

PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee Meeting

Thursday, September 25, 2014

Via Conference Call

Meeting Summary

PRCC HSC Members

Craig Busack, NMFS (alt)
Bill Gale, USFWS
Peter Graf, GPUD (alt)
Lynn Hatcher, NMFS
Keely Murdoch, Yakama Nation
Todd Pearsons, GPUD
Mike Tonseth, WDFW
Kirk Truscott, CCT

Other Participants

Tom Kahler, DPUD
Greg Mackey, DPUD
Deanne Pavlik-Kunkel, GPUD

Elizabeth McManus, Facilitator
Andy Chinn, Facilitator

Actions

1. YN will provide NMFS with available documentation describing remote spring Chinook acclimation, including objectives and documentation of HSC decision-making related to remote acclimation.
2. YN will provide NMFS with in-pond survival data.
3. NMFS will circulate an e-mail with a summary of data needs related to remote acclimation.
4. Ross Strategic will follow up with YN on whether the Tribe will request formal SOA approval or will withdraw the SOA.

HSC Meeting Summary

Note: The discussion below includes references to a draft SOA that is appended to the end of this summary.

I. Methow Spring Chinook

A. Methow Spring Chinook at Mid Valley Pond Complex

- NMFS alternate HSC representative stated that the Agency was not familiar with the details of the ongoing remote spring Chinook acclimation activity approved annually by the HSC.
- YN commented that in prior years there was no formal approval (e.g., an SOA) for remote spring Chinook acclimation. The initial remote acclimation was approved by the HSC for Wolf Creek Pond, and later approved for Mid Valley Pond, which is located farther upstream and greater distance from the Methow Hatchery. To-date the HSC has approved five years of remote acclimation.
- NOAA commented that the Section 10 permit extension includes language to the effect that activities consistent with other actions permitted under the HGMP can be undertaken if approved by the HSC.
- NMFS noted that due to the novelty and fluidity of programs in the Methow basin it

is difficult to track the details of all programs, and therefore it is critical to summarize these types of activities and demonstrate under what authority they are undertaken.

- GPUD and DPUD stated their rationale for the conditional text in the draft SOA. Neither PUD is convinced of the need for off-site acclimation, nor are the PUDs comfortable with approving an action that may or may not be covered by a forthcoming NMFS permit. However, if the fisheries managers collectively agree to move forward with remote acclimation, the PUDs will not obstruct such activity, provided the assurances outlined in the “Background” section of the SOA are met.
 - NMFS noted that once a permit is issued, the only valid legal challenge is whether the terms and conditions of the permit are being met, and NMFS is the only party against which litigation can be brought.
- YN commented that given recent actions within the HSC, the ultimate goal – species recovery – appears to be a secondary consideration. They also asked the PUDs to provide their plan for recovery.
 - DPUD noted that there is a fundamental disagreement between the PUDs and some resource managers about the appropriate recovery strategy – DPUD believes that the best approach is to let wild fish spawn with wild fish on the spawning grounds. DPUD has previously proposed a non-supplemented control stream to test this theory but this has not been attempted due to conflicts with specific requirements of the US v Oregon management agreement.
- CCT stated that a supplementation program that does not attempt to return fish to their spawning habitat does not seem like a good idea.
- NMFS noted that because ponds and concrete holding tanks have very different characteristics, they might need different requirements written into the permits.
- WDFW suggested the use of one permit identifying the roles and responsibilities of the permit holders and authorized agents.

B. SOA Modification and Support

- All HSC members indicated they would support the SOA if the “Background” section were removed, with the stipulation (as reflected in this meeting summary) that the issues described in the background section would be revisited prior to approval of fish transfer for remote acclimation. DPUD affirmed its support for this approach.

C. Next Steps

- YN will provide NMFS with available documentation describing remote spring Chinook acclimation, including objectives and documentation of HSC decision-making related to remote acclimation.
- YN will provide NMFS with in-pond survival data.
- NMFS will circulate an e-mail with a summary of data needs related to remote acclimation.
- Ross Strategic will follow up with YN on whether the Tribe will request formal SOA

approval or will withdraw the SOA.

II. Wrap Up and Next Steps

A. Next Meeting: Thursday, October 16, 2014

B. Potential October Meeting Agenda Items

- Composite broodstock collection
- Wanapum Dam update
- White River spring Chinook program

Meeting Materials

A draft SOA on remote spring Chinook acclimation was circulated with HSC members via e-mail prior to the conference call. The text of the SOA is below:

Statement:

The Grant/Douglas (fill in as needed) Committee approves PIT tagging up to 12,000 spring Chinook at Methow Hatchery by the Yakama Nation in autumn 2014. This approval of tagging does not constitute approval of the transfer of spring Chinook from Methow Hatchery to the custody of the Yakama Nation, and such action will require approval by both the PRCC-HSC and the Wells HCP Hatchery Committee following approval under a new NOAA Section 10 permit.

Background:

This PIT tagging is in anticipation of proposed offsite acclimation of up to 50,000 spring Chinook from Methow Hatchery in the YN Mid-Valley Pond in the Methow Basin. Approval of the proposed acclimation will require additional SOAs in both HCP and PRCC arenas, and is contingent upon NMFS determination of ESA compliance for this acclimation under a new NOAA Section 10 permit, and the following conditions:

1. PUDs receive full mitigation credit upon transfer of custody of these fish from Douglas/Grant to YN, because the PUDs would no longer have any control over their disposition.
2. All transferred fish must possess a CWT or other mark that allows the PUDs and WDFW to distinguish them from all other fish on the spawning grounds or trapping location.
3. The PUDs must have no responsibility for pHOS or PNI violations resulting from a failure to manage adult returns from these transferred fish because transferring them from Methow Hatchery to a YN acclimation facility jeopardizes their homing to the Methow Hatchery outfall (or Twisp weir) for adult management or collection for broodstock.
4. The YN must obtain an ESA permit for the transfer, acclimation, and release of these fish before PUDs can allow the transfer from our custody.
5. Funding for the remote acclimation will be secured by the Yakama Nation.