

Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee (PRCC) Meeting

**In Person at Confluence Technology Center
and Microsoft Teams
Tuesday, April 28, 2026
9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**

Meeting Minutes

PRCC Representatives, Alternates, and Facilitation

Larissa Rohrbach, Anchor QEA, Facilitator	Scott Carlon, Emi Melton (Alt), NMFS
Kristi Geris, Anchor QEA, Technical Support	Clayton Buck, Nathan Buck, Wanapum
Tom Lorz, Pete McHugh (Alt), CRITFC for CTUIR	Chad Jackson, Andrew Murdoch (Alt), WDFW
Kirk Truscott, Casey Baldwin (Alt), CTCR	Bill Gale, USFWS
Tom Dresser, Rod O'Connor (Alt),	Keely Murdoch, Brandon Rogers (Alt), YN
Tim Taylor (Alt), GPUD	

Meeting Attendees

Larissa Rohrbach, Anchor QEA, Facilitator	Tim Taylor, GPUD*
Kristi Geris, Anchor QEA, Technical Support	Scott Carlon, NMFS*
Pete McHugh, CRITFC for CTUIR*	Chad Jackson, WDFW
Kirk Truscott, CTCR	Bill Gale, USFWS
Tom Dresser, GPUD	Keely Murdoch, YN
Rod O'Connor, GPUD*	

*Joined virtually.

Action Items

- L. Rohrbach will work with T. Dresser to identify proposed dates for a PRCC Policy Committee meeting, including a timeline for materials preparation. (*This item is ongoing.*)
- Grant PUD will do the following after completion of this year's smolt survival study:
1) Verify whether dead fish releases were used in the studies presented in the ongoing review of past survival studies; 2) Consider looking into route-specific survival data as they relate to avian predation presented in the ongoing review of past survival studies; and 3) Continue discussing the "Past Survival Studies

Review” agenda topic. *(Note: Items 1 and 2 are ongoing; Item 3 will be discussed during the PRCC June 23 meeting.)*

- Grant PUD will update the draft White River Spring Chinook Program Public Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement Guide with suggested responses to the talking points. *(This item is ongoing.)*
- Anchor QEA will locate the PRCC meeting protocols working document, and the PRCC will consider updating the meeting minutes approval protocols as necessary. *(Note: This working document was located, and the voting criteria are consistent with the Salmon and Steelhead Settlement Agreement [SSSA].)*
- Grant PUD will review and respond to the Joint Fisheries Parties’ (JFP’s) revisions to the draft statement of agreement (SOA) *Survival Evaluations - Path Forward*.
- Anchor QEA will confirm with T. Hillman (PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee [HSC] Chair) the PRCC’s role in the White River Spring Chinook Salmon Program decision process, and coordination for the PRCC Policy Committee.
- Grant PUD will share outcomes of the 2026 Quincy Northern Pikeminnow Derby with the PRCC.
- Grant PUD will provide Grant PUD’s and Chelan PUD’s final *Study Proposal: Tag Effects for Subyearling Summer Chinook Salmon* for distribution to the PRCC and Habitat Conservation Plan Coordinating Committees (HCP-CCs). *(Note: The final study plan was distributed to the PRCC and HCP-CCs by K. Geris on May 5, 2026.)*

Review Items

- A draft *White River Spring Chinook Program Public Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement Guide* was distributed to the PRCC by K. Geris on September 22, 2025.
- The revised draft SOA *Survival Evaluations - Path Forward* was distributed to the PRCC by K. Geris on April 27, 2026.
- A draft No Net Impact (NNI) Cost Match Letter was distributed to the PRCC by K. Geris on June 15, 2026.

Decisions and Approvals

- None.

I. Welcome, Announcements, Agenda Review, and Meeting Minutes Approval

L. Rohrbach welcomed the PRCC and reviewed the agenda. The agenda was approved by all members in attendance.

The draft March 10 PRCC conference call minutes were distributed to the PRCC by K. Geris on March 31. No edits were received. The draft minutes for approval were distributed on April 21. K. Murdoch distributed edits on April 22. The March 10 minutes were approved by members who attended that meeting. K. Truscott and B. Gale abstained because the Confederated Tribe of the Colville Reservation (CTCR) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) representatives, respectively, were not present during the March 10 PRCC conference call.

The draft March 24 PRCC meeting minutes were distributed to the PRCC by K. Geris on April 15. No edits were received from PRCC members. The only edits were administrative. The revised minutes for approval were distributed on April 21. The March 24 minutes were approved by members who attended that meeting. K. Truscott abstained because a CTCR representative was not present during the March 24 PRCC meeting.

L. Rohrbach said there is a proposal to update to the PRCC meeting minutes approval protocols. K. Geris suggested, consistent with the HCP-CCs and Aquatic Settlement Work Group, the administrative record will reflect that “PRCC members present” approved the minutes. This way if a PRCC member is absent during approval of the minutes, the record essentially captures this as an abstention or non-vote instead of holding up finalizing the minutes to chase down votes. L. Rohrbach clarified that this would only apply to minutes with minor clarifying edits. If there are significant edits, Anchor QEA will follow up with absent members for approval. K. Murdoch asked whether a member could request an extension. B. Gale suggested that the alternate should be present to vote. K. Truscott argued that sometimes there is not enough time to fully brief the alternate on the discussions.

Section 5.4 of the SSSA was shared on Microsoft Teams, notably, the following:

If a Party cannot be present for an agenda item to be decided upon it may notify the Chair, who upon the receipt of such a request shall delay a decision on the agenda item for up to five (5) business days on the specified issues for which a delay is requested...

K. Truscott suggested requesting a delay, per the SSSA. Another option is to provide a vote ahead of being absent and request that the Facilitator follow up if there are further changes. L. Rohrbach proposed keeping the status quo based on this feedback but to hold more consistent with the SSSA with a 5-day grace period before moving forward. K. Murdoch recalled a PRCC meeting protocols working document when Bryan Nordlund was the PRCC Facilitator, which she believes included a description on how to handle meeting minutes. If this protocol changes, this document needs to be updated.

Anchor QEA will locate the PRCC meeting protocols working document, and the PRCC will consider updating the meeting minutes approval protocols as necessary.

II. Actions Items Review

Action items from the PRCC March 24 meeting and follow-up discussions were as follows (*Note: Italicized text corresponds to agenda items from the March 24 meeting.*):

- *L. Rohrbach will work with T. Dresser to identify proposed dates for a PRCC Policy Committee meeting, including a timeline for materials preparation.*
This item is ongoing.
- *The JFP will review and respond to Grant PUD's revisions to the draft SOA Survival Evaluations - Path Forward.*
A revised SOA was distributed to the PRCC by K. Geris on April 27, 2026. This will be further discussed during today's meeting.
- *Grant PUD will verify whether dead fish releases were used in the studies presented in the ongoing review of past survival studies.*
This item is ongoing.
- *Grant PUD will consider looking into route-specific survival data as they relate to avian predation presented in the ongoing review of past survival studies.*
This item is ongoing.
- *Grant PUD will update the draft White River Spring Chinook Program Public Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement Guide with suggested responses to the talking points.*
This item is ongoing.
- *Anchor QEA will distribute calendar placeholders for April 1 and April 2, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., to discuss the forthcoming PRCC NNI Funds Specification Sheet (spec sheet) for the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission's (CRITFC's) proposed work. Anchor QEA will also reach out to K. Truscott about his availability to attend one of these sessions. P. McHugh will communicate to J. Fryer (CRITFC) that a spec sheet is needed before April 1.*
All these items were completed after the PRCC meeting on March 24. Ultimately, CRITFC decided not to pursue this request for NNI funds. P. McHugh thanked the PRCC for being receptive and considering this draft proposal. Considering the challenges with the U.S. Department of Energy site access, J. Fryer plans to move forward with a smaller passive integrated transponder (PIT) tag effort using Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) access. B. Gale said he reached out internally to refuge management about the importance of this project and the purpose of the work. He said to reach out if he can help further.
- *Anchor QEA will reach out to K. Truscott about the CTCR's vote on Task 3.2.b Rock Island Dam (RIS) Yearling Chinook PIT-tagging of Real Time Research's*

(RTR's) PRCC NNI Funds Specification titled Avian Predation on Juvenile Salmonids on the Middle Columbia River, 2026.

This outreach was completed on March 25, and K. Truscott indicated that the CTCR approves Task 3.2.b via email on April 15, 2026.

- *Anchor QEA will obtain written clarification from T. Hillman about the current status of the White River Spring Chinook Salmon Program process.*

This clarification was distributed to the PRCC by K. Geris on March 27, 2026.

- *Grant PUD will continue discussing the "Past Survival Studies Review" agenda topic after completion of this year's smolt survival study.*

This item is ongoing.

III. Survival Evaluations Path Forward SOA

L. Rohrbach shared on Microsoft Teams the revised draft SOA *Survival Evaluations - Path Forward* (Attachment A), which was distributed to the PRCC by K. Geris on April 27. L. Rohrbach thanked the JFP for coming together to work on this, and she recalled that this started as a bullet list of options on how to move forward if survival standards are not met. A lot of progress has been made including: 1) questions surrounding an acceptable standard error; 2) retest protocols; and 3) what the suite of actions is if Grant PUD cannot meet survival standards after retests. Grant PUD has made it clear inclusion and/or reference to future contributions of NNI funds cannot be supported, so this is struck in this version. To note, this version was just distributed yesterday, so there is no expectation for Grant PUD to have responses ready today.

B. Gale said in this version, edits were accepted where the JFP believed there is consensus. Comments were retained that show Grant PUD was supportive of edits. Edits in tracked changes are where the JFP was not sure whether there is consensus or are edits made to attempt to achieve consensus. Lastly, a background section was added. The PRCC reviewed the revised draft SOA, and discussions were as follows.

Bullet No. 4, Subbullet No. 2

B. Gale said these edits were intended to address concerns about "will" versus "may." K. Murdoch said the HCPs require a total of three tests, and if survival standards are still not met, the species goes back to Phase II so changes can be implemented before attempting to achieve survival standards again. The "may" language proposed by Grant PUD was not clear about when to implement a retest. She believes it was K. Truscott who suggested that language should allow flexibility if Grant PUD does not want to do three consecutive tests but instead wants to implement changes first and then retest. The JFP liked this idea and inserted language to allow flexibility around when to retest, acknowledging there will still need to be another test to evaluate whether the changes were effective. The intent of three tests is to capture normal variability in survival metrics. What if the first year has poor migratory conditions and the survival standard is

not met? No changes are made, and then Grant PUD conducts a retest the next year and barely achieves the survival standard, but the average does not meet the standard. Grant PUD then conducts a third test, and the average meets the standard, but no changes were implemented. It would be beneficial to have flexibility in both directions. If there is a large shortfall below the survival standard, maybe it is best to make changes first. If not, maybe no changes are needed.

T. Dresser appreciates the language that supports flexibility on both sides. He will want to further discuss this internally. He does not want to put Grant PUD and the PRCC in the position of conducting three tests for a source of mortality that is not in Grant PUD's control. For example, for avian predation that is impacting survival within the project area. Grant PUD has already conducted several studies in a row on this, and he does not want to be put in that situation again.

K. Murdoch appreciates this explanation, and this is why the JFP proposed edits to capture some flexibility. In this regard, this framework has more flexibility than the HCPs and she hopes this is enough for Grant PUD on this issue. Regarding the avian predation comment, if faced with this situation, she recommended that the PRCC review Grant PUD's predation requirements under the SSSA and use RTR data to adaptively manage to reduce predation within the project area. K. Truscott noted that this issue likely cannot be adequately addressed in this document. T. Dresser agreed and said he was just sharing his thoughts. It took a long time for Grant PUD to get attention on this topic. After years of studies and data collection, it is clear there is nothing more Grant PUD can do within the project area to reduce avian predation in the project area.

L. Rohrbach suggested including some of this verbal discussion about flexibility in the implementation of retests in the SOA and separating topics that cannot be answered, such as avian predation.

K. Murdoch said the Yakama Nation (YN) does not see in the SSSA where actions for a programmatic approach to reduce avian predation are limited to the project areas. Action for piscine predators is clearly tied to the project area in *Action 11: Northern Pikeminnow Removal Program* states that Grant PUD will "continue to develop and annually fund an overall programmatic approach to the reduction of juvenile salmon mortality associated with predation by the Northern Pikeminnow *in the area of the Priest Rapids Project.*"

However, action for avian predators is not tied to the project area using the same language. *Action 10: Avian Predator Control* states that Grant PUD will "continue to develop and fund an overall programmatic approach to the reduction of avian-related mortalities to salmon populations affected by the Priest Rapids Project."

K. Murdoch said this is different than the Northern Pikeminnow Removal Program that limits actions to the Priest Rapids Dam (PRD) Project. This is something to consider when talking about actions and what has been learned from RTR's work.

T. Dresser asked whether the YN is advocating or asking Grant PUD, in the future, to control every avian predator outside of Grant PUD's Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) boundary and on properties owned by other entities such as U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. This is what he is hearing, and this is not what Grant PUD signed up for. It would be extremely difficult from an incidental take and PRCC purview standpoint for Grant PUD to implement any actions outside of Grant PUD's FERC boundary.

K. Murdoch said the YN has its own avian predation program that partners with several other agencies toward reducing avian predation throughout the Columbia and Yakima River basins. The YN wants to understand what the overall approach is. If NNI funds are being used to collect data about avian predation on Upper Columbia River populations affected by the PRD Project, the YN would like to see Grant PUD take this information to reduce avian predation within the project area. She is not saying Grant PUD needs to control avian predation everywhere, but something needs to be done to meet survival standards.

T. Dresser suggested reviewing the progress reports that show what Grant PUD has accomplished over the years.

B. Gale said the PRCC has been dancing around the avian predation issue for years, and at some point, it needs to be addressed. He said T. Dresser is right, Grant PUD has little authority to manage colonies outside of the project area, and K. Murdoch is also right about not hitting survival standards. T. Dresser noted that Grant PUD has requested incidental take from USFWS and it was not approved. B. Gale said USFWS has a lot of responsibilities to manage under the Migratory Bird Act.

Grant PUD will review and respond to the JFP's revisions to the draft SOA *Survival Evaluations - Path Forward*.

IV. White River Spring Chinook Salmon Program

L. Rohrbach recalled that last month's update on this topic led to questions about the sequence of events at the PRCC HSC level and what the PRCC's role is.

L. Rohrbach said this month, T. Hillman had a good discussion with the PRCC HSC about next steps. L. Rohrbach recalled that the White River Decision Tree does not map out steps after the Expert Panel provides their opinion whether an adult supplementation program in the White River would be necessary to support recovery of Wenatchee spring Chinook Salmon population. It does state the Expert Panel will

address critical questions, but the panel does not have decision authority. The question then is, if not the panel, then who? The Expert Panel's general position was that an adult-based supplementation program in the White River would likely not increase the probability of the Wenatchee spring Chinook Salmon population meeting viable salmonid population criteria. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has expressed they do not support restarting a hatchery program for White River spring Chinook Salmon supplementation. USFWS then agreed with NMFS in the PRCC HSC meeting. The YN, the CTCR, and WDFW requested additional time to further discuss this internally and will report back to the PRCC HSC whether their organizations would support, or not, a White River hatchery program by the end of May. WDFW noted in the PRCC HSC meeting that the White River SOA is focused on recovery, but it does not bring the focus back to Grant PUD's mitigation if there is no support for a hatchery program. So, another task for the PRCC HSC is to discuss in the coming months what can be implemented as mitigation, including justifications.

L. Rohrbach said it seems appropriate that the PRCC HSC is the body to develop a documented opinion, and if not a hatchery program, then what. This determination could then come to the PRCC for review and approval, before passing up to the PRCC Policy Committee. She and Tracy Hillman do not want to see something communicated to the PRCC Policy Committee that gets bounced back down to the PRCC or PRCC HSC. She also does not want to see something cycle through the PRCC HSC for long that ultimately needs policy direction. She does want to confirm what the PRCC believes their role should be.

L. Rohrbach shared on Microsoft Teams Section 5.5.1 of the SSSA: "Coordination and Oversight. The PRCC shall serve as a forum to coordinate the implementation of this Agreement and to consider issues that arise..."

L. Rohrbach added, importantly, the PRCC has a role in the dispute resolution process if the PRCC HSC cannot reach agreement.

B. Gale said it seems the PRCC HSC still has work to do. Two parties have expressed their position, but the others have not. As of now, the Expert Panel has provided a recommendation and the PRCC HSC is still discussing this internally. Once this is complete, the PRCC has a responsibility to review what the PRCC HSC recommends. It is the PRCC's responsibility to filter what goes to the PRCC Policy Committee. Currently, the mitigation level is whatever was determined at recalculation. This is not new production; it is shifting production among different tributary programs.

K. Murdoch said the SOA moved White River production to the Nason Creek program for 10 years. There are data that suggest this may be too many fish returning to Nason Creek. Todd Pearsons (former Grant PUD PRCC HSC Representative, retired)

said this, and she thinks he was right. The question is whether the full production should stay at Nason Creek or should this change to something else. She does agree there needs to be a recommendation from the PRCC HSC, and a PRCC review is appropriate. Ultimately, this needs to be a policy decision because: 1) the SOA originated in the PRCC Policy Committee; and 2) this SOA is embedded in regulatory documents. If this discussion is contemplating amending the SSSA, this needs to be a policy decision. If discussions are just delaying a decision, this needs to go to policy. The YN has an internal meeting scheduled with policy staff on May 12 to discuss this, and she hopes to receive guidance during this meeting, but she is not sure whether there will be solid answers.

L. Rohrbach said T. Hillman communicated to the PRCC HSC that time is of the essence, and he encouraged members to move quickly on developing decisions and recommendations. If this does not happen, the PRCC may need to help move this along. This SOA expires at the end of 2026, which includes White River production at Nason Creek. The hatchery genetic management plans (HGMPs) for Wenatchee Spring Chinook Salmon are also in development now, and she questioned whether language needs to be included to allow different permutations of what White River production may look like. K. Murdoch said the HGMPs can stipulate “up to so many fish,” so she does not believe this should be an issue.

K. Truscott said he provided a detailed paper to the CTCR policy staff explaining the situation, and importantly that the regulatory agencies did not support restarting the program but did not say the White River spawning aggregate is not important for recovery. He tried to lay out the broader ideas and hopes to hear his policy representatives’ approach on how to foster improvement in the White River spawning aggregate. How does this work within the various regulatory documents where White River propagation is specified? The CTCR should consult their legal staff, too. If the regulatory agencies do not support adult supplementation, how would it get permitted?

K. Murdoch agreed NMFS’s role is confusing. NMFS is a party to the SSSA, but their regulatory role is different. NMFS is tasked with reviewing a proposal and deciding whether to issue an incidental take permit or whether it poses jeopardy. K. Truscott said if NMFS does not support reinitiation of an artificial propagation program in the White River, reasons being based on best available science and the outcome of the Expert Panel. From programmatic standpoint, he believes it will be difficult for NMFS’s regulatory branch to turn around and issue a permit.

B. Gale believes it would be acceptable for the PRCC HSC to recommend that a hatchery in the White River is not warranted at this time but comment that the Nason Creek program is oversized and recommend that the PRCC Policy Committee consider alternate means of mitigation instead of extra production at Nason Creek. L. Rohrbach

said this is the conversation planned for next month—where does the PRCC HSC’s obligation end and move to the PRCC Policy Committee? She said T. Hillman wants to provide more technical support to the PRCC Policy Committee, so this does not just get kicked back down to the PRCC HSC.

T. Dresser said the PRCC absolutely has a role in this and needs to be engaged in some way. The PRCC HSC and PRCC Habitat Subcommittee (HabSC) are technical committees. If the discussion becomes beyond technical, the PRCC needs to be the starting point.

Anchor QEA will confirm with T. Hillman the PRCC’s role in the White River Spring Chinook Salmon Program decision process, and coordination for the PRCC Policy Committee.

V. 2026-2028 Smolt Survival Studies Preparations

R. O’Connor said the 2026 smolt survival study is underway. All logistical details were squared away, Grant PUD was monitoring the sample rate and numbers available at RIS, and there was alignment in the percent of run projections to be comparable to past studies. The first yearling Chinook Salmon collection occurred on Monday, April 20, and the first release was on Wednesday, April 22. The first steelhead collection occurred on Saturday, April 25, and the first release was on Monday, April 27.

L. Rohrbach asked about the last collection and release dates. R. O’Connor said if the tentative schedule to collect all fish needed holds and there are suitable conditions for the helicopter, the last release date will be May 23, 2026.

VI. 2026 Fish Passage Operations Report

A. Fish Ladder Inspections

K. Murdoch said she and M. Clement (Grant PUD) will conduct the first fish ladder inspections of the year, tomorrow.

B. Fish Spill Updates

T. Dresser said in coordination with B. Gale and S. Carlon (agency spill representatives), there was a PRD bypass outage on Wednesday, April 23. High winds caused a barrier to break resulting in a 3.5-hour outage. Wanapum Dam also experienced a broken barrier, but crews were able to fix this without shutting down the bypass.

C. Adult Fish Counts for 2026 (April 15 to November 15)

L. Rohrbach reviewed the adult fish counts through April 20, as shown below:

Project	Spring Chinook Salmon ^a		Summer Chinook Salmon ^b		Fall Chinook Salmon ^c		Sockeye Salmon	Coho Salmon	Steelhead
	Adults	Jacks	Adults	Jacks	Adults	Jacks			
PRD	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
WAN	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
RIS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5

Notes:

a: Chinook Salmon counted from April 15 to June 13 are considered spring Chinook Salmon.

b: Chinook Salmon counted from June 14 to August 13 are considered summer Chinook Salmon.

c: Chinook Salmon counted after August 14 are considered fall Chinook Salmon.

PRD = Priest Rapids; WAN = Wanapum; RIS = Rock Island

UPDATES

VIII. Review of Outstanding NNI-Funded Projects

- **Lower Wenatchee Instream Flow Enhancement Project Phase II**

T. Dresser said a final payment for this project is being processed through the PRCC HabSC per the NNI funding (H602) requirement. This project can be considered complete.

- **Northern Pike Removal**

No updates were shared.

- **WDFW PIT-Tag Detection Barge**

No updates were shared.

- **2026 Quincy Northern Pikeminnow Derby**

T. Dresser said this derby will take place mid-May, and Grant PUD will share outcomes with the PRCC.

- **2026 RTR Avian Predation Study**

T. Taylor said although the PRCC could not reach consensus on approving funding for Task 3.2.b,¹ Grant PUD elected to fund this effort separately without using NNI funds.

- **Tag Effects Evaluation for Summer Subyearling Chinook Salmon**

T. Dresser said this contract is out for signature, and he hopes to have this ready to go by the end of the week. Grant PUD will provide Grant PUD's and Chelan PUD's final *Study Proposal: Tag Effects for Subyearling Summer Chinook Salmon* for distribution to the PRCC and HCP-CCs. (Note: The final study plan was distributed to the PRCC and HCP-CCs by K. Geris on May 5, 2026.)

¹ PIT tagging approximately 5,000 UCR yearling Chinook Salmon at RIS, as described in RTR's PRCC NNI Funds Specification titled *Avian Predation on Juvenile Salmonids on the Middle Columbia River, 2026*.

IX. Subcommittee Updates

K. Geris will continue to forward subcommittee notes and materials to PRCC members and alternates as follows:

- Priest Rapids Fish Forum – met April 1, next meeting May 6.
- Habitat Subcommittee – met April 9, next meeting May 14.
- Fall Chinook Work Group – met October 7, next meeting April 30.
- Hatchery Subcommittee – met April 15 to 16, next meeting May 20 to 21.

X. SOAs Discussed in 2026

SOA number	Key Words	Last Discussed	Status
2026-01	Decoupling Summer Subyearling Survival	February 24, 2026	Approved (March 20, 2026)
2026-XX	Survival Evaluations - Path Forward	April 28, 2026	In Review

XI. Next Meetings

The next PRCC meeting will be on Tuesday, May 26, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., to be held in person at the Douglas PUD Auditorium in East Wenatchee, Washington. The next Subyearling Joint Session (Session 17) with the HCP-CC is to be determined.²

K. Murdoch will not be present for the PRCC May 26 meeting (on leave from May 17 to 28). C. Jackson will also not be present for the PRCC May 26, 2026, meeting.

XII. Attachments

Attachment A – Revised draft SOA *Survival Evaluations - Path Forward*

XIII. Subyearling Joint Session 16 (with HCP-CCs)

The PRCC and HCP-CCs convened Joint Session 16 to discuss the PUD studies (see separate joint session minutes).

² Tentatively, a subyearling joint session may not be needed next month, and approval of the Douglas PUD study plan will take place during the normal HCP-CCs session. These details will be confirmed closer to the meeting date.

Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee
DRAFT Statement of Agreement

Survival Evaluations - Path Forward

Submitted to the Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee: _____

Approved by the Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee: _____

Background: The Priest Rapids Project Salmon and Steelhead Settlement Agreement (SSSA) and the 2008 NOAA Fisheries Biological Opinion (BiOp) establish a project-wide juvenile survival standard of 86.49% ($\pm 2.5\%$ SE) for Covered Species and require periodic survival evaluations to assess continued compliance (currently every 10 years). While the SSSA and BiOp address steps and actions when the standard is not initially achieved, they do not explicitly define the procedural pathway when, upon subsequent evaluation, a previously achieved standard is not maintained. To ensure a consistent, agreed-upon framework for responding to new survival estimates (SSSA Section 15.6), the PRCC has developed this SOA. The retesting framework and steps outlined herein are consistent with the SSSA's adaptive management principles, existing PRCC procedures established under SOA 2017-2, and retesting protocols applied under similar regional Habitat Conservation Plans governing hydropower operations in the upper Columbia.

Statement: The Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee (PRCC) approves the following Statement of Agreement (SOA).

- This SOA only pertains to the procedural step(s) which would be taken when new juvenile survival estimates are developed under the Priest Rapids Salmon and Steelhead Settlement Agreement (SSSA). It outlines the evaluation process and subsequent actions based on whether the performance standards are achieved or not achieved. The frequency and timing new survival evaluations are determined and approved by the PRCC (currently 10-year intervals) and may be modified by mutual agreement of the parties. This SOA does not amend, supersede, or reinterpret any requirement of the SSSA or 2008 BiOp and is not intended to address or resolve any other issues such as juvenile steelhead correction factors, adult salmonid passage methodology, or interpretation of the 91% adult and juvenile combined standard.
- The project-wide juvenile performance standard for Covered Species¹ is 86.49% ($\pm 2.5\%$ SE) per the SSSA and 2008 NOAA BiOp for the Priest Rapids Project. Precision requirements ensure survival estimates are statistically reliable and reproducible. Consistent with SOA 2017-2, which reaffirmed the precision requirement for a valid study to be SE $\pm 2.5\%$, a less precise estimate of not more than $\pm 3.5\%$ SE may be acceptable if the PRCC agrees.

¹ "Covered Species" - means spring, summer and fall Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), sockeye salmon (*O. nerka*), steelhead (*O. mykiss*) and coho (*O. kisutch*).

- If the new survival estimate demonstrates that the juvenile performance standard has been achieved, the next evaluation will occur at the interval established by the PRCC (currently every 10-years). The most recent valid estimate will represent the current best measure of project performance.
- If the juvenile performance standard is not achieved during the initial evaluation a retest will be conducted. The retest will be expanded to gather more detailed project-level information (e.g. dam specific, route specific, behavior, approach, etc.), as necessary to better understand the test results. The average of the initial test and the first retest will represent the new Project survival estimate.
 1. If the average of the initial test and first retest meets the juvenile performance standard, the next evaluation will proceed at the interval established by the PRCC (currently every 10-years).
 2. If the average of the initial valid test and the first valid retest does not meet the standard, a second retest will be conducted. If necessary, additional project-level information may be added. In consultation with the PRCC measures identified in bullet 4 may be implemented before implementation of the second retest.
 3. At the conclusion of the retesting process, all valid estimates (initial estimate, first and second retests) will be averaged together to determine the new survival estimate. If the new estimate demonstrates that the performance standard has been achieved, then future evaluations will proceed at the interval established by the PRCC in accordance with the SSSA.
 4. If performance standards are not achieved after 3 valid tests the PRCC , will develop a set of additional tools or suite of actions to improve survival and demonstrate measurable progress toward re-achieving the juvenile performance standards. These additional tools include but are not limited to evaluation of study design elements, facility modifications or adjustments, predator control or operational adjustments.
 5. After such measures have been implemented and evaluated, if the PRCC determines that the standard remains unachievable for an ESA listed species. Grant PUD shall initiate consultation with NOAA fisheries consistent with the 2008 NOAA Biological Opinion.
- For all Covered Species under the SSSA, the PRCC will decide on what additional tools may be implemented to achieve the survival standards using the following criteria: 1) likelihood of biological success; 2) time required to implement; and 3) cost-effectiveness of solutions, but only where the Parties agree that two or more alternatives are comparable in their biological effectiveness.

The PRCC may recommend temporary mitigation measures to offset biological impacts during the interim period while the Project demonstrates progress toward re-achieving the juvenile survival standard². Once agreed upon, these measures will remain in place until it is demonstrated that the juvenile survival standard has been achieved.

DRAFT

² The Parties could not reach agreement on temporary mitigation measures. Some Parties contend that the NNI Fund (SSA Part XV) is the appropriate near-term mitigation mechanism and others disagree. This policy disagreement will likely require resolution by the PRCC Policy Committee if invoked.