Grant County
PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT
Excellence in Service and Leadership

Fall Chinook Working Group

Conference Call

Monday, 5 October 2026
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

FINAL MINUTES

Technical Members

Kelsey Swieca, NMFS	Joe Skalicky/Don Anglin, USFWS
Jeff Fryer, CRITFC	Keely Murdoch, YN
Leah Sullivan, BPA	TBD, American Rivers
Tom Kahler, DPUD	Lance Keller, CPUD
Bill Tweit/Todd Miller, WDFW	Dani Evenson, ADFG
Melissa Peterson, WDOE	Rod O'Connor/Gabe Temple, GPUD
Tracy Hillman, Facilitator	

Meeting Attendees

Rod O'Connor, GPUD	Shaun Harrington, GPUD
Tom Kahler, DPUD	Keely Murdoch, YN
Todd Miller, WDFW	Tim Taylor, GPUD
Jeff Fryer, CRITFC	Tammy Mackey, BPA
Pete McHugh, CRITFC	Lance Keller, CPUD
Gabe Temple, GPUD	Erin Harris, GPUD
Ryan Harnish, PNNL	Melissa Peterson, WDOE
Kelsey Swieca, NMFS	Tracy Hillman, Chair

Action Items:

- **Rod O'Connor will provide updates on the HRFCPPA Periods and Flow Constraints.**
- **As soon as the draft 2025-2026 HRFCPPA Report is available, FCWG members will have 30 days to review it and provide comments to Gabe Temple.**
- **As soon as the 2025 draft Priest Rapids Hatchery M&E Report is available, FCWG members will have 30 days to review it and provide comments to Gabe Temple.**

Decision Items:

- None.

I. Welcome and Introductions

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

II. Agenda Review

The FCWG reviewed and approved the 5 October 2026 agenda.

III. Review Action Items

The FCWG reviewed the following action item from the 30 April 2026 meeting:

- Grant PUD will provide updates on the HRFCPPA Periods and Flow Constraints. **Ongoing.**
- Zak Robinson will send his PowerPoint presentation to Tracy Hillman for distribution to the FCWG. **Complete.**
- Jeff Fryer will notify the FCWG whether the 2026 Hanford Reach tagging project receives final approval and proceeds. **Complete. Jeff reported that they were unable to apply CWTs in natural-origin juvenile fall Chinook Salmon in 2026. They did, however, PIT tag about 10,000 juvenile fall Chinook Salmon and collected genetic samples from about 8,000 fall Chinook Salmon.**
- Tracy Hillman will send a calendar invitation confirming the next FCWG meeting on 5 October 2026. **Complete.**

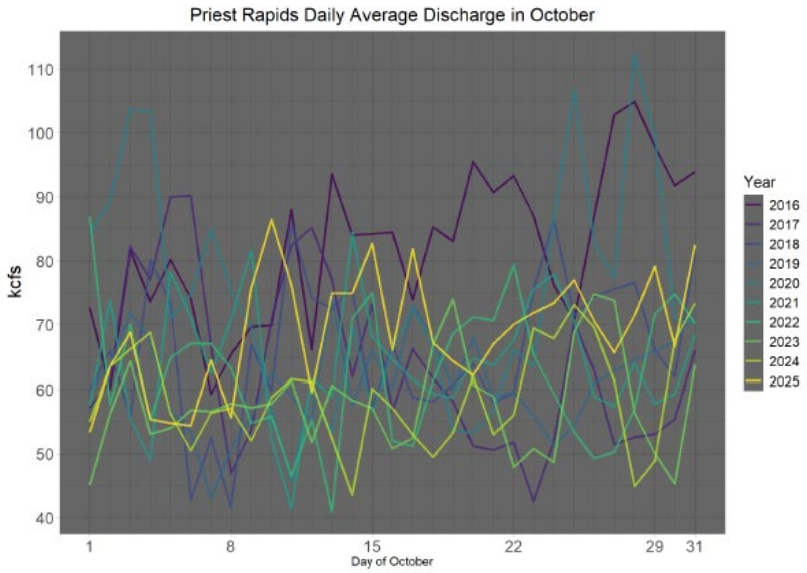
IV. HRWG Activities

2025-2026 Hanford Reach Annual Report – Gabe Temple reported that he is developing the annual report as an R Markdown report, which is a document that combines narrative text, data visualizations, and executable code. This will decrease the time needed to generate the annual report. Data will be input into the file, and the file will auto-update the report.

Gabe is currently coordinating with Shaun Harrington and the River Coordination Team to validate any flow exceedance information. He noted that at this time, there appears to have been one exceedance, but that was a positive exceedance, meaning that additional flow was released from Priest Rapids Dam.

2025-2026 Operations Review – Shaun Harrington said it is important to look at the forecasted flows for the upcoming spawning period. He said they are expecting less-than-average flows for October, with flows around 60 kcfs. Flows will increase in November for spawning. Comparing this to previous years, he said flows averaged 69 kcfs last year, which was quite a bit higher than previous years, which averaged 66 kcfs (see figure below).

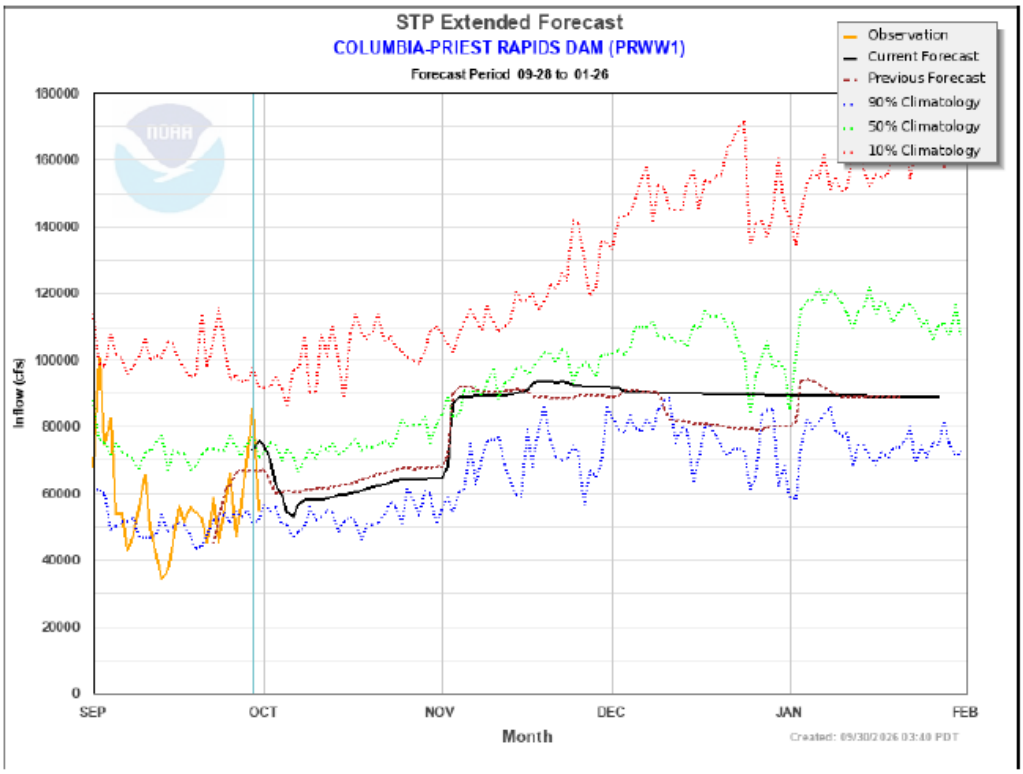
Spawning Season Flows



Average October PRD Discharge
2016-2025

	Year	kcfs
	2016	82.0
	2017	63.8
	2018	66.4
	2019	61.3
	2020	74.3
	2021	64.4
	2022	62.5
	2023	57.8
	2024	58.8
	2025	69.0
Average		66.0

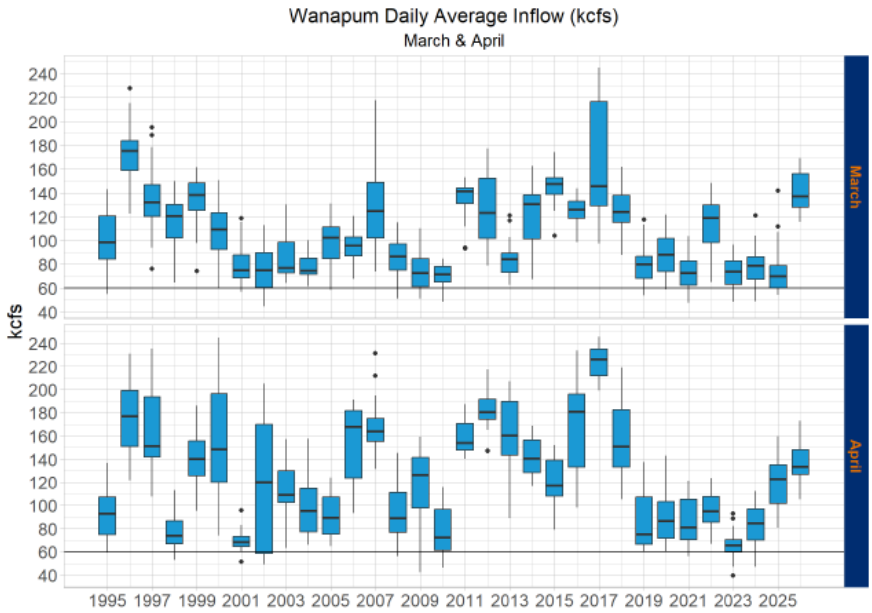
Referring to the figure below, Shaun said, based on current projections, they should be able to achieve the required flows for fall Chinook Salmon spawning. Given the projected flows, he said it is better to start with a lower RLF target (40-50 kcfs), which is consistent with the last 6-7 years. This causes Chinook Salmon to spawn at lower elevations, which means that as flows change, the redds remain watered. Starting with a target too high, it is possible that redds placed at higher elevations could be dewatered when there is a lack of flow. Shaun said that by November, as shown in the figure, flows are projected to increase to 55-70 kcfs because Bonneville Power Administration will be releasing higher flows from Grand Coulee Dam to support Chum Salmon spawning in the lower Columbia River. Shaun added that they may have some additional constraints associated with the Priest Rapids Spillway Stability Project, but he is not expecting any effects from that project on spawning flows.



Northwest River Forecast Center

Shaun then discussed the stranding bands and low flows experienced last spring (see figure below). He said last spring, they had more water during March and April than in previous years. He said flows in March 2026 were the highest since 2017 and the flows in April were the highest since 2018. He pointed out that they were well above the 60 kcfs critical protection level. In addition, they generally had higher inflows, which made day-to-day operations easier.

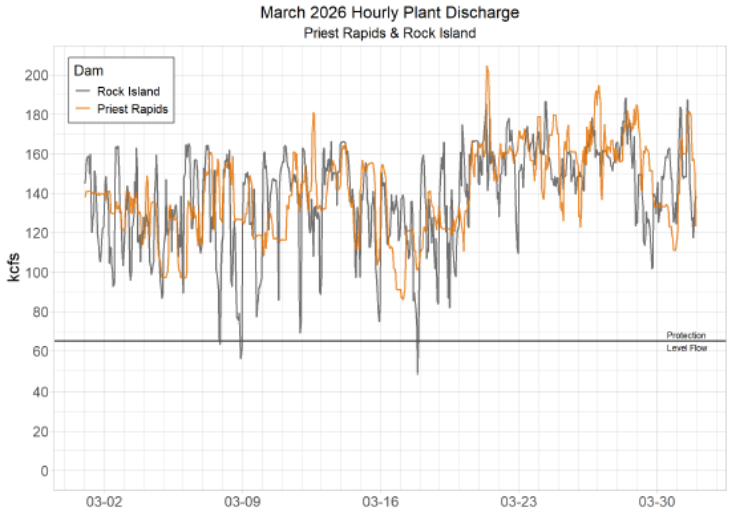
Stranding Band & Low Flows



- March-April 2026 experienced significantly more water than recent years.
  - March was highest since 2017
  - April was highest since 2018

Shaun said managing flows can be challenging when inflows are less than the required minimum flows to be released from Priest Rapids Dam. In the following two figures, Shaun showed the relationship between inflows (measured at Rock Island Dam, gray line) and outflows (measured at Priest Rapids Dam, orange line). Shaun described the high variability in inflows from Rock Island Dam (median deviation of 24.02-30.10 kcfs) and the outflows from Priest Rapids Dam (median deviation of 25.13-18.98 kcfs), noting that outflows during March and April 2026 were consistently well above the 65 kcfs minimum flow constraint. He also pointed out the times when inflows were below the minimum flow constraint. He reiterated that given the variable inflows, it is challenging to stay within the flow fluctuation bands and above the minimum flow constraint; however, given the higher spring flows this year, meeting the constraint was easier than in past years.

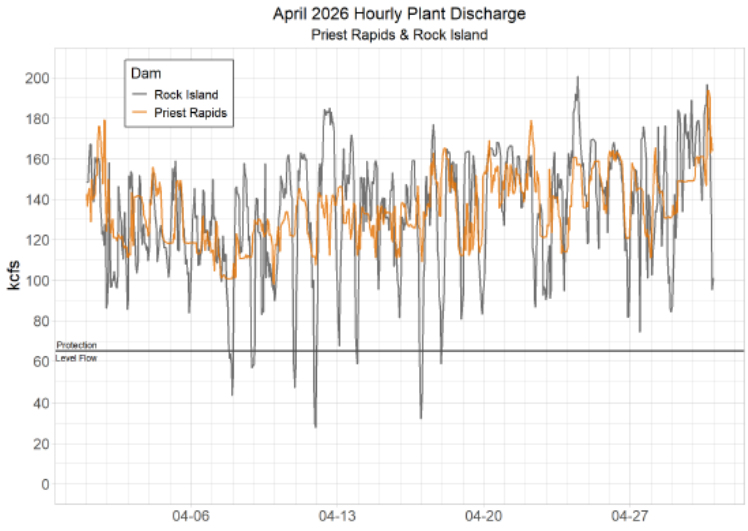
Stranding Band & Low Flows



- Rock Island discharge median absolute deviation[1]: 24.02 kcfs
- Priest Rapids discharge median absolute deviation: 25.13 kcfs

1. Median absolute deviation is an outlier-robust measure of variation measured as the median distance between observations and the observed median. ↩

Stranding Band & Low Flows



- Rock Island discharge median absolute deviation: 30.1 kcfs
- Priest Rapids discharge median absolute deviation: 18.98 kcfs

Shaun concluded by stating that there are challenges, but they have generally been successful meeting the constraints and when they violate a target, it is usually on the high side, which is less risky to the resource than violating a constraint on the low side.

2025-2026 Protection Program Update – Gabe Temple gave a brief overview of the 2025-2026 program. He began by providing the following outline for his update: (1) 2025 flow protection season; (2) updated life-stage/development rate modeling; (3) long-range forecast; and (4) Reverse Load Factoring (RLF) and Vernita Bar surveys.

2025 Flow Protection Season

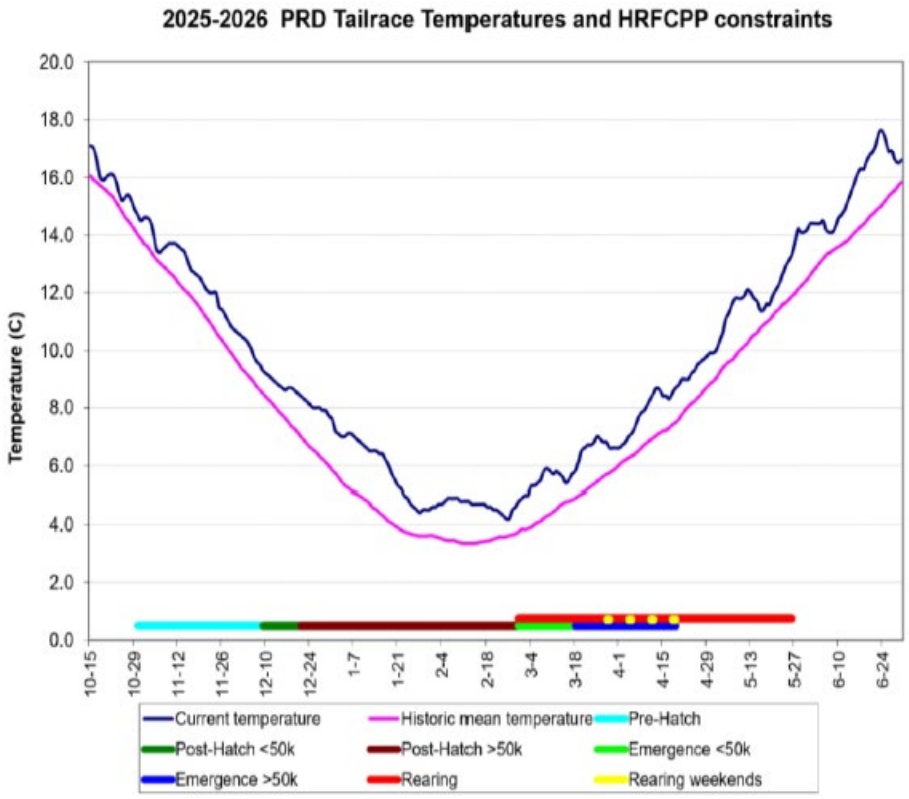
As an overview, Gabe provided the following table showing the protection periods and primary flow constraints. He pointed out that warmer water temperatures resulted in spawning beginning later than normal and the final protection periods ending earlier than normal on the Hanford Reach. Post-hatching occurred in mid- and late-December in the respective <50 kcfs and >50 kcfs zones, and emergence began in late-February or mid-March depending on the zone. Emergence ended in mid-April. The rearing period was from late-February through late-May.

HRFCPPA Protection Periods

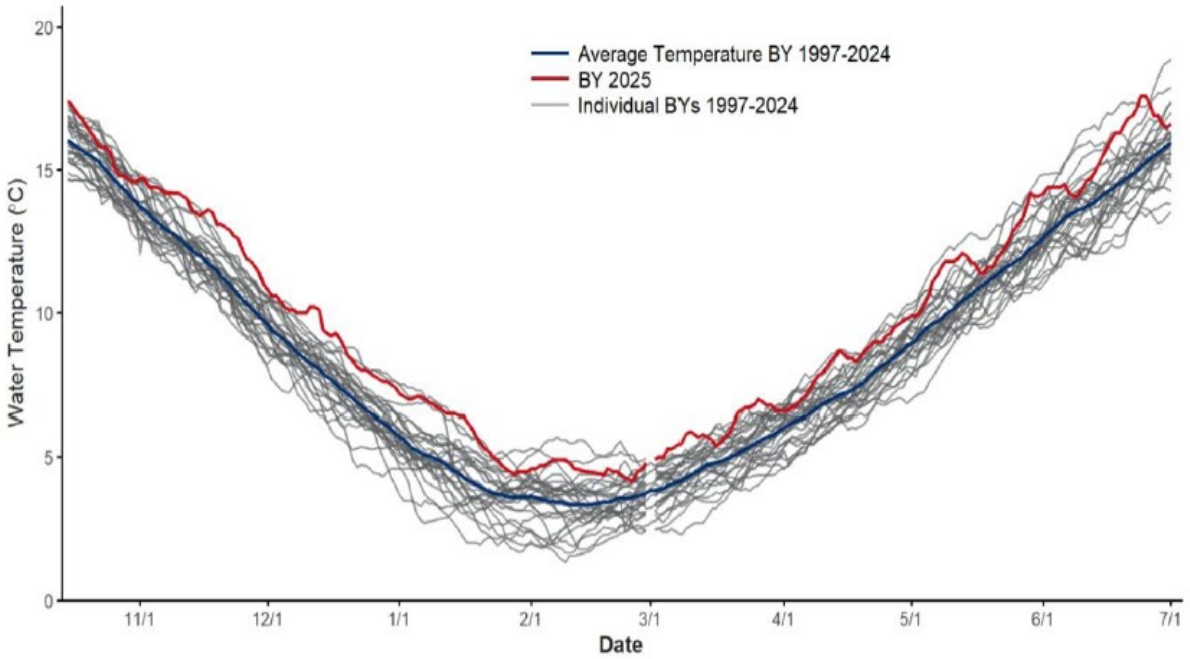
HRFCPPA Period	Begin	End	Primary Flow Constraint
Spawning Period	10/30/2025	11/23/2025	• 55–70 kcfs during daylight hours.
Pre-Hatch Period (above and below 50 kcfs)	10/30/2025	12/8/2025	• No less than the Critical Elevation for 8 hours on weekdays and 12 hours on weekends, with no two consecutive periods.
Post-Hatch Period (below 50 kcfs)	12/9/2025	2/27/2026	• No less than 15 cm below the 50 kcfs elevation.
Post-Hatch Period (above 50 kcfs)	12/21/2025	3/17/2026	• No less than 15 cm below the Critical Elevation.
Emergence Period (below 50 kcfs)	2/28/2026	4/19/2026	• No less than the Critical Elevation or 50 kcfs elevation, whichever is greater.
Emergence Period (above 50 kcfs)	3/18/2026	4/19/2026	• No less than the Critical Elevation.
Rearing Period	2/28/2026	5/25/2026	• See flow fluctuation table in Figure 1.
Weekend Constraints	03/28/2026	4/19/2026	• Weekend minimum flow no less than the daily hourly minimum from Mon–Thursday of the previous week.

Protection Dates	Initiation of Spawning	End Spawning	Begin Hatching	Begin Emergence	End Emergence	End Protections
Average	10/23	11/22	12/3	3/17	5/11	6/13
2025-2026	10/30	11/23	12/9	2/28	4/19	5/26

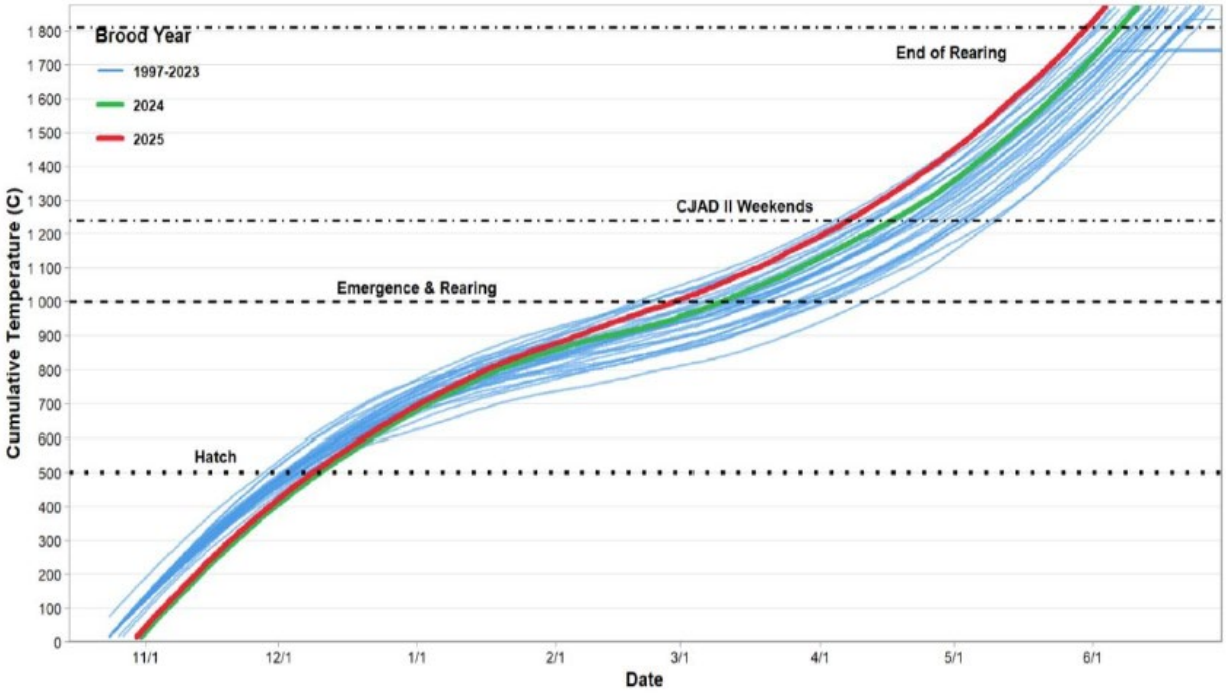
Gabe then talked about the water temperature regime during the protection period. He noted that water temperatures were above and stayed above the average temperatures (pink line) for the entire protection period (see figure below).



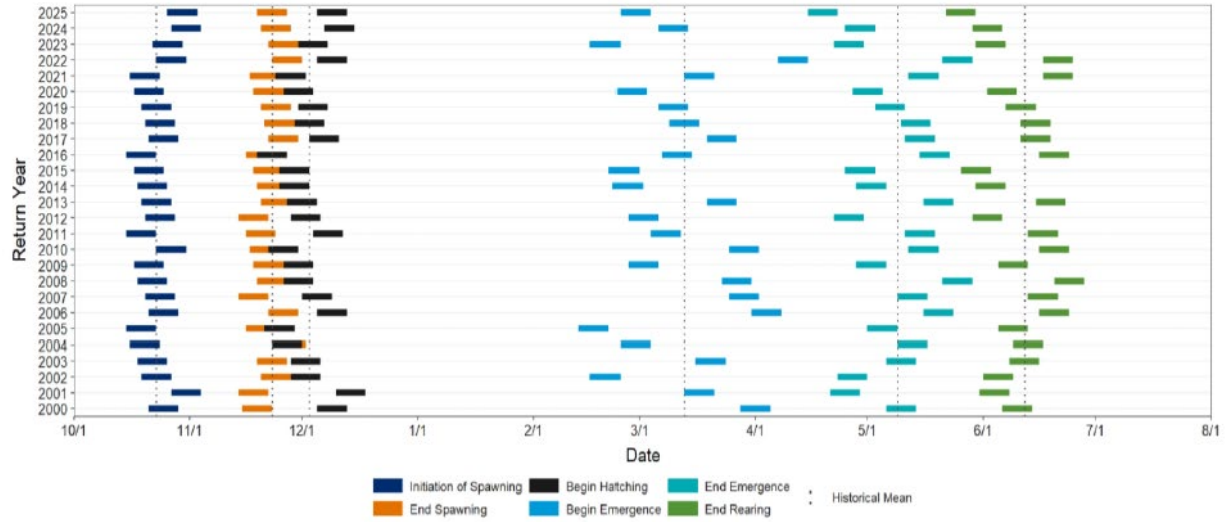
Gabe then showed the following figure, which places the water temperature regime in 2025 in context with water temperatures recorded in 1997-2024. Water temperatures were above the average temperature conditions on the Reach.



The following graph compares the cumulative water temperatures for 1997-2023, 2024, and 2025. Gabe noted that the cumulative water temperatures were on the warmer side compared to previous years. This means that spawning and hatching began later and emergence and rearing began earlier in 2025 than they did in previous years.

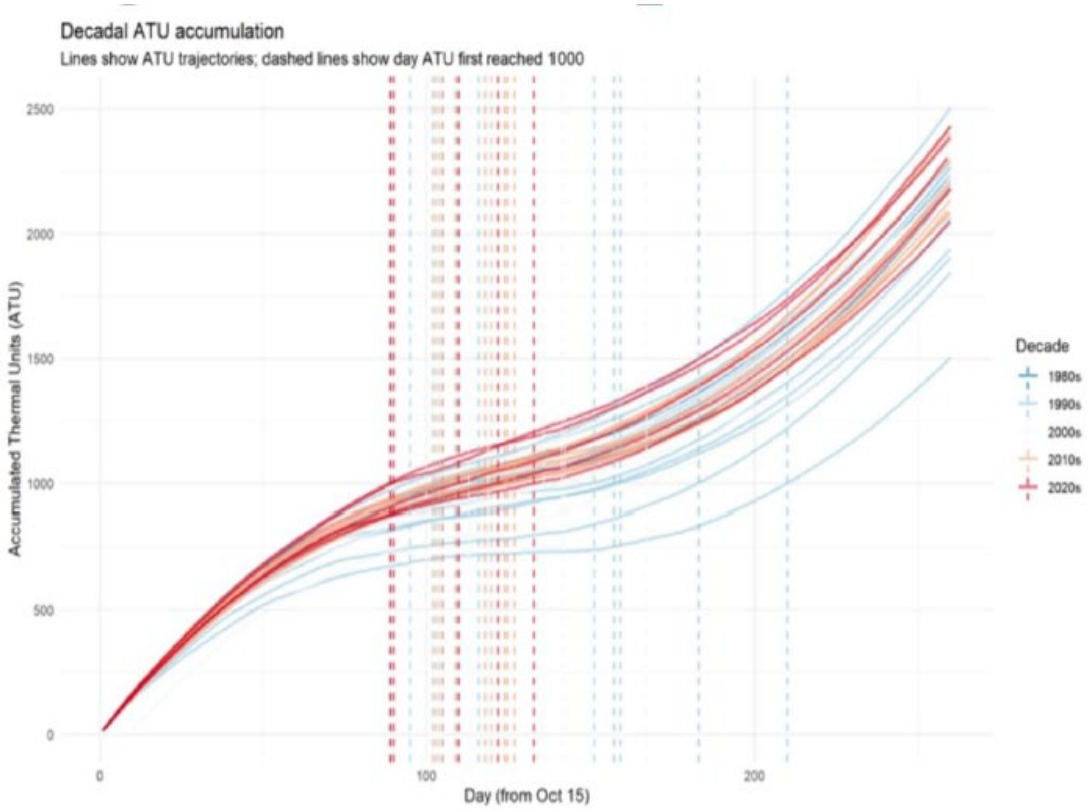


The following figure shows another way to compare starting and ending periods for different life stages across years. Again, the beginning of spawning and hatching were later, and emergence and rearing were earlier compared to most of the previous years.



Gabe said the changes in the beginning and ending of different life-stage periods are in part driven by decadal changes in water temperatures. The following figure shows the accumulated thermal units by

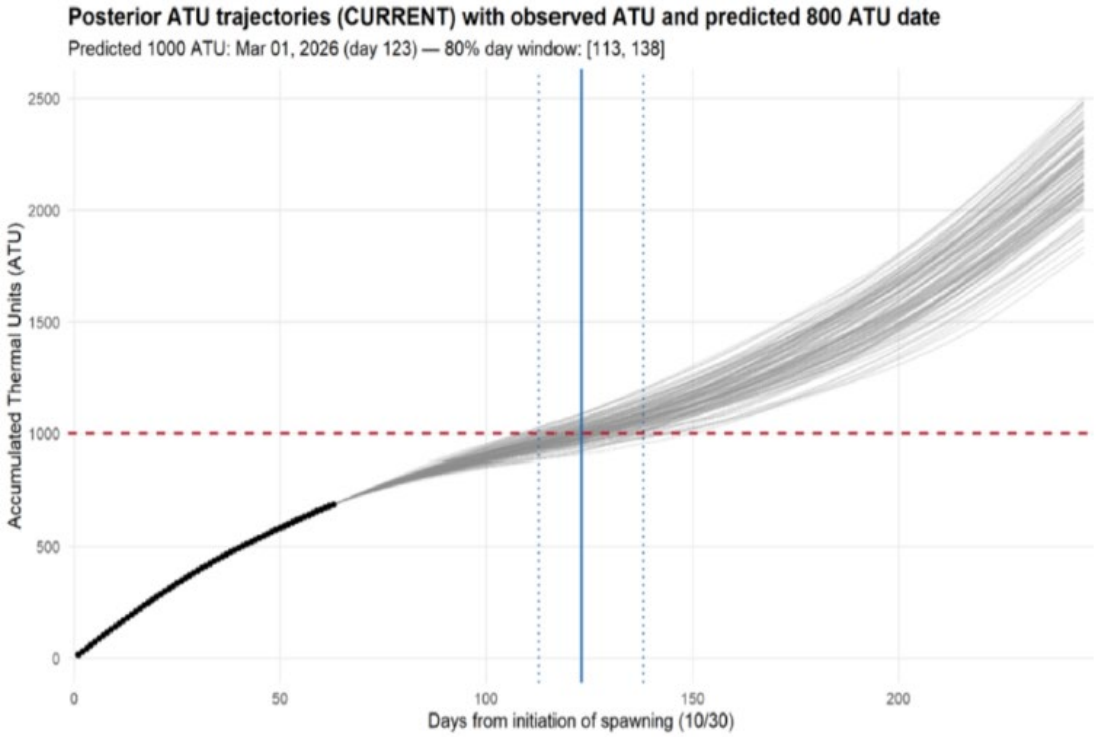
decade, with the cooler colors representing earlier decades and the darker colors indicating more recent decades. The vertical dashed lines show how the accumulation of river temperatures is shifting to earlier periods. These data can be used to help forecast when different life stages are expected to occur, which in turn informs river operations.



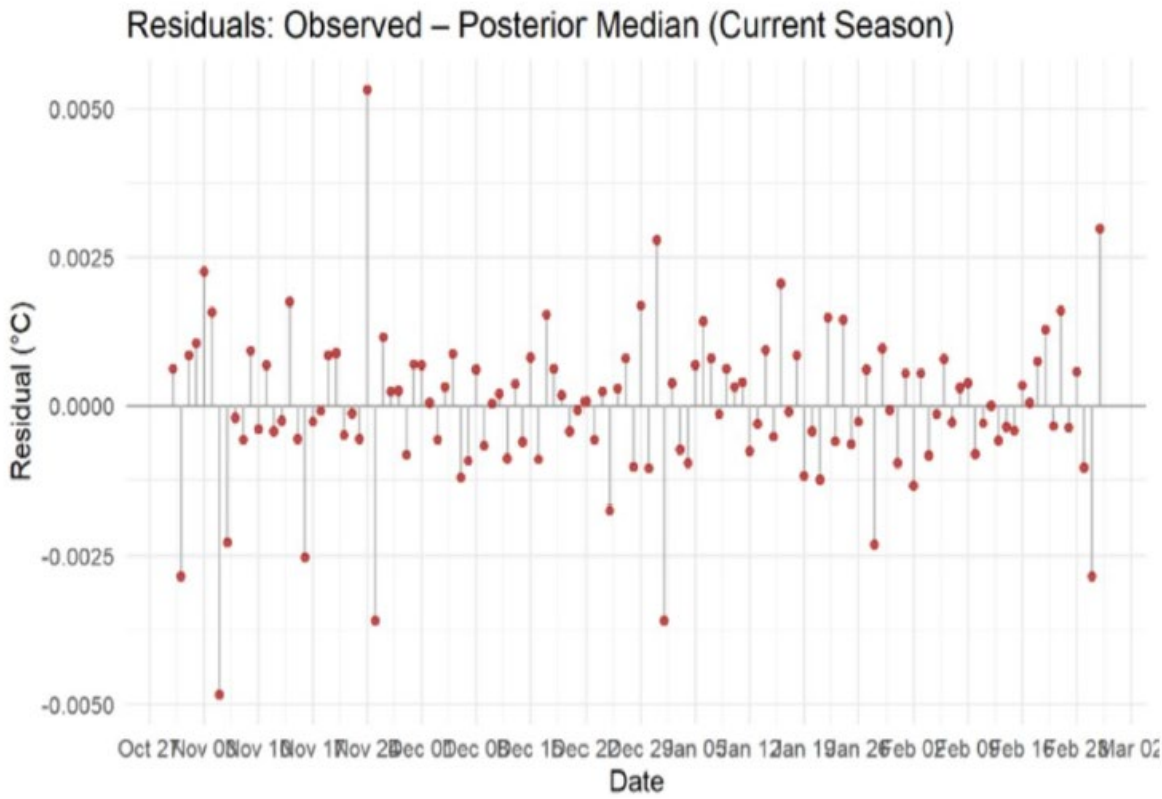
Improved Life-Stage Forecasting Model

Gabe stated that they are developing an improved life-stage forecasting model. The Hierarchical Bayesian State-Space Series (AR1) model will better predict critical developmental dates based on accumulated temperature units. They used 37 seasons of observed mean daily water temperatures (inform priors in the Bayesian model) and up-weighted more recent years given observed decadal increases in river temperatures. They ran the model to estimate critical developmental dates (4,000 iterations, 1,500 warmup iterations, and informed priors) and then evaluated model predictions versus observed data to validate model performance (hindcasting).

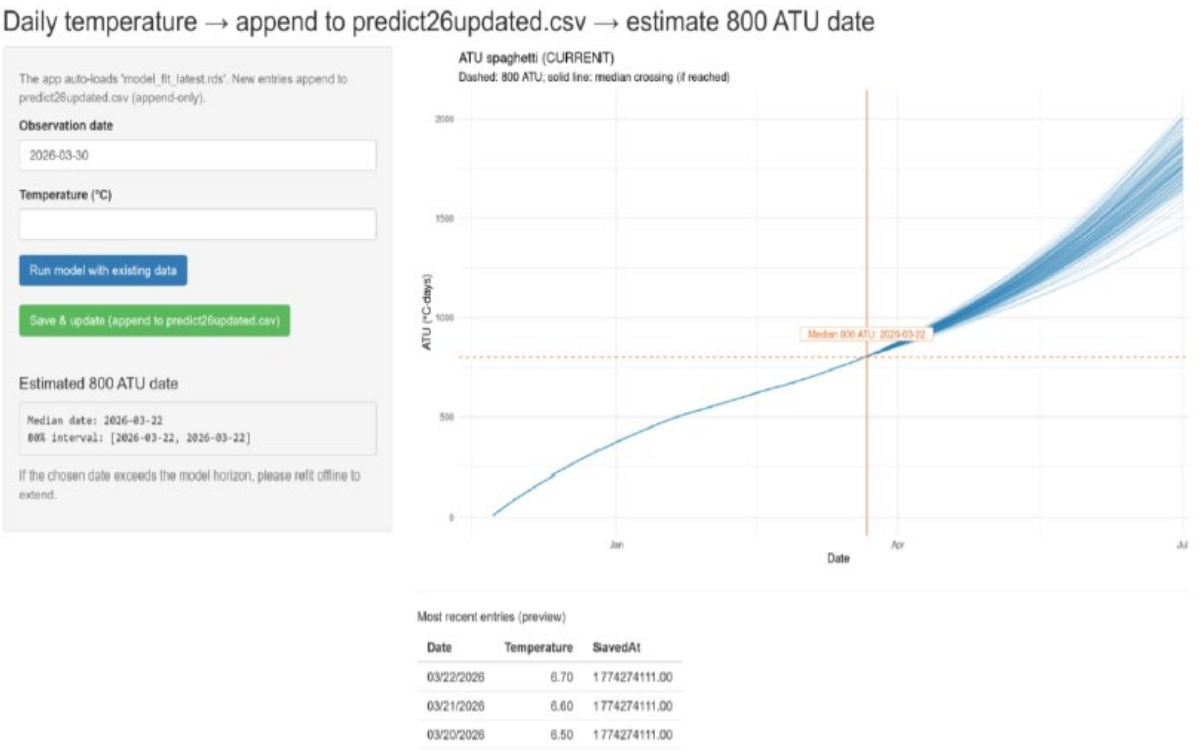
Gabe showed the following figure, which reveals the accuracy of forecasting. In the figure, the black dots (thick black line) represent the daily accumulation of temperature units that were observed. Each day, observed data are added to the model and the model is rerun. As more data are added to the model, the model more accurately predicts the next life-stage transition. This helps inform river management and operations.



Gabe said they also evaluated model accuracy by evaluating residuals (see following figure). Gabe pointed out that there is variability over time but noted the extremely small error on the Y-axis. He stated that the model is quite accurate, especially as the input data get closer to the critical dates that are being forecasted.

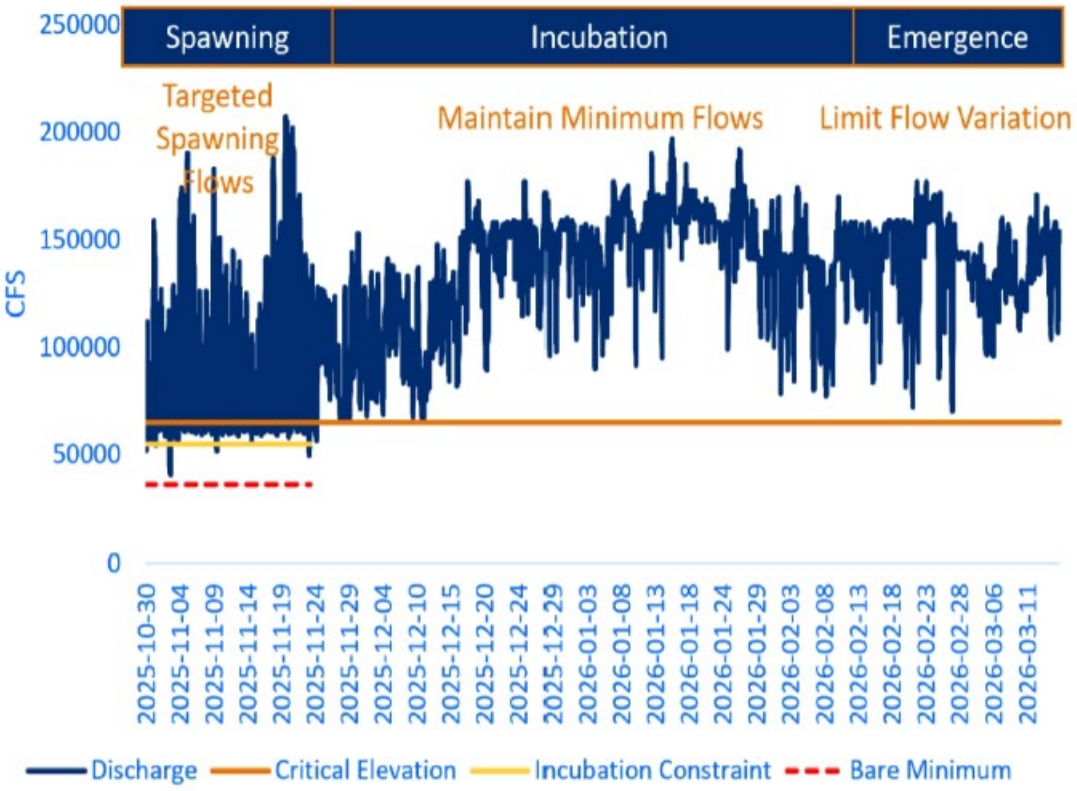


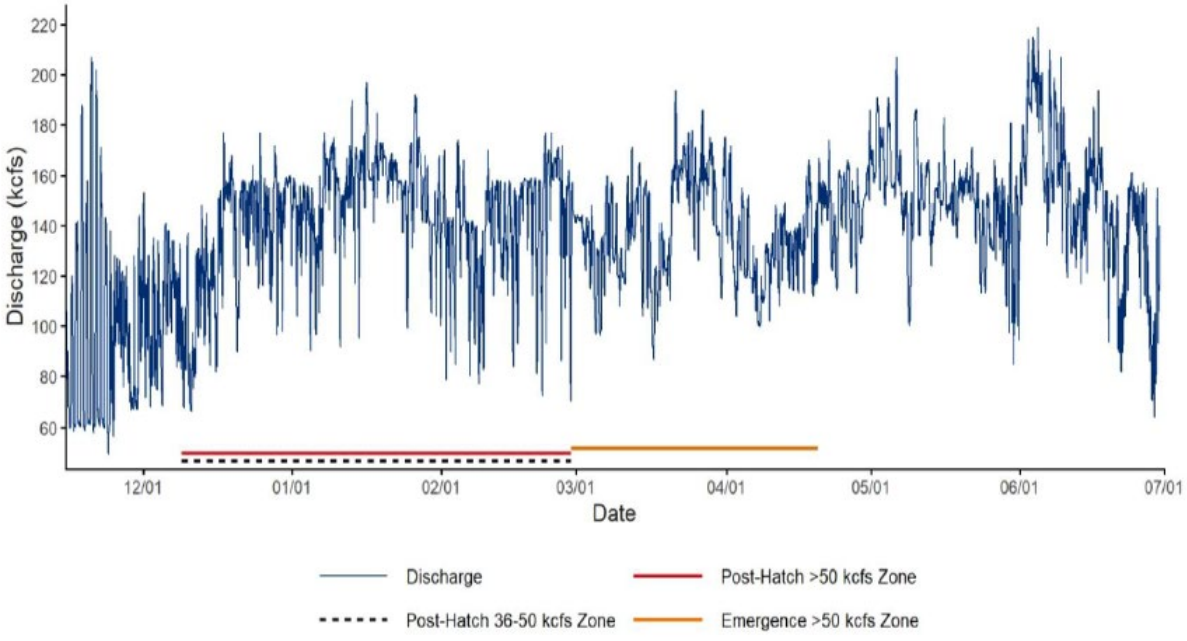
Gabe indicated that the model is being used to forecast key developmental milestone dates, which can be used to inform river operations. Gabe developed an R Shiny application that provides the River Operations Team with access to current and projected developmental milestone dates. By making this information available between weekly coordination meetings, the application will help keep team members informed, improve coordination among staff, and enhance communication between fisheries and river operations personnel.



Environmental Conditions

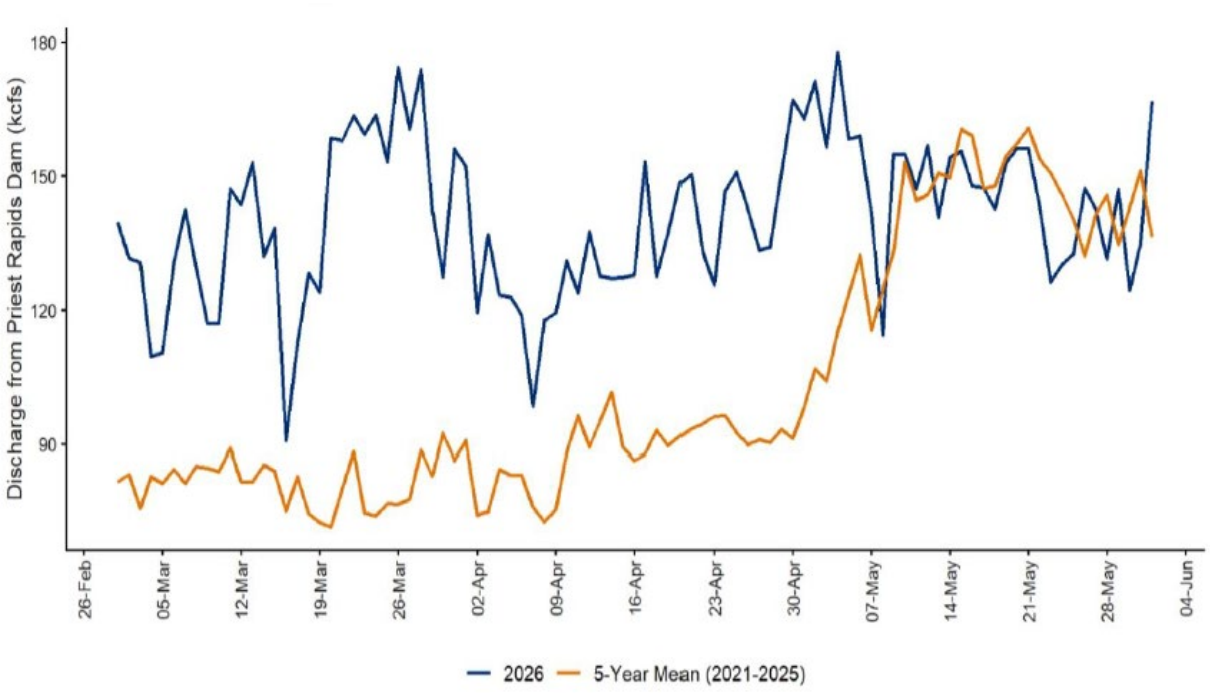
Gabe described the flow conditions during the protection period. The following figures show the daily flows recorded at the Vernita Bar gauge through June 2026. Various flow targets are represented with orange, yellow, and red horizontal lines. He said that Grant PUD closely monitors the minimum-flow constraint throughout the season. Gabe said he is still working through the data but believes they met all their obligations.



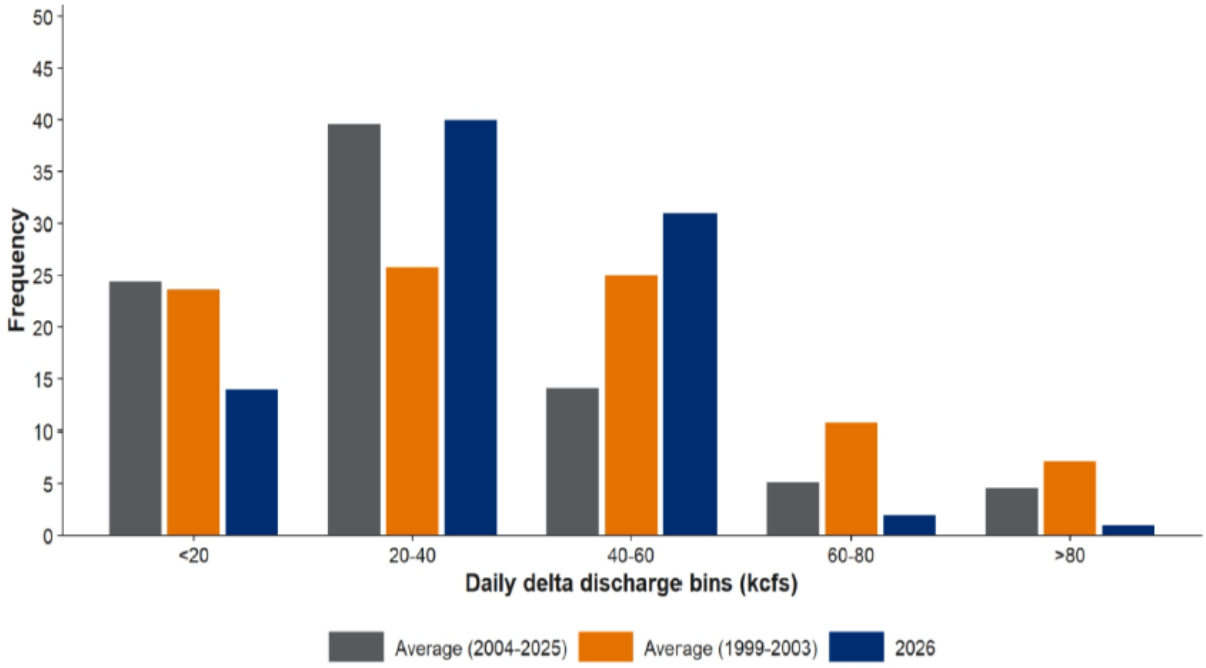


The following figure shows the average 2001-2025 and 2026 flows at Priest Rapids Dam during the emergence and rearing protection periods. Gabe said this figure shows that 2026 flows up to early May

were considerably higher than the previous 5-year mean flows. During May, 2026 flows were similar to the 5-year mean flows.



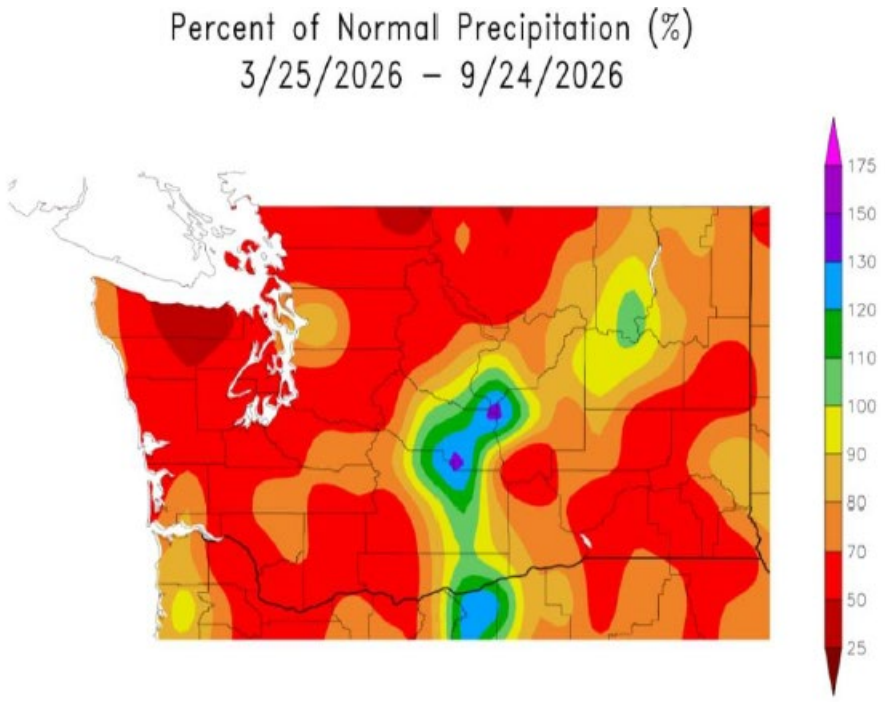
Gabe said the higher flows in 2026 resulted in more variability in the mid-daily discharge bins (as shown in the following figure). He said this is normal and close to average, but there was less variability in both the low and high flow delta bins this year.



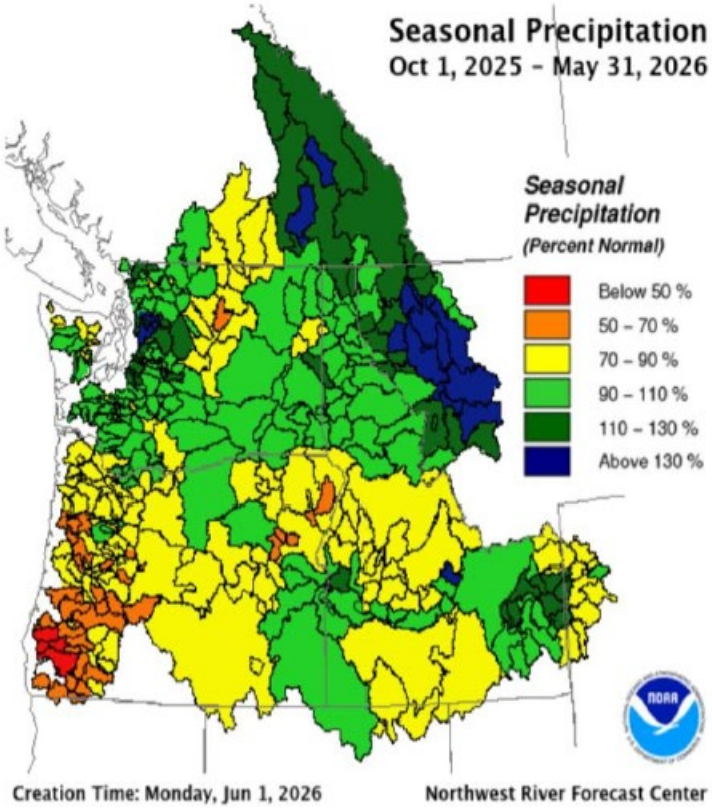
Gabe said CJAD-2 weekends took place in late-March through April, and the required weekend minimums were met. The table below shows the difference between the weekend minimum constraint and the minimum weekend outflow from Priest Rapids Dam. The differences shown in the last column should be positive. All weekend constraints were met.

Weekend of CJAD II Minimum Flow Constraint	Weekend Minimum Constraint (kcfs)	Minimum Weekend Outflow from Priest Rapids Dam (kcfs)	Difference Between Constraint and Outflow (kcfs)
March 28-29	130.6	141.4	10.8
April 4-5	117.2	118.1	0.9
April 11-12	103.4	107.4	4.0
April 18-19	110.9	112.2	1.3

For this year, Gabe noted that the percentage of normal precipitation was quite high within the project area but was very low around the project area (see figure below).

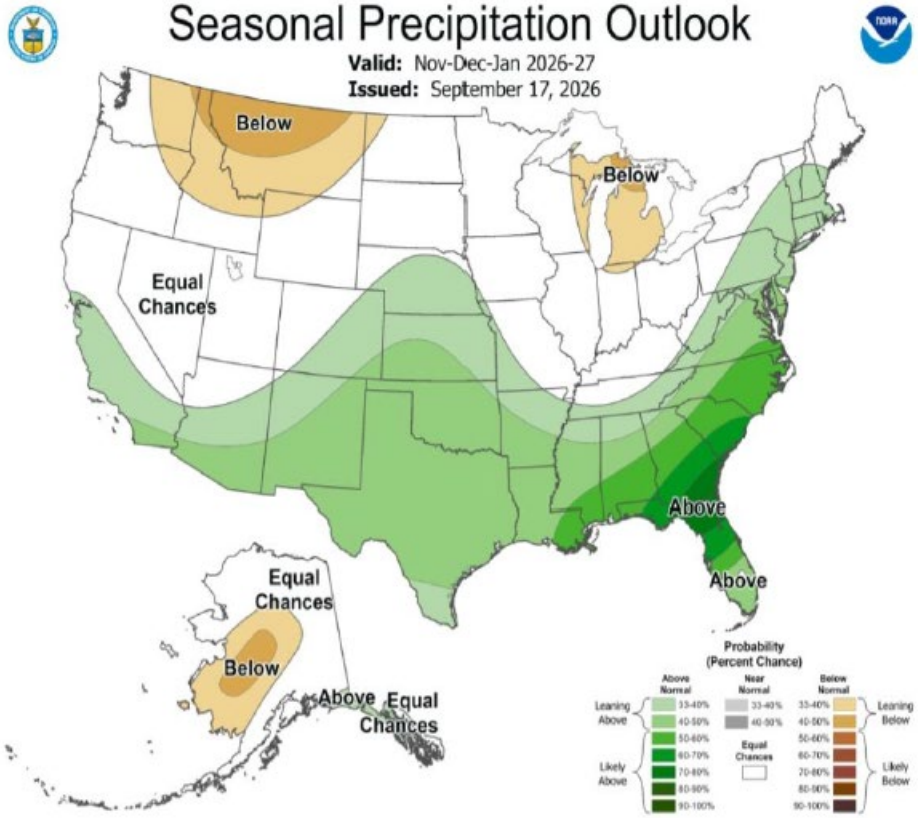


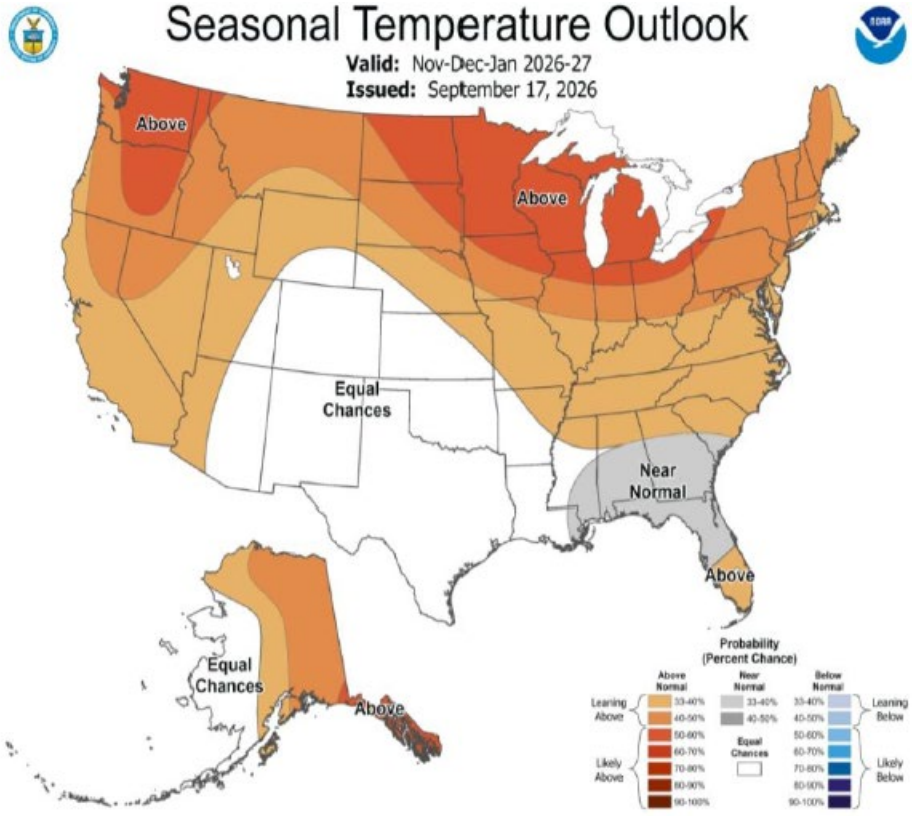
In the following figure, Gabe pointed out that seasonal precipitation was well above normal in the northern Columbia River basin (i.e., in Canada, northern Idaho, and northwestern Montana) but low in the southern basin.



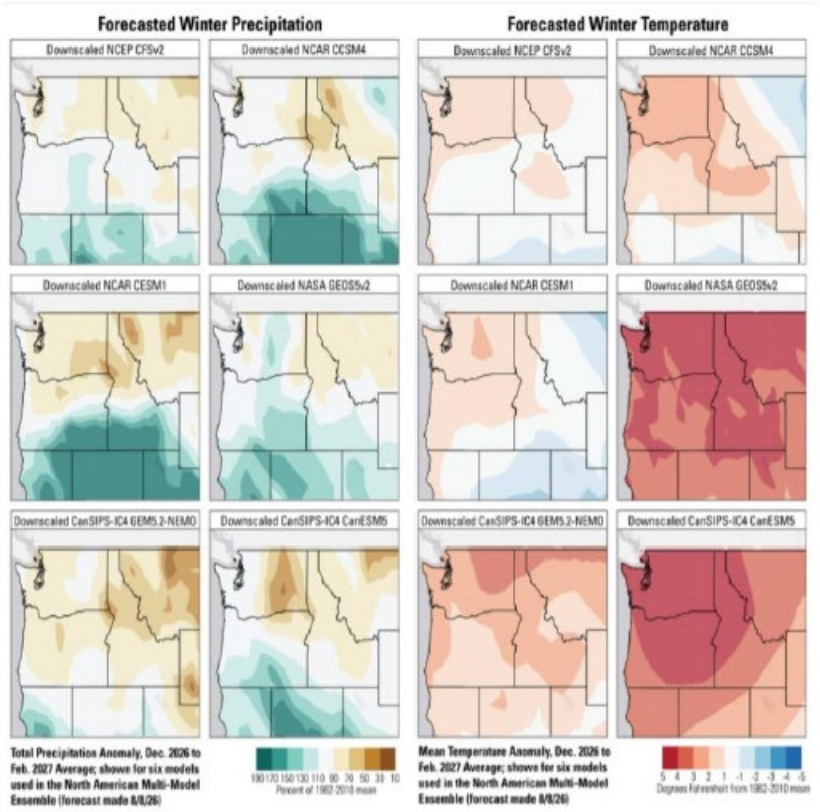
Long-Range Forecast

Next, Gabe described the seasonal precipitation and temperature outlook for the Pacific Northwest (see figures below). Eastern Washington can expect normal to below normal precipitation and above normal temperatures throughout the rest of 2026.


Seasonal Precipitation Outlook
Valid: Nov-Dec-Jan 2026-27
Issued: September 17, 2026
Below
Below
Equal Chances
Above
Above
Equal Chances
Below
Above
Equal Chances
Probability (Percent Chance)
Above Normal
Near Normal
Below Normal
Leaning Above
Likely Above
Equal Chances
Leaning Below
Likely Below
33-40%
40-50%
50-60%
60-70%
70-80%
80-90%
90-100%


Seasonal Temperature Outlook
Valid: Nov-Dec-Jan 2026-27
Issued: September 17, 2026
Above
Above
Equal Chances
Near Normal
Above
Equal Chances
Above
Probability (Percent Chance)
Above Normal
Near Normal
Below Normal
Leaning Above
Likely Above
Equal Chances
Leaning Below
Likely Below
33-40%
40-50%
50-60%
60-70%
70-80%
80-90%
90-100%

Because climatologists are predicting a Super El Niño this year, Gabe shared results from six different climate models used by NOAA (see following figure). These models also forecast warmer temperatures and lower precipitation in the Pacific Northwest.



Gabe concluded by stating that spawning and hatching started later than normal, and emergence and rearing ended earlier than normal. All this was driven by warmer water temperatures that resulted in faster developmental rates. He added that predicting biological checkpoints is complicated by non-stationary environmental conditions. To address this, they modified their modeling approach, which resulted in improved predictions and more favorable program implementation and efficiency. In addition, flows were above average during the protection period despite local drought conditions. Lastly, the long-range outlook predicts drier and warmer than average winter conditions.

Gabe will continue to provide updates on the HRFCPPA Periods and Flow Constraints. He said the 2025-2026 HRFCPPA Report should be available for a 30-day review soon.

Reverse Load Factoring and 2026 Vernita Bar Surveys – Gabe Temple reported that reverse load factoring (RLF) will begin on 15 October 2026. He said daytime flow targets are generally 55-70 kcfs; however, low river flows may create challenges like they did during the past few years. Therefore, given recent low flow conditions, initial daytime flows will begin around 40-50 kcfs to preserve RLF, with increases to 55-70 kcfs in November when higher flows are released from Grand Coulee Dam to support Chum Salmon spawning in the lower river.

Gabe noted that Vernita Bar spawning ground surveys are planned for 18 October, 25 October, and 1 November (all Sundays). The final survey for the season is planned for 22 November and, if necessary, 29 November.

Run Projection and Management Update for 2026 – Todd Miller shared the following table, which provides forecast returns by origin to the Hanford Reach, Priest Rapids Hatchery, and Ringold Springs Hatchery in 2026. Todd said the expected return of natural-origin fish to the Reach is about 27,138 fall Chinook Salmon, which is greater than the 5-year average. He added that 22,669 fish are expected back to Priest Rapids Hatchery, 8,340 to Ringold Springs Hatchery, and 58,147 hatchery and natural-origin fish are expected back to the Reach.

2026 URB Forecasted Returns to the Hanford Reach

2026 URB Fall Chinook Returns to the Hanford Reach by Origin

Hanford Reach Natural Origin Fall Chinook					
Age	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	Adult
Return	5,548	17,244	4,346	0	27,138

Priest Rapids Hatchery Origin Fall Chinook					
Age	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	Adult
Return	6,071	15,291	1,307	0	22,669

Ringold Springs Hatchery Origin Fall Chinook					
Age	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	Adult
Return	2,358	5,749	233	0	8,340

Hanford Reach Fall Chinook (natural + hatchery)					
Age	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	Adult
Return	13,977	38,284	5,886	0	58,147

Estimated return to escapement (stream), sport fishery, and hatcheries

Adult return estimates do not include strays except the combined totals

2026 Adult Fall Chinook Returns to the Hanford Reach by Location

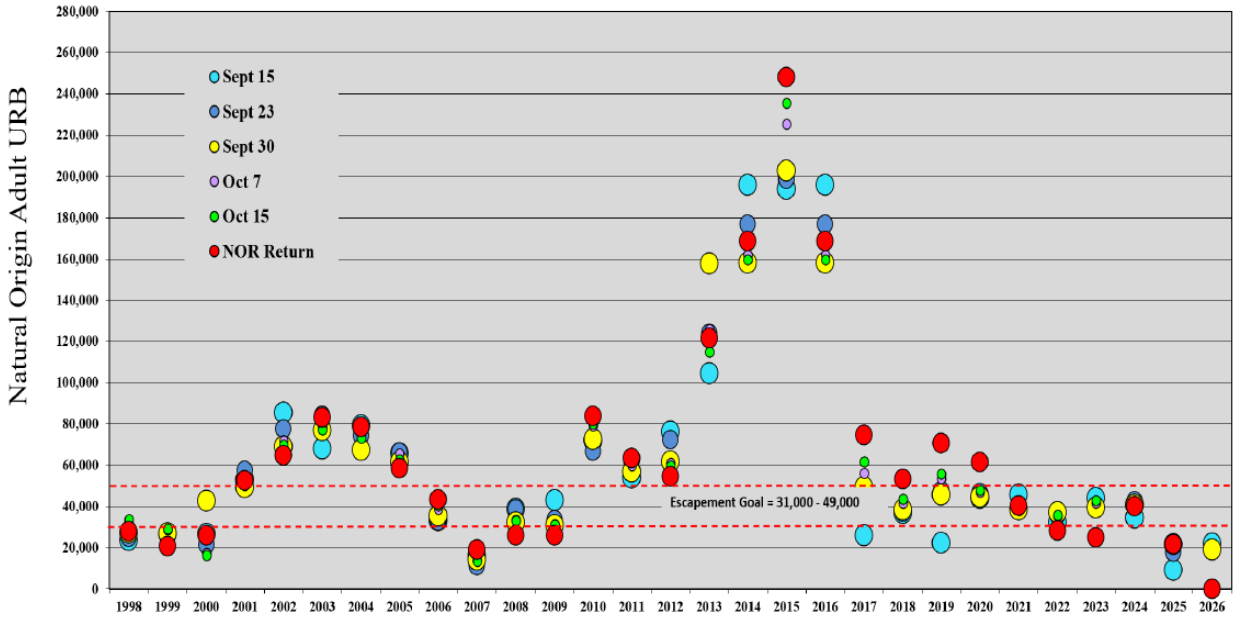
Recent 5-year Mean			
Stream	Sport Fishery	Priest Rapids	Ringold Springs
75.4%	20.8%	3.7%	0.0%
20,462	5,645	1,004	0

Priest Rapids	Stream	Sport Fishery	Ringold Springs
75.7%	17.0%	7.3%	0.1%
17,160	3,854	1,655	23

Ringold Springs	Stream	Sport Fishery	Priest Rapids
62.0%	20.2%	8.2%	7.1%
5,171	1,685	684	592

Recent 5-year Mean			
Escapement	Sport Fishery	Priest Rapids	Ringold Springs
26,000	7,983	18,757	5,193

Todd presented the following figure, which shows forecasted and actual natural-origin fall Chinook Salmon returns (actual returns are the red dots) since 1998. Currently, the total natural-origin return in 2026 is projected to fall below the escapement goal of 31,000 fish. This means they initially set the harvest limit to one fish. He said they set the harvest limit to one fish when the return is below 36,000 natural-origin fish.



Based on a reevaluation of the fish in September, on 21 September, WDFW revised the harvest on fall Chinook Salmon (see slide below). This action closed retention of wild (unmarked) adult fall Chinook Salmon in the Hanford Reach effective on 23 September.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Sept. 21, 2026

Hanford Reach fall Chinook fishery update
Action: Closes retention of wild (unmarked) adult Chinook in the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River beginning Sept. 23, 2026.
Effective dates: Sept. 23-Dec. 31, 2026 (see specific dates below).
Species affected: Chinook salmon.

Locations, dates, and rules:
From the Highway 395 Bridge at Pasco to the Old Hanford Townsite Powerline Crossing (Catch Record Card (CRC) areas 534 and 535):

- Sept. 23-Dec. 31:
  - Daily limit six, including no more than one adult. Release wild Chinook.

From the Old Hanford Townsite Powerline Crossing to 650 feet below the fish ladder at Priest Rapids Dam (CRC 536):

- Sept. 23-Oct. 15:
  - Daily limit six, including no more than one adult. Release wild Chinook.

Reason for action: WDFW has reviewed in-season estimates of run size and current harvest of unmarked fall Chinook salmon and associated impacts to natural-origin fish from recreational fisheries. Based on current harvest levels, it is necessary to shift to a mark-selective fishery for adult Chinook to extend opportunity to harvest hatchery fish while minimizing impacts on natural-origin fish.

Todd said recently the U.S. v Oregon Technical Advisory Committee revised the Upper Columbia River Bright abundance down to 231,700 fall Chinook Salmon (see slide below).

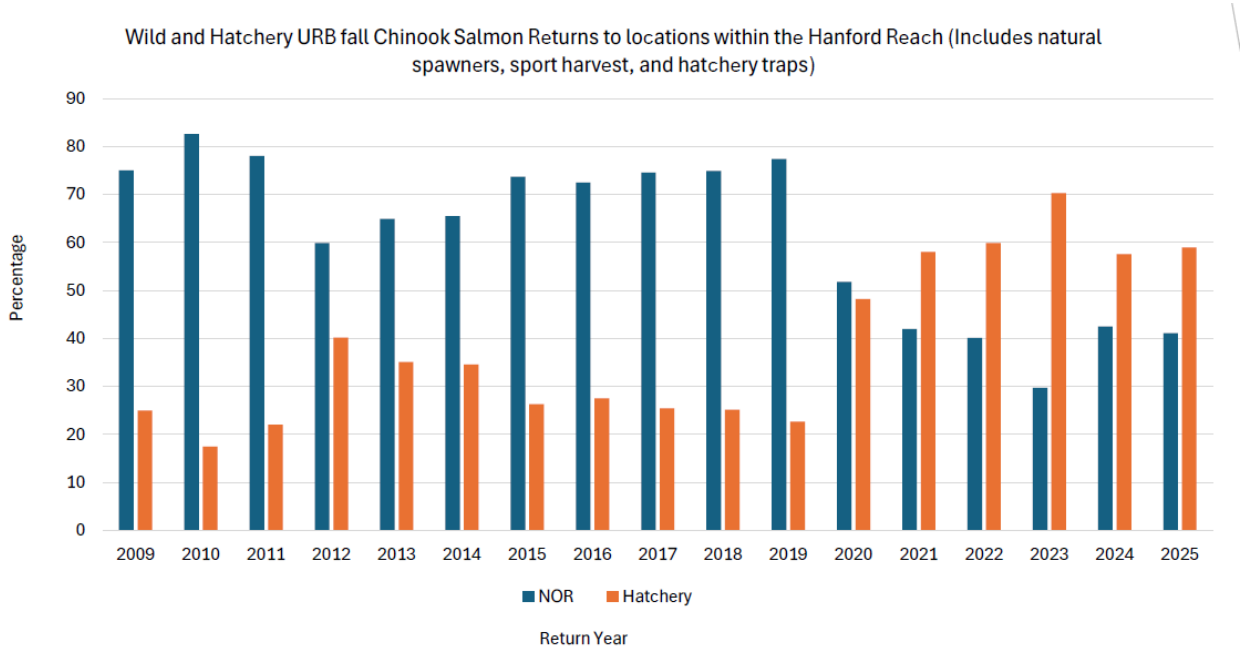
The U.S. vs Oregon Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met on September 28, 2026 to review and discuss information relative to the upriver A-/B-Index summer steelhead and upriver fall Chinook returns including Bonneville Dam passage information and outputs from passage projection models. In addition to reviewing run size information, TAC also discussed ongoing fall fisheries.

Based on the passage to date and assumptions of passage timing, TAC updated the total expected steelhead return at Bonneville Dam to 56,900 fish (*vs 128k pre-season*). The tota includes 50,400 (*vs 87.9k*) total A-Index steelhead of which 17,400 are unclipped fish, and 6,500 (*vs. 40.1k*) total B-Index steelhead of which 1,500 are unclipped fish.

Based on passage to date, assumptions of passage timing at Bonneville Dam, and harvest downstream of Bonneville Dam, TAC expects the total return of adult-aged fall Chinook to be 605,900 fish (*vs. 636.5k*) at the Columbia River mouth. The total includes 231,700 URB (*vs. 270.9k*), 99,300 PUB (*vs. 102.2k*), and 135,300 BPH (*vs. 123.8k*) fall Chinook.

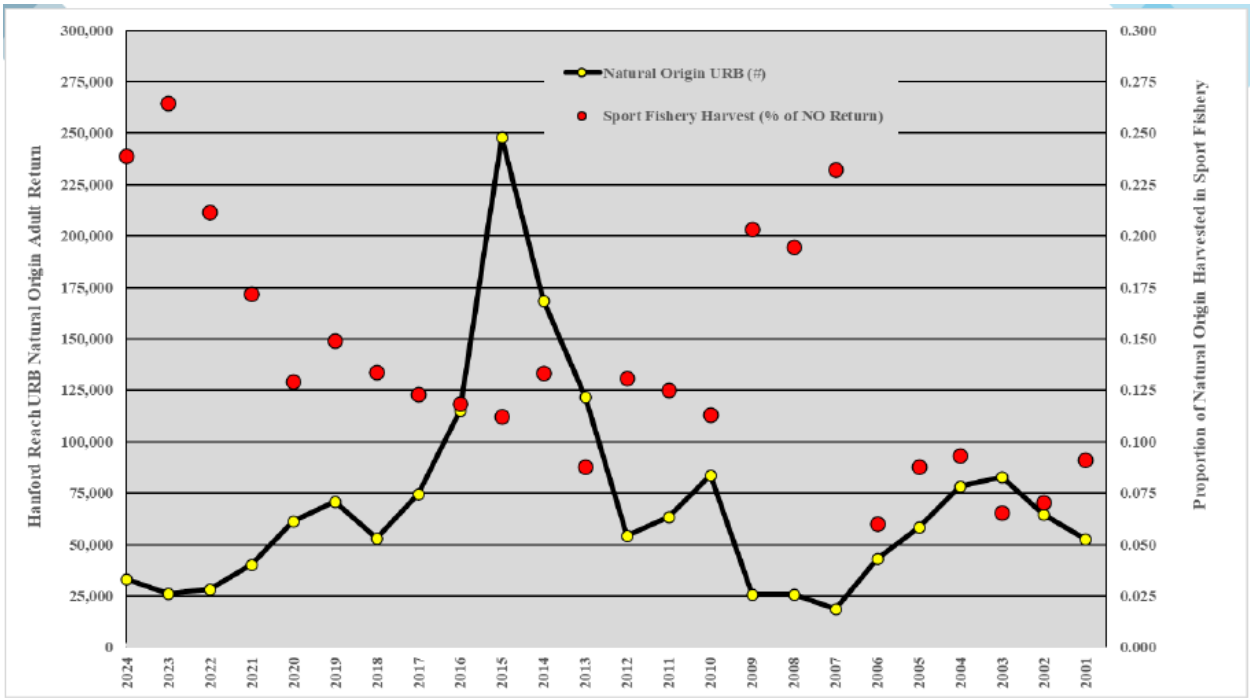
TAC will continue to monitor and assess the upriver A-/B-Index summer steelhead, upriver fall Chinook, and upriver coho returns during the fall management period and will provide updates as appropriate. TAC is scheduled to meet again on Monday, October 5.

Todd then noted that the proportion of natural-origin fall Chinook Salmon since 2019 continues to remain low, while the proportion of hatchery-origin fish remains high (see figure below;). He is not sure why that is, but it could be related to several things, which have been discussed by the FCWG in the past.

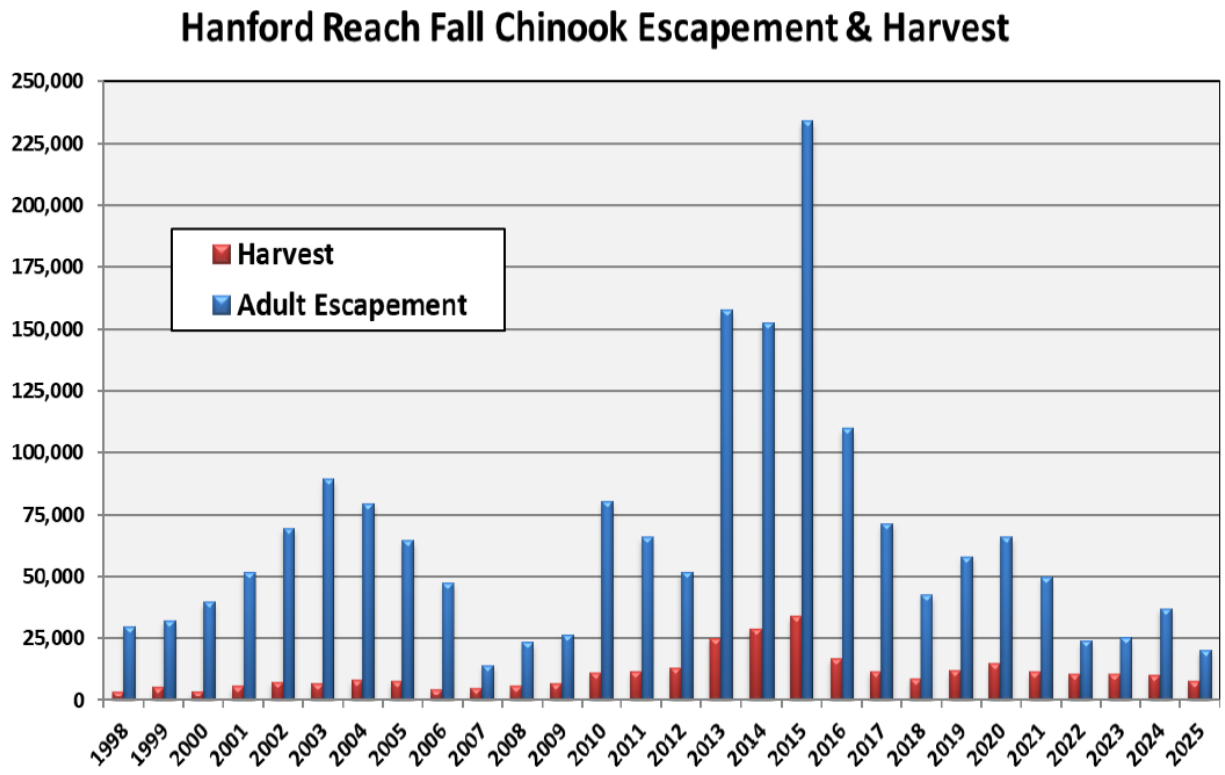


In the following figure (note the scale on the X-axis goes from 2025 to 2001 from left to right), Todd showed the natural-origin return to the Hanford Reach and the proportion of natural-origin fish harvested in the sport fishery over time (2001-2025). He noted that the lower the escapement to the

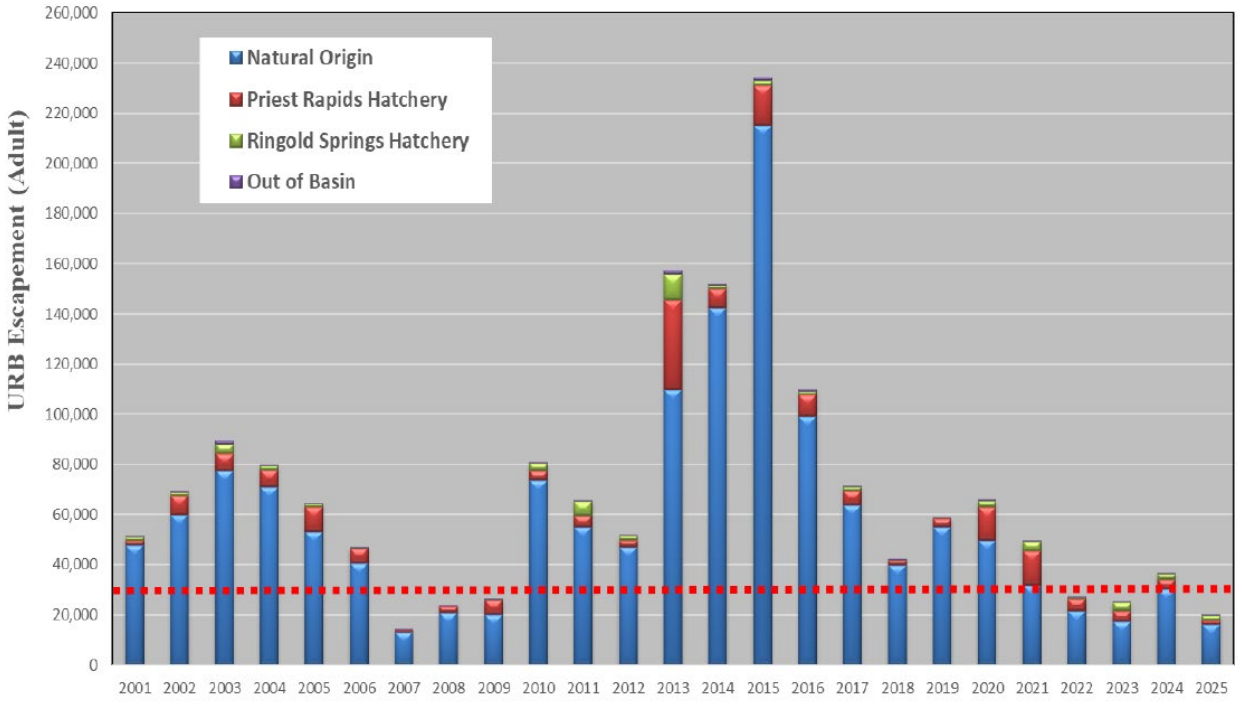
Reach, the higher the proportion of natural-origin fish harvested. This is in part because natural-origin fish are holding in certain areas longer than hatchery-origin fish, and fishermen know these areas and target these areas. Because hatchery-origin fish spend less time in these areas than natural-origin fish, harvest can affect the natural-origin fish differentially.



Todd then identified the escapement and number of fish harvested. He noted that recent returns are similar to the 2007-2009 returns. He also pointed out that the number harvested since 2016 has been relatively static.



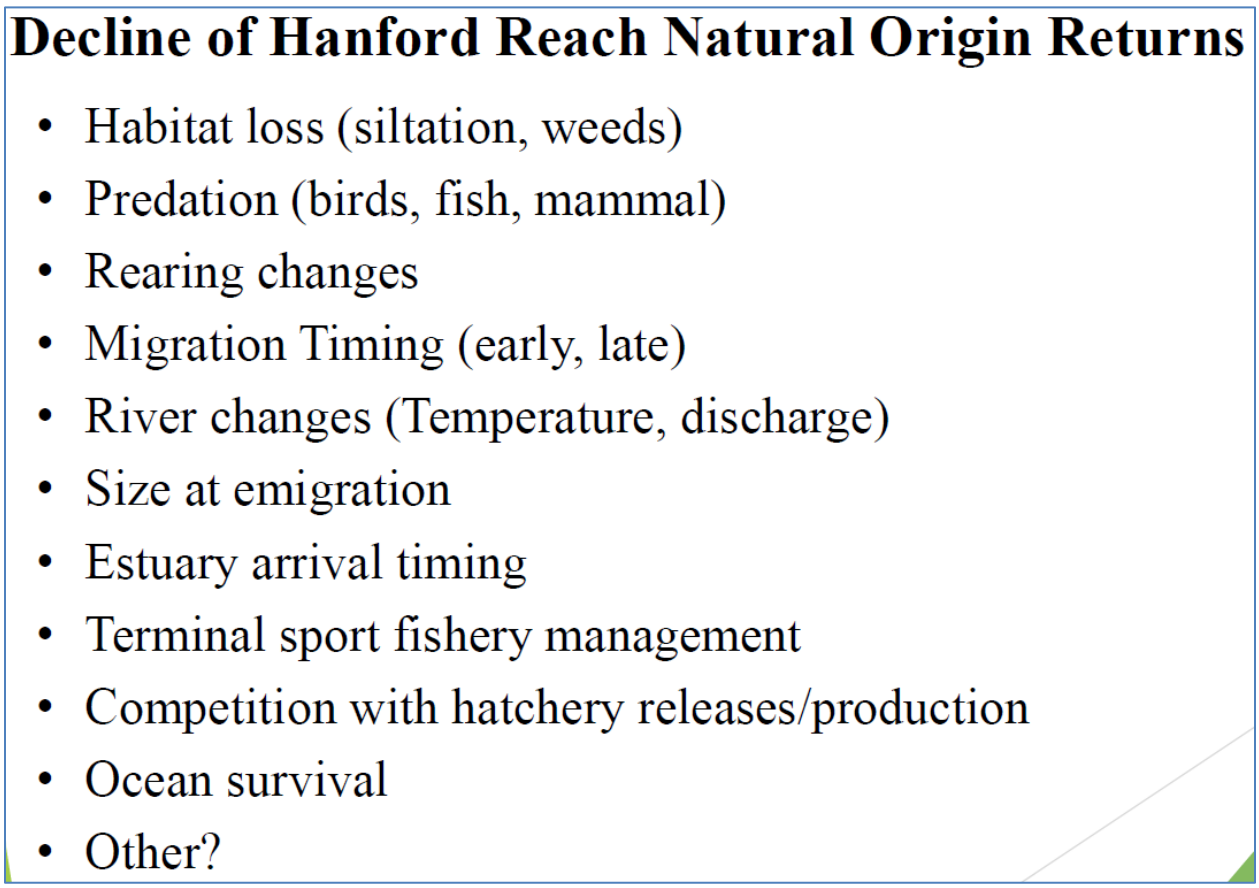
Todd presented the following figure, which shows the breakdown of adult returns to the Upper River Bright (URB) population. The figure also shows the decline in natural-origin-adult returns to the Reach. Todd reiterated that the natural-origin escapement during the last few years is similar to the low returns in 2007-2009. He also indicated that the return in 2025 was below the escapement goal of 31,000 fall Chinook Salmon (dashed red line in the figure below). Ideally, WDFW would like the escapement to be between 40,000 to 45,000 natural-origin fish.



Todd described the origin of the escapement on the Reach (see Table below). He identified the proportion of the escapement that was made up of hatchery-origin fish and noted the source of the hatchery-origin fish (e.g., Priest Rapids, Ringold Springs, and out-of-basin hatchery fish). Generally, most of the hatchery-origin fish in the escapement come from the Priest Rapids Hatchery.

Origin of Escapement (Adult + Jack)						
Year	NORs	pHOS	% Hatchery Origin			
			Combined	PRH	RSRF	OOB
2001	0.934	0.066	0.066	0.040	0.020	0.006
2002	0.875	0.125	0.125	0.096	0.022	0.007
2003	0.883	0.117	0.117	0.066	0.037	0.014
2004	0.901	0.099	0.099	0.079	0.019	0.001
2005	0.844	0.156	0.156	0.139	0.016	0.002
2006	0.876	0.124	0.124	0.114	0.006	0.004
2007	0.935	0.065	0.065	0.062	0.000	0.003
2008	0.913	0.087	0.087	0.085	0.000	0.002
2009	0.826	0.174	0.174	0.158	0.009	0.007
2010	0.924	0.076	0.076	0.042	0.033	0.001
2011	0.849	0.151	0.151	0.067	0.079	0.005
2012	0.882	0.118	0.118	0.070	0.042	0.006
2013	0.713	0.287	0.287	0.215	0.059	0.013
2014	0.931	0.069	0.069	0.051	0.013	0.005
2015	0.925	0.075	0.075	0.064	0.007	0.004
2016	0.903	0.097	0.097	0.077	0.012	0.007
2017	0.896	0.104	0.104	0.081	0.021	0.003
2018	0.913	0.087	0.087	0.076	0.003	0.009
2019	0.940	0.060	0.060	0.051	0.005	0.004
2020	0.766	0.234	0.234	0.192	0.034	0.009
2021	0.708	0.292	0.292	0.229	0.060	0.003
2022	0.846	0.154	0.154	0.128	0.016	0.011
2023	0.758	0.292	0.292	0.229	0.060	0.003
2024	0.771	0.229	0.229	0.084	0.128	0.017
2025	0.866	0.134	0.134	0.049	0.069	0.016

Lastly, in the following slide, Todd identified some of the factors that may be contributing to the decline in natural-origin fall Chinook Salmon to the Reach.



V. Hatchery Activities

2025 Priest Rapids Hatchery M&E Report – Gabe Temple reported that Stacy Remple is working on the draft 2025 Priest Rapids Hatchery M&E Report. She is moving data tables to an appendix and generating more figures within the main body of the report to show trends more clearly. She should have a draft completed soon for internal review. Once the 2025 draft M&E report is complete, Gabe will send the draft report to Tracy Hillman, who will then provide it to the FCWG for a 30-day review.

Brood Year 2026 Updates – Gabe Temple reported, based on notes from Stacy, that they opened the volunteer trap on 7 September and handled and hauled the first fish from the trap on 8 September. As of the end of September, they have collected just over 12,000 fall Chinook Salmon at the trap. That is 1.5 times greater than the number collected at the trap last year at this time. Recall that last year fish were delayed because of the high water temperatures.

Monitoring and evaluation staff are sampling every fish for CWTs and every 10th surplused fish or mortality for demographic information (biological sampling).

Hatchery staff have ponded about 1,400 adults for the Grant PUD program and around 1,500 for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers program.

Lastly, Gabe reported that the ABC fishery, which is used to help collect natural-origin fish for the Priest Rapids Hatchery program, is unlikely to happen this year. As a result, Priest Rapids Hatchery staff are adjusting their broodstock collection number to target up to 600 natural-origin fish (unmarked fish) from the volunteer trap. The intent is to achieve the proportionate natural influence (PNI) goal.

VI. Regional Updates

Jeff Fryer reported that this year, he and his crew PIT tagged 10,000 juvenile fall Chinook Salmon on the Reach. They also collected genetic samples from about 8,000 fish. Early results from PIT tagging suggest that survival from release to McNary Dam increased to 20% (it was 10% last year). Jeff said they plan to do PIT tagging again in 2027 but likely not at the same site (USFWS Parking Lot 7). It is unlikely they will tag fish with CWTs next year. Jeff also noted that they may try to secure funding to purchase an additional 10,000 PIT tags.

Tracy Hillman asked about the status of the Assessment of Juvenile Chinook Salmon Habitat Use and Productivity in Hanford Reach study conducted by CRITFC. Jeff Fryer indicated that Casey Justice is the lead on that study and we would need to contract Casey for an update. Jeff said the study will continue in 2027.

VII. Adjourn

With no additional business to discuss, Tracy Hillman adjourned the meeting at 11:00 am.

VIII. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the FCWG will be on Monday, 3 May 2027.