



## Priest Rapids Fish Forum

### Conference Call

Wednesday, 2 April 2025

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

### FINAL MINUTES

#### PRFF Members

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Emily Orling, USFWS  
Ralph Lampman, Keely Murdoch, YN  
Nathan and Clayton Buck, Wanapum  
Jason McLellan, Bret Nine, CTCR  
Mike Clement, Chris Mott, Grant PUD  
Tracy Hillman, Chair

Patrick Verhey, Benjamin Cox, WDFW  
Melissa Peterson, Chad Brown, WDOE  
Aaron Jackson, Carl Merkle, CTUIR  
Steve Lewis, BIA  
Pete McHugh, CRITFC

#### Meeting Attendees

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Mike Clement, Grant PUD  
Cory Kamphaus, YN  
Chad Jackson, WDFW  
Todd Miller, WDFW  
Melissa Peterson, Ecology  
Erin Harris, Grant PUD

Ralph Lampman, YN  
Corey Wright, LGL ESI  
Tygh Schuster, YN  
Pete McHugh, CRITFC  
Nate Patterson, YN  
Tracy Hillman, Chair

#### Action Items:

- Tracy Hillman will distribute the Guidance for Evaluating Spontaneous Autopolyploidy in White Sturgeon Supplementation Programs (June 3, 2020) to PRFF members.
- Tracy Hillman will reach out to PNNL, RRRF, and ASWG on whether 2 July or 6 August works for them to participate in a virtual Pacific Lamprey Subgroup meeting.
- Tracy Hillman will distribute Ralph Lampman's Upper Columbia Juvenile Lamprey Source Datasheet to the PRFF. The PRFF will update source numbers in the spreadsheet.
- Ralph Lampman will develop a juvenile Pacific Lamprey survival strategy.

## Decision Items:

- None.

### I. Welcome and Introductions

Tracy Hillman welcomed everyone to the meeting and identified all attendees.

### II. Agenda Review

The PRFF reviewed and approved the April agenda with no additions.

### III. Approve March Meeting Notes

The PRFF reviewed and approved the 5 March 2025 meeting minutes.

### IV. Review Action Items

The PRFF reviewed the following action item from the March meeting:

- Ralph Lampman will update the Upper Columbia Juvenile Source Lamprey Datasheet and send it to Tracy Hillman for distribution to the PRFF. **Ongoing. See discussion under Section VI.**
- Tracy Hillman will schedule a Pacific Lamprey Subgroup meeting in June or July to discuss the possibility of a juvenile Pacific Lamprey study in the project area. **Ongoing. See discussion under Section VI.**
- Ralph Lampman, with help from others, will develop a juvenile Pacific Lamprey survival strategy. **Ongoing. See discussion under Section VI.**

### V. White Sturgeon

**Update on White Sturgeon Rearing, Tagging, and Testing** – Tygh Schuster reported that they tagged and tested juvenile sturgeon during the week of 24 March. He noted that there was a higher than usual occurrence of spontaneous autopolyploidy this year. Of the 3,445 fish tested, 166 were positive for spontaneous autopolyploidy (4.8%). Positive fish originated primarily from tanks that incorporated gametes from females 1, 4, and 5. The number of positive juveniles from each female was as follows:

Female 1 = 63

Female 2 = 9

Female 3 = 2

Female 4 = 44

Female 5 = 40

Female 6 = 8

Despite elevated rates, there are enough fish to meet the release target this year. Tygh thought the increase in autopolyploidy may be related to the stirring of eggs, but he is not certain.

Mike Clement reported that they had a large, efficient crew this year and they exceeded the testing of 1,000 fish per day. Mike shared that the fish will be released during the week of 7 April. Mike asked Tracy Hillman to send the Guidance for Evaluating Spontaneous Autopolyploidy in White Sturgeon

Supplementation Programs (June 3, 2020) to PRFF members. Further discussion on spontaneous autopolyploidy will occur in May.

**Adult Broodstock Collection** – Cory Wright shared that the two-week adult broodstock collection efforts are scheduled for the weeks of 12 and 19 May. They have been tracking water temperatures to make sure they begin collections at the right time. They are also securing all necessary permits from Washington and Oregon, and they continue to collaborate with ODFW on the acoustic telemetry study. Gabby Brill is leading the telemetry study for ODFW as part of her master’s degree and will be defending her study on 16 April. Once her thesis is accepted by the graduate school, she will share it with the PRFF. She is also willing to present her results to the PRFF during a future meeting. Cory said they helped her collect fish for her tagging study and provided information on recaptures. Mike Clement added that they will use fishing guides to help them collect broodstock this year. These are the same guides they have used for over 10 years.

**Other White Sturgeon Items** – Chad Jackson reported that a couple weeks ago, the Fish and Wildlife Commission delegated rule-making authority to the Director for potential White Sturgeon fisheries in the middle-Columbia project areas. This will help the State be more proactive and more flexible in opening fisheries when necessary. Chad said that a fishery may occur in the Rocky Reach project area this fall but probably not in the Priest Rapids project area. Chad added that they are coordinating with the Yakama Nation on a potential fishery in the project areas.

## **VI. Pacific Lamprey**

**Pacific Lamprey Subgroup Meeting** – Tracy Hillman said that it will be very difficult to find a date this summer when everyone is available. Therefore, he proposed that the subgroup meeting be held on 2 July or 6 August, which are the dates for regularly scheduled PRFF meetings. This will allow more participation from members. Members present agreed and directed Tracy to work with PNNL, RRF, and the ASWG on which date would work best for them. Ralph Lampman said it is critical that PNNL participate in the meeting.

**Update on Feasibility of a Juvenile Lamprey Survival Study** – Ralph Lampman presented his Upper Columbia Juvenile Lamprey Source Datasheet and walked the PRFF through each of the tabs in the spreadsheet. Ralph identified possible locations for collecting juveniles for a survival study. He asked that members look at the locations and update possible numbers of juveniles that may be encountered at those collection locations. He then discussed the remaining key questions associated with a survival study. Those include:

1. What is the scope and scale of a survival study?
2. What survival model should be used?
3. What is an acceptable precision level?
4. What is the source of lamprey for a study?
5. How to deal with tag performance and biological/seasonal effects?

Ralph discussed the use of artificially propagated fish in survival studies and the benefits of tag recycling (e.g., fish tagged for studies in the Rocky Reach project area being used in the Priest Rapids studies). The ability to recycle tags is based on tag life. Lastly, Ralph indicated that he is working on the Pacific Lamprey survival strategy and will include the excel spreadsheets as an appendix to the report.

**Other Pacific Lamprey Items** – Ralph Lampman reported that the Upper Columbia Regional Management Unit meeting is scheduled for Monday, 14 April from 9:00 am to noon. He added that the Pacific Lamprey Conservation Initiative is beginning to plan the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Lamprey Information Exchange. They need input on when and where the Information Exchange should be held and what topics should be covered. The survey closes on 16 April.

Mike Clement reported that Grant PUD will be collecting adult lamprey at Priest Rapids Dam for Chelan PUD's adult lamprey survival study at Rock Island Dam. He said they will begin trapping earlier than in past years, likely beginning in mid-June, and will trap through early October.

## **VII. Administration**

No new administration business was discussed.

## **VIII. Adjourn**

With no additional business to discuss, Tracy Hillman adjourned the meeting at 10:00 am.

## **IX. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the PRFF will be on 7 May 2025.