated only one survival estimate. An estimate for the total PR Project.
- **accuracy/precision of data analysis** – In the 2004 BiOp, under section 9.0 (Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives), part 9.1 (Performance Standards), Action 1 states:  
*Survival estimates shall be measured at the 95% confidence level with a standard error of not more than plus or minus 2.5%. For any specific study, a less precise estimate of not more than plus or minus 3.5% may be acceptable if the PRCC agrees.)*

- **fish source** – fish source has many options, each with its pros/cons. The different sources of study fish are:
  - gateway dipping at WAN and PRD.
  - fish raised in hatchery for study.
  - fish collected from the Rocky Reach collection facility
  - fish collected from the Rock Island Dam index facility.
- **release points** - GCPUD has used two different “sets” of release points for conducting its fish studies: 1) a two (2) release study, which were the tail races of RI and PRD. 2) a three (3) release study, which were the tailraces of RI, WAN & PRD. The main differences between using the two different “sets” of release points is that the 2-release point study only gives a Project wide survival estimate and with the 3-point release, you can get a survival estimate for each of the two developments – Wanapum and Priest Rapids.
- **assessing tag and tagger effects detection points** – The aspect/influence of tag-life issues, tagger-effects (i.e., variation of surgical/tagging skills seen within a team of taggers, which may be manifested in fish survival post-tagging), and the simple aspect of “handling” effects upon the smolts, are always addressed within a Grant’s survival study.
  - Tag-life issues are looked at via a tag-life evaluation within the study – random tags pulled from each tag lot and activated and retained until the tag fails.
  - Tagger-effects are evaluated in that each fish that an individual tagger has tagged is recorded and assigned to that specific tagger. As each mortality is seen, that specific fish can be traced back to who tagged it and if a specific tagger had an abnormal amount (%) of the study’s mortality rate.
  - Handling-effects are addressed by having each study be a “paired-release” study. There is a “test” group of tagged fish and a “control” group of tagged fish. The “test” fish are released at RI Dam and the “control” fish are released below PRD. The delta between the two survival rates of each group of tagged fish is the survival estimate for the PR Project.
- **dealing with adverse river flow conditions** – The HCP has language in it that addresses the issue of adverse river flow conditions and if an on-going survival study is valid or not, based on those river conditions. Grant does not have any language in its documents (SSSA and/or BiOp) that addresses this issue (river flows/survival study). This may be a subject we want to discuss.
- **plant operations** – Unless a specific aspect of plant operations (i.e., turbine operated outside of fish mode range, less flow thru the bypass, etc.) were being investigated within the study, the plants are operated in their “normal fashion”. An exception from this would be related to plant maintenance, etc. – (i.e., a turbine was down for maintenance, a crack in the dam, etc.)

- **achieving standard or not – path forward**
- **factoring in avian predation**
- **others, per PRCC discussion?**