



Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee Meeting

In person at Douglas PUD and Webex
Tuesday, June 27, 2023
9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

PRCC Representatives and Alternatives

Curt Dotson, Tom Dresser (Alt), GPUD
Kirk Truscott, Casey Baldwin (Alt), CTCR
Tom Lorz, CTUIR
Scott Carlon, Justin Yeager (Alt), NMFS

Jim Craig, Bill Gale (Alt) USFWS
Chad Jackson, Andrew Murdoch (Alt) WDFW
Keely Murdoch, Brandon Rogers (Alt), YN

Meeting Attendees

Larissa Rohrbach, Anchor QEA
Bryan Nordlund, Facilitator (Online)
Curt Dotson, GPUD
Tom Dresser, GPUD (Online)
Kirk Truscott, CTCR

Scott Carlon, NMFS
Jim Craig, USFWS
Bill Gale, USFWS
Chad Jackson, WDFW
Keely Murdoch, YN

Action Items

- B. Nordlund will contact Tom Lorz regarding Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation input to Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee (PRCC) processes.

Review Items

- The *Draft Study Plan for the Estimation of Juvenile Yearling Chinook, Sockeye and Steelhead Survival through the Priest Rapids Project in 2025–2027*, version 4.0 modified May 2023, is available for review with written comments due to C. Dotson by July 15.

Decisions and Approvals

- None.

I. Welcome, Announcements and Agenda Review

- No changes to the agenda were requested, and the PRCC approved the agenda.

II. Meeting Minutes Status

- Draft May 23 meeting minutes were distributed on June 6. No comments or revisions were received. All parties that were present in that meeting approved the minutes; C. Jackson abstained from approving because he did not attend.

III. Action Items Review

- B. Nordlund will follow up with C. Jackson for final approval of March 21 and April 25 PRCC meeting minutes.
 - *C. Jackson approved the March 21 and April 25 minutes.*

IV. Steelhead Fallback – Ongoing Coordination and Discussion

C. Jackson said that during the Habitat Conservation Plan Coordinating Committee (HCP-CC) meetings this afternoon, some alternate analysis of fallback success will be provided from Chelan PUD and Douglas PUD, and he said he will keep the PRCC apprised of progress on this topic in the future, as needed.

V. 2023 Fish Passage Operations Report

Fish passage operations have started their 2023 season, summarized in the following subsections.

Fish Ladder Inspections

K. Murdoch said she met with Gabe Shear (Fish Passage Center [FPC]) and Mike Clement (Grant PUD) on May 31, as well as a couple of other people, to walk through the fish passage inspection protocols. This month, the inspection will be done electronically, an approach that was started by Tom Skiles with electronic printouts when the facility could not be accessed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since access has been allowed again, inspections have been done with a combination of in-person visits and electronic printouts. K. Murdoch said she is still determining how often in-person visits are necessary.

B. Nordlund said when he was a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries representative and did the inspections, he found it useful to visit the site at least monthly; it was an opportunity to see operations in person and ask questions of the operators.

Fish Spill Updates

C. Dotson said the end date for juvenile salmonid spring outmigration spill was June 15. The juvenile salmonid summer outmigration spill then started on June 15.

On June 21, the Priest Rapids Fish Passage Bypass Facility was put on seal to allow mechanics crews to replace the cable of the boat restricted zone (BRZ). There were safety concerns around working within the BRZ because the fish bypass facility is a

surface spill facility. The facility was on seal from 9:34 a.m. to 12:43 p.m. B. Nordlund asked whether spill committee representatives were involved. C. Dotson said a decision was made in real time for the work to go ahead before informing the spill committee for safety, but that he informed the other PRCC Spill Committee representatives (S. Carlon and K. Truscott) that same day.

C. Dotson said that, in a separate event at Wanapum Dam (WAN), turbines went out of fish mode for about 20 seconds due to low flow through the turbines; one of the turbines was taken offline, and its flow was distributed to the rest of the running turbines. This affected two units (W-8 and W-9). S. Carlon asked how long it takes for the WAN top spill gate to close. C. Dotson answered that the gate moves approximately 1 foot every 90 seconds.

No other questions or concerns were shared on these variances to spill protocols.

Fish Counts for 2023

C. Dotson said that at this time, there is roughly a 4-day lag from Grant PUD's contractor in reporting ladder counts relative to the passage date.

C. Dotson said that there has not been the same problems with the timing and duration of crowder openings this year compared to those observed last year.

K. Truscott noted that for adult Sockeye Salmon, there is a substantial difference in fish counts between WAN and Rock Island Dam (RIS) because Sockeye Salmon seem to pass through quickly in large groups; there could be a large discrepancy in the counts between the two dams with a 4-day lag in reporting simply because many Sockeye Salmon may have passed during that 4-day period. He noted that perhaps it depends how many Sockeye Salmon are passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagged to be able to identify them electronically or whether the fish identification is visual. K. Truscott said that, based on the counts report on the FPC website, the count at Priest Rapids Dam is current through June 21, with a count of about 4,400 Sockeye Salmon. The count at RIS is current through June 25, with a count of about 6,000 Sockeye Salmon. The last count on the June 25 was 1,500 fish within a day. On June 26, at Bonneville Dam, they counted 16,722 Sockeye Salmon in a day, so there has been a big increase in just in the last day or two. C. Dotson agreed that toward the end of the season, as numbers are reported more completely, this difference between counting sites will resolve.

K. Murdoch said that there are PIT-tagged Sockeye Salmon coming out the Canadian Okanagan hatchery program. C. Jackson said that there are some adults that are also tagged at Bonneville Dam. K. Murdoch said those PIT-tag records could be reviewed after the run if there are still a discrepancy.

K. Truscott said the spring Chinook Salmon counts were fairly similar between counting sites last year; it was counts of summer Chinook Salmon, Sockeye Salmon, and Coho Salmon later in the season that showed major discrepancies between dam counts.

The following are fish counts reported as of June 27, 2023:

Project	Spring Chinook Salmon (Adult + Jack; end June 15)	Summer Chinook Salmon	Fall Chinook Salmon	Sockeye Salmon	Coho Salmon	Steelhead
Priest Rapids (as of June 21)	16,956	7,217	0	4,414	0	61
Wanapum (as of June 21)	17,235	5,320	0	2,040	4	75
Rock Island (as of June 25)	17,617	7,274	0	5,971	2	146

Updates

VI. Review of Outstanding No Net Impact-Funded Projects

- **Lower Wenatchee Instream Flow Enhancement Project Phase II**
No update.
- **Northern Pike Removal (2022 to 2024).**
H. McLellan gave a virtual presentation in the May 23 meeting.
- **Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife PIT-Tag Detection Barge.**
Presentation forthcoming in summer 2023.
- **Quincy Northern Pikeminnow Derby (planned for May 12 to 14).**
C. Dotson said Grant PUD is awaiting the tally sheet from the event organizers. K. Truscott asked whether Grant PUD staff were present at the derby; T. Dresser confirmed that no Grant PUD staff were present.
- **2023 Real Time Research, Inc. (RTR), Avian Predation Study.**
C. Dotson said the surveys have been done throughout the region and gave an update based on a report for the week of June 19 through 25.
 - The typical nesting season for Caspian terns is wrapping up. There are three different locations in the Columbia Basin where tern chicks are in fledgling stage at the following locations: Goose Island on Banks Lake, Goose Island on Potholes, and Shoal Island on Lake Lenore.
 - Tagging at RIS has ceased with an estimated 98% of the juvenile steelhead run completed past the projects. The run was slightly earlier than previous years. All fish chosen for the tagged sample are PIT tagged; none are excluded due to condition or size. The last day of steelhead tagging for the study at RIS was June 12. There were 5,088 hatchery fish and 2,149 presumed-wild smolts that were PIT-tagged. There were an additional 1,058 recaptures that were also sampled for length and condition, resulting in 8,295 PIT-tagged juvenile steelhead for the 2023 analysis season.
 - On March 21, RTR gave a presentation on last year's results in a special meeting of the PRCC. The question was brought up regarding whether the

estimate that 18 to 20% of the steelhead population tagged at the Rock Island facility was of natural origin (wild) was accurate and whether this was solely based on presence of an adipose (ad) fin and body condition. Committee members had requested that RTR scan for code wire tags (CWTs) when PIT-tagging study fish. This year, RTR did scan for CWTs in all fish that they designated as wild, whether they are ad-present or absent, to avoid misidentifying ad-present hatchery-origin fish. Of the 2,151 smolts they suspected to be wild, after scanning for CWTs, they found only 2 CWTs out of the 2,151 smolts, suggesting that less than 0.1% of the smolts designated as wild had been misidentified. Hatchery fish were also scanned to confirm the CWT scanning was working well. Based on this year's observations, suspected wild fish were 26.5% of the run, which is the highest percentage since the start of tagging steelhead smolts for studies in 2008. T. Dresser asked what percent of the run was wild was last year. C. Dotson said 18.5%, and it has ranged from 18 to 20% in past years. K. Truscott asked what criteria were used to identify presumed-wild fish, whether the 2,151 presumed-wild fish represent all ad-present fish, and whether all the presumed-wild fish were scanned. C. Dotson confirmed presumed-wild fish were identified based on completely intact ad fins and no evidence of fin erosion.

- C. Dotson said that in the late 1990s, during an analysis by Hydroacoustic Technology Inc. (HTI), the juvenile smolt runs were often preceded by the birds by 2 to 3 days before the first tag detections occurred.
- B. Nordlund asked whether the birds on the colonies are the same that are observed foraging on the river. C. Dotson said that yes, that has been confirmed by satellite tagging and tracking of terns from the colonies by RTR as well as PIT tags found on the colonies.
- S. Carlon asked whether the water supply from above Lake Roosevelt has been below average. K. Truscott said the most recent forecast showed water supply would be about 85% of average from now onward. The average discharge at Chief Joseph Dam in May was about 126,000 cubic feet per second (cfs); now it is between 129,000 and 73,000 cfs. There may be a bit of an increase in flow above normal due to proportional draft at Arrow Lake in British Columbia (BC), so there may be an increase of about 30,000 to 40,000 cfs in June; it is uncertain whether that water will arrive in the anadromous zone below Grand Coulee Dam. The remaining 75% of treaty-allocated water, around 12,500 cfs from Canada will be released in July, then a small amount of water will be saved from the spring runoff for release in summer in BC reservoirs. It will be determined how that will be released depending on decisions of the Bonneville Power Administration and Canadian entities.

VII. Subcommittee Updates

Subcommittees that report up to the PRCC are the hatchery and habitat subcommittees convened under the Priest Rapids Salmon and Steelhead Settlement Agreement. The Fall Chinook Work Group and Priest Rapids Fish Forum have policy representatives convened under the Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification. All are signatories to the Fall Chinook Protection Act.

B. Nordlund has forwarded the subcommittee distributions received to date via email to PRCC members and alternates.

- Priest Rapids Fish Forum – met June 7, next meeting TBD.
- Habitat Subcommittee – no June meeting, next meeting July 13.
- Fall Chinook Work Group – next meeting October 3.
- Hatchery Subcommittee – next meeting July 19.

VIII. Policy Representatives Meeting

A Policy Representatives meeting will take place at the Wanapum Cultural Center on July 20, 2023. Overview presentations will be given on PRCC activities and subcommittee activities. Lunch will be provided.

B. Nordlund will email representatives to ask for confirmation of attendance.

IX. SOAs Discussed in 2023

SOA number	Key Words	Last Discussed	Status
2022-03	Fish Mode revision	January 24, 2023	Closed
2023-01	Sockeye Salmon Program	January 24, 2023	Closed
2022-02	Hatchery Production Objectives, 2024–2033	February 28, 2023	Closed

X. Next Meetings

The next PRCC meeting is scheduled for July 25 at 1:00 p.m. at Wanapum HB 103.

B. Nordlund asked how the PRCC should go forward lacking participation of CTUIR representative T. Lorz—whether Lorz should be asked for approval of meeting minutes or other documents. K. Truscott suggested that B. Nordlund keep him apprised of important documents for review to ensure he has an opportunity to review as needed.

B. Nordlund asked C. Dotson to present an overview of the survival study plan later this year for the PRCC.

T. Dresser thanked Jim Craig for his service to the PRCC, acknowledging his balanced approach and diligence over the years.