

PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee Meeting

Thursday, October 16, 2014

Wenatchee, Washington

Meeting Summary

PRCC HSC Members

Bill Gale, USFWS

Peter Graf, GPUD (alt)

Lynn Hatcher, NMFS

Keely Murdoch, Yakama Nation

Todd Pearsons, GPUD

Mike Tonseth, WDFW

Kirk Truscott, CCT

Deanne Pavlik-Kunkel, GPUD (alt)

Other Participants

Andy Chinn, Facilitator

Laura Spencer, Facilitator

Decisions

- A. Approved the September 17th meeting summary as amended
- B. Approved the September 25th conference call summary as amended

Actions

1. WDFW will check on the timing of the Agency's composite broodstock collection SOA review.
2. Ross Strategic will send the approved NTOC SOA final version to the PRCC.
3. Ross Strategic will send the approved broodstock collection SOA final version to the PRCC.
4. CCT will circulate its Chief Joseph hatchery program workshop report with the HSC (status: carried over from April meeting summary).
5. GPUD will look into options for HSC document storage and access (status: in progress).
6. Yakama Nation will draft and circulate the 2016 remote acclimation proposal for the Goat Wall site.
7. WDFW will begin the process for ordering CWT's in anticipation of YN's remote acclimation request.
8. Ross Strategic will draft and distribute the White River program decision tree.
9. USFWS will circulate the USFWS invasive species hatchery protocol.
10. HSC members will provide comments on the WDFW draft brood stock collection protocol by 10/31.

I. Updates and Meeting Summary Review

- A. HCP-HC Update** – The HCP-HC met on 10/15. During the meeting the committee discussed runoff conditions due to summer fire in the Methow; most of the burns (and associated runoffs) are anticipated to occur above the Carlton Acclimation Facility. The HCP-HC announced a fire seminar, sponsored by the RTT, in mid-November, which may have some relevance to post-release fish performance.
- B. Habitat Subcommittee Update** – Habitat Subcommittee members toured funded projects at Okanogan River in early October. There is a potential project to remove the passage barrier at Shingle Creek and work is likely to occur at Shuttleworth creek. The

tour also included the spawning platforms' gravel additions from Skaha to Okanagan. The platforms are long, providing space for about 1,200 redds. The platforms are targeted for Sockeye, but gravel grades installed at the upper portion are appropriate for Chinook.

- C. **Fall Chinook Working Group Update** – Reverse load factoring began 10/15 in the Hanford Reach and will continue until Thanksgiving, with a subsequent intermediate pool raise. The Hanford Reach annual report will be distributed to the Subcommittees this week. GPUD is working towards distributing a feasibility study/plan draft final report to the Fall Chinook Working Group.

II. **Composite Broodstock Collection**

- A. **Status of Draft SOA** – WDFW is still considering the SOA on composite broodstock collection and will follow up with Yakama Nation.
- B. **Status of Draft Supplementation Biological Opinion** – NMFS anticipates the completed effects analysis and revised supplemental biological opinion by 12/31. As a result of USFWS-NMFS discussions, NMFS is moving toward a variation of Option 3 while reducing effects on Bull Trout. WDFW will draft an overview of the option and provide to NMFS as a formal response. The overview will provide option details such as contingency plans for low-run years.

III. **Methow Spring Chinook**

- A. **Remote Acclimation** – WDFW noted that 2016 expanded acclimation requests should be submitted by the end of October to provide sufficient time to order coded wire tags.
 - YN noted that the Goat Wall site will be available for 2016 release. Goat Wall is a small site, and has not been used previously. YN estimates a maximum capacity at Goat Wall of 35,000 fish and YN will request 25,000 fish for 2016.
 - USFWS expressed concern that remote acclimation has yet to be proven as effective and the first step is demonstrating that acclimation works.
 - GPUD stated that if the question of remote acclimation efficacy is still open, then the Methow release should be viewed as a test of concept (or attempt to validate acclimation) and should be sized accordingly (but to not exceed the management objective).
- HSC members discussed the Methow management objectives and plan, noting several gaps: The management objective is not identified, the maximum target escapement is not identified, the plan needs to address available spawning capacity as compared with wild fish spawning level, and spawning capacity on a reach-by-reach basis is not identified (NMFS anticipates PHOS data on a reach-by-reach basis by June 2015).
- a) USFWS reiterated the importance of answering the question of whether short-term acclimation of fish produced downstream nets a significant change.
 - b) WDFW suggested comparing the previous Mid Valley release and 4 year old release from Methow.

(1) YN noted that this comparison does not account for other adjusted factors.

B. Next Steps

- YN will prepare a formal 2016 Methow release proposal for review during the November HSC meeting; Cory will be available for questions on site-specific details. NMFS requests that the Biological Opinion include every site/pond in the proposal.
- WDFW will begin the process for ordering CWT's in anticipation of YN's remote acclimation request.

IV. White River Spring Chinook

A. Key Questions and Data Needs for 2026 White River Program Decision – HSC members refined the list of questions and associated data needs developed during the 9/17 PRCC HSC meeting, then prioritized research questions and began drafting a decision tree (the draft decision tree is attached to this meeting summary).

- USFWS expressed interest in documenting and summarizing the lessons learned from prior hatchery supplementation and suggested that the HSC focus on providing sufficient documentation for decision makers to follow in 2026.

B. Next Steps

- Ross Strategic will draft and distribute the White River program decision tree.

V. Priest Rapids Hatchery

A. New Zealand Mud Snails – WDFW identified New Zealand Mud snails at Ringold Hatchery. WDFW suspects that the snail population is isolated to a small area of water, but is large enough that it is estimated to have been there for approximately four years. Hatchery fish are going through a multi-stage testing and decontamination process. The vector has not been identified; potential vectors include waterfowl, beavers and anglers. The Ringold Hatchery has contacted all other stations that received Ringold fish, and is trying to identify any potential snail introduction to other locations.

- WDFW expressed concern about contamination at Wells, as adult Steelhead were transferred from Ringold to Wells.
- USFWS is concerned that the efficacy of fish decontamination is not known, and there is the potential for moving infected fish to uninfected waters. If Wells Hatchery has New Zealand Mud Snails, there is potential for the infestation to move up the Methow. Due to fish transfer activities, the HSC should ensure that invasive species monitoring is adequate.
- GPUD noted that GPUD has an invasive species monitoring plan that has been approved by the PRFF. The issue is largely handled by invasive species monitoring staff and performed outside of the hatcheries.
- USFWS noted that all federal hatcheries monitor for invasive species annually, and it is not a large expense.

B. Next Steps

- USFWS will provide a copy of the federal invasive species hatchery monitoring

program to the HSC for review.

VI. Broodstock Collection Protocols

- A. Draft Broodstock Collection Protocol Template** – During the 10/15 HC meeting, WDFW introduced the draft broodstock collection protocol template. The protocol was designed to ensure broodstock collection protocol content would suffice for USFWS and NMFS review of Section 10 permits. GPUD noted that all of the M&E implementation plans may not be available at the time that collection protocols are submitted to NMFS.
- B. Next Steps**
- HSC members will provide comments and questions on the draft broodstock collection protocol template to WDFW by 10/31.

VII. Permit Updates

- A. Leavenworth Spring Chinook** – USFWS is in litigation with Wild Fish Conservancy; the lawsuit will not change the NOAA biop scheduled for completion in December 2015.
- B. NMFS Permit Updates** – The Okanogan spring Chinook biop is expected to be signed by October 31, 2014. The Methow Hatchery conservation and Winthrop safety net spring Chinook biop is expected in March or April 2015. The Okanogan Steelhead biop is scheduled for completion by 12/31/14. The summer/fall Chinook biop is expected in the spring of 2015.
- C. CCT Egg Transfer** – CCT reported a columnaris outbreak in spring Chinook from Leavenworth resulting in a large mortality. On 10/10 and 10/11, 350,000 surplus spring Chinook eggs from Carson stock became available. NMFS approved transferring the Carson stock eggs and CCT will accept as part of the segregated program. CCT will differentially wire 200,000 fish in 2016 to monitor potential straying.
- D. Nason Creek Acclimation Facility** – NCAF now has fish; when the fish were transferred into the tanks no abnormal behavior was observed.

Meeting Materials

The following documents were provided to HSC members in advance of this meeting:

- October meeting agenda
- White River discussion questions
- SOA 2013-01
- Draft September conference call summary
- September Nason Creek rotary trap summary
- September White River rotary trap summary
- September PRH M&E report
- Draft broodstock collection protocol template