



Grant County
PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT
Excellence in Service and Leadership

Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee

FINAL MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 23, 2016

9:00 am

CONFERENCE CALL

PRCC REPRESENTATIVES

Scott Carlon, Justin Yeager (Alt), NMFS

Bob Rose, YN

Jeff Korth, C. Andonaegui (Alt), P. Verhey (Alt) WDFW

Curt Dotson, Tom Dresser (Alt), GCPUD

Denny Rohr, D. Rohr & Assoc, Facilitator

Jim Craig, USFWS

Kirk Truscott, CCT

Tom Skiles, CTUIR

Orlene Hahn, GCPUD, Executive Assistant

PRCC CONFERENCE CALL ATTENDEES

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Curt Dotson, GCPUD

Denny Rohr, D. Rohr & Assoc, Facilitator

Tom Dresser (Alt) GCPUD

Jim Craig, USFWS

Kirk Truscott, CCT

Tom Skiles, CTUIR

Orlene Hahn, GCPUD, Executive Assistant

Action Items from February 24, 2016 PRCC Meeting:

1. **Hanford Reach and Protection Flows** (C. Dotson) – Dotson to forward email from Peter Graf to the Committee with the report which he did right after the meeting ended via email to the Committee. **COMPLETED**

FINAL MEETING MINUTES

I. Welcome and Introductions

- II. **Agenda Review** (D. Rohr) – Dotson added Agrilaser-Autonomic (Green Laser) for Caspian Tern Deterrent (VII below).

III. Meeting Minutes Approval (D. Rohr)

- A. Affirmation of Email Approval for January 27, 2016 meeting minutes **APPROVED**
- B. Approval of February 24, 2016 meeting minutes **APPROVED**

- IV. **Action Items Review from February 24, 2016 meeting** (D. Rohr) – See above

- V. **2016 Spill Representatives** (C. Dotson) – Jim Craig will act as the Agency representative, Kirk Truscott will act as the Tribal representative and Curt Dotson will represent Grant PUD.

- VI. Review of Logistics of May 25, 2016 PRCC Meeting at Wanapum Dam** – The main meeting will be at Wanapum Dam at the new Hydro Office Building (HOB) in Room 118 starting at 9:00 a.m. The Committee was asked to think about what they are wanting to look at i.e. tour Fishtown, take a tour of the new visitor center, tour things at PR dam, etc. Lunch will be provided at the HOB. Aaron Penvose and/or Lisa Pelly (Trout Unlimited) is scheduled to come and discuss the Methow Valley Irrigation District (MVID) Lower Wenatchee Instream Flow Enhancement Project Phase II. Carlon stated he will not be at this meeting.
- VII. NNI Funding Proposal - Agrilaser-Autonomic (Green Laser) for Caspian Tern Deterrent (C. Dotson)** - The goal of this project is to reduce/deter the number of Caspian terns nesting on the Caspian tern colony located on Twinning Island in Banks Lake. Through tag recoveries, it has been demonstrated that Caspian terns are the primary avian predator of out-migrating steelhead smolts in the Columbia River and very much so in the Priest Rapids Project. It is for this reason dissuasion of the Caspian tern nesting colony on Goose Island (Potholes Reservoir) started in 2014 and continued in 2015. Dissuasion of the Crescent Island (McNary Dam reservoir) started in 2015. During that same time frame, Twinning Island's Caspian tern colony increased from less than 10 nest (2005) to 67 nest in 2014 and 64 nest in 2015. Also, the Caspian tern colony at the Blalock Islands (John Day Dam reservoir) saw a 10-fold increase in breeding pairs from 2014 to 677 nest in 2015 – a big part of this increase coming from the terns pushed off of Crescent Island, combined with a lower than normal McNary reservoir water elevation that provided additional tern nesting habitat. The Agrilaser is solar powered and programed to “shoot” a green laser dot within a specified x/y-coordinate range, to scare the birds from the colony and prevent them from settling down and nesting. Once programed, the laser unit is self-contained to haze terns completely on its own. Agrilaser-Autonomic unit costs \$10,500. This funding request also has included costs of shipping the laser unit and materials to set the unit up on Twinning Island. This proposal is to help out the Federal group who does not have the funds in their budget at this time. The Committee asked questions about the cost effectiveness of this item versus how it was done in the past on Goose Island (i.e. concrete blocks with rope and flagging). The Agrilaser would seem to be more cost effective than how Goose Island was done. There were also questions raised about theft and vandalism and protecting the device. The Committee discussed several ideas. There were questions about the landscape on Twinning which is fairly open. There are no big boulders or rocks, which could possibly block the green laser dot from reaching the tern nesting grounds. There is some vegetation i.e. sage brush on the peripheral. It is flatter than Goose Island. The question was asked about taking out an insurance policy through the NNI to cover for theft and vandalism. Dresser said he was certain it would be covered by existing Grant PUD insurance policies. The Committee asked if this scenario was run through NEPA. Denny stated that funding would come from the NNI fund for the requested \$17,000. We need to move quickly on this as birds are moving in soon for this year's nesting season. Dotson noted that under the 200 (tern) egg take permit we could go in and setup but if there are other species of birds actively nesting then that limits when to go in and get it setup. The Committee approved subject to final approval by Korth at the end of next week (April 1, 2016). Korth requested more time to review the proposal. Dotson will continue to work a parallel path as if it is approved noting it is subject to approval from Korth.
- VIII. Updates**
- A. Avian Predation Activities (C. Dotson)** – the pit tagging of smolts done by RTR will start in the first week of April. Things are proceeding. We do have a schedule for an Inland Avian working group meeting in mid-April. The draft avian report regarding satellite birds is out. Rohr will send out the report again to the Committee.
- B. Hatchery Activities (T. Dresser)**
- 1. Carlton Acclimation Facility** – Over the course of several weeks, runoff resulted in an increase in the amount of silt into the tanks. This has resulted in sick fish, but the extent is unknown at this time. To mitigate the situation, WDFW staff was running a mix of 50% well and 50% river water into the tanks. This helped clean up silt/turbidity issues.
 - 2. Nason Creek Acclimation Facility** – As a result of a rain and snow event that occurred in October and November 2015 the Nason Creek intake structure was damaged and inflow to the Nason

Creek Acclimation Facility has been impeded. To mitigate the situation, approximately 100,000 juvenile spring Chinook were moved to the Chiwawa Facility. Currently approximately 30,000 wild X wild Nason Creek juvenile spring Chinook remain on station in 2 tanks. Due to the amount of damage to the screen, debris/gravel build up and possible changes in the stream channel morphology due to the 100 year flood event, Grant PUD will need to revisit the originally preferred streambank intake design. The preferred option (streambank intake) was not supported by the permitting entities during original construction because of the need to have large angular rock incorporated into the design.

3. **Priest Rapids Hatchery Modifications** – Grant PUD is currently going out to bid for modifications to the Priest Rapids Hatchery that had been previously delayed.
 4. **Penticton Hatchery** – No updates
- C. **Hatchery Permits: Sec 10 Consultation/Summer Chinook, Sec 7 Consultation/Bull Trout** (T. Dresser) – No updates
- D. **Amended 2014 and Draft 2015 Survival Study Reports** (C. Dotson) – Currently undergoing PRCC review and comment period, closing COB, March 23, 2016. Dotson commented on Truscott's comments and the Committee asked for Truscott's comments to be put in a new document and that document to be sent back out for review by the Committee. A new comment period will be established.
- E. **2016 Survival Study** (C. Dotson) – Set-up for the upcoming study season is underway.
- F. **June 21/22 Sub-yearling Workshop and Coordinating Committees Meetings** (D. Rohr) – The workshop is scheduled for June 21, 2016 at the Red Lion (next door to the SeaTac Radisson). Committee meetings will take place on June 22, 2016 back at the Radisson. The Agenda continues to be developed and should be out to everyone in the next couple of weeks.
- G. **NNI Funded Projects**
1. **(2015) Real Time Research / Oregon State University – “Evaluation of Foraging Behavior, Dispersal, and Predation on ESA-listed Salmonids from the Upper Columbia River by Caspian Terns Displaced from Managed Colonies in the Columbia Plateau Region”** (C. Dotson) – Currently undergoing PRCC review and comment period, closing COB, April 1, 2016. Denny to send another copy immediately to Korth.
 2. **(2016) Real Time Research / Oregon State university – “Evaluation of Caspian Tern Management to Reduce Predation on ESA-Listed Salmonids in the Columbia Plateau Region”** (C. Dotson) – they are in the process of preparing for this year's study season.
 3. **Upper Columbia Fish Screen Monitoring Program Phase I Contract Extension** (J. Korth) – Korth referred the Committee to the minutes from the February 23rd meeting.
 4. **Mid-Columbia River Intake Screen and Diversion Assessment (2014-15)** (T. Dresser) – Nothing to report.
 5. **Lower Wenatchee Instream Flow Enhancement Project Phase II** (J. Korth) – Aaron Penvose and/or Lisa Pelly will be coming to the May meeting to discuss.
 6. **Methow Valley Irrigation District (MVID) Instream Flow Improvement Project** (T. Dresser) – Aaron Penvose and/or Lisa Pelly will be coming to the May meeting to discuss.
- IX. **Committee Reports** (D. Rohr) – Reports sent out. There was no FCWG meeting this month.
- X. **Quarterly NNI and Habitat Funds Report through December 31, 2015** (D. Rohr) – The next quarterly report will be sent out in April 2016.
- XI. **Potpourri** - Dotson commented on receiving the Western Division American Fisheries Society's Conservation Achievement award for the work that was done at the Wanapum Dam fish ladder exits to insure upstream adult passage due to the 2014 Wanapum Reservoir drawdown. The teamwork approach by all PRCC members to move this work forward was definitely noticed and acknowledged.

XII. Next Meeting – April 27, 2016, SeaTac Radisson Hotel (D. Rohr)

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