

PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee Meeting

Thursday, February 19, 2015

Wenatchee, Washington

Meeting Summary

PRCC HSC Members

Bill Gale, USFWS

Peter Graf, GPUD (alt)

Lynn Hatcher, NMFS (via phone)

Keely Murdoch, Yakama Nation

Todd Pearsons, GPUD

Mike Tonseth, WDFW

Kirk Truscott, CCT

Deanne Pavlik-Kunkel, GPUD (alt)

Other Participants

Mark Ahrens, USFWS (via phone)

Eric Lauver, GPUD (via phone)

Ken Lujan, USFWS (via phone)

Mary Peters, USFWS (via phone)

Elizabeth McManus, Facilitator

Andy Chinn, Facilitator

Decisions

A. Approved the January meeting summary as amended, pending NOAA approval.

Actions

1. LWSNFH staff will cull additional fish showing signs of BKD during the week of 3/2 and monitor the remaining fish (including ELISA sampling) prior to the 3/17 transfer date.
2. GPUD will continue net pen and temporary remote site acclimation preparation activities assuming transfer will occur.
3. If necessary the HSC will convene via conference call on 3/12 for final decision on White River fish transfer.
4. YN will circulate the summary data from the parr tracked from the Nason Creek rotary trap to the Little Wenatchee River.
5. WDFW will provide data from the RSS or other appropriate sources to improve estimates of White River productivity by life-stage.
6. Ross Strategic will circulate the revised White River decision tree.
7. HSC members will provide comments on the draft broodstock collection protocol document by 3/6.
8. WDFW will circulate a revised draft broodstock collection protocol document on 3/10 for discussion at the March committee meetings.
9. HSC members will vote on the revised remote acclimation proposal SOA by 3/4, concurrent with the HCP-HC.
10. Ross Strategic will coordinate with Anchor QEA on signing the joint HCP-HC/HSC-HC letter to NOAA supporting incorporation of a preferred alternative for Wenatchee broodstock collection into the agency's consultation.
11. GPUD will revise the proposed 2015 otolith reading and alternative mating strategy talk and circulate it with the HSC.
12. HSC members will provide comments on the draft Priest Rapids Hatchery M&E 2015-2016 Implementation Plan by 3/6.

13. WDFW will check on Chiwawa dates for volitional release (note that steelhead on-station at Chiwawa are a constraint).
14. WDFW will contact state invasive species staff to determine the timeline for development of a New Zealand Mud Snail protocol (carried over from previous meeting summary).
15. CCT will circulate its Chief Joseph hatchery program workshop report with the HSC (carried over from previous meeting summary).

I. Updates and Meeting Summary Review

- A. PRCC** – The PRCC recently approved amending the timeline for the sockeye survival studies one year earlier. The PRCC also approved modification of the left bank fish ladder at Wanapum Dam due to issues associated with debris.
- B. PAC** – GPUD has requested updates on discussions within PAC on the Ringold HGMP.

II. White River Fish Health

- A. Juvenile BKD at LWSNFH** – USFWS staff reported high ELISA levels in White River fish in the lower raceway sections and low ELISA levels in the upper raceway sections. USFWS staff culled approximately 1/3 of the fish from the lower raceway section and began a 14 day azithromycin treatment on the remaining fish. The treatment was scheduled for completion on 2/20. Visual inspection of the low and high titer raceways on 2/17 did not reveal gross BKD signs. The azithromycin treatment appears to be slowing or reducing BKD spread, at least temporarily, although February mortalities were still in the epizootic range. Given the current fish health status, USFWS staff stated that the remaining approximately 26,000 fish could be transferred, with low disease risk to fish populations in receiving waters. There will be some mortality associated with fish transfer; USFWS staff suggested transferring at low densities.
 - USFWS noted that if high titer fish are transported to the Lake Wenatchee net pens, the transport stress could trigger delayed mortality and increased BKD levels, with no way to monitor or treat the fish.
 - WDFW suggested additional culling of the high titer raceways.
 - GPUD noted that transfer arrangements and net pen and temporary remote site acclimation activities require lead-up time to prepare equipment and arrange staffing.
 - WDFW noted that the state would not support fish transfer or release if BKD infection was at epizootic levels immediately prior to transfer.
 - WDFW noted that if the HSC decides against White River fish transfer and release, any order to destroy the remaining fish must originate with NOAA.
- B. Performance of White River Spring Chinook Hatchery Fish** – BY06 juvenile survival to McNary Dam was uniformly low for all three titer groups. By contrast, for BY10 (below lake release) the very low/low group survived at a rate nearly 6 times greater than the high/very high titer group. For BY06 and BY10, the number of adult returns to the mainstem Columbia River and the Wenatchee River was low. For BY06, only one fish, from the very low/low titer group, successfully returned as an adult. For BY10, seven

fish, all from the very low/low titer group, returned to Bonneville Dam; however none of the fish were detected in the White River.

- GPUD commented that the decision to transfer and release White River hatchery fish involves comparison of the relative benefit (adult returns) to the risk to fish health in receiving waters.
- USFWS noted that given the information provided by USFWS fish health staff, risk is low but the benefit is likewise low.
- CCT commented that if no fish are released, then adult returns will be zero. However, if the fish are released, there is at least the possibility of some adult returns.

C. Next Steps

- LWSNFH staff will cull additional fish showing signs of BKD during the week of 3/2 and monitor the remaining fish (including ELISA sampling) prior to the 3/17 transfer date.
- GPUD will continue net pen and temporary remote site acclimation preparation activities assuming transfer will occur.
- If necessary the HSC will convene via conference call on 3/12 for final decision on White River fish transfer.

III. White River Productivity

A. Productivity Estimate by Life-Stage – GPUD examined data on mean annual eggs per female, egg-to-migrant, lake survival, below-lake survival, and adult holding and homing to determine which life stages were most limiting for White River spring Chinook. The analysis found that, based on preliminary estimates, the White River population is not only unsustainable but would require substantial improvements at all life stages (both in-basin and out-of-basin) to reach sustainability.

- WDFW commented that for whatever reason, the White River spring Chinook population persists and the life stage that is contributing to this persistence is not known.
- YN noted that several parr have been PIT-tagged at the Nason Creek rotary trap, detected at the White River array, and then recaptured at the Little Wenatchee the same year.
- CCT commented that adjusting the data variables to benefit productivity may never achieve sustainability; however, the question remains of whether a supplementation program should be implemented to support abundance.
 - GPUD noted that NOAA has the final decision about whether hatchery fish support delisting. If hatchery fish do not contribute to VSP parameters and natural spawners are not sustainable then what is the purpose of a supplementation program in the White River?

B. Next Steps

- YN will circulate the summary data from the parr tracked from the Nason Creek rotary trap to the Little Wenatchee River.

- WDFW will provide GPUD with RSS data or data from other appropriate sources to improve estimates of White River productivity by life-stage.

IV. White River 2026 Decision

- A. White River Decision Tree and Table** – Continuation of discussion from previous HSC meetings:
- GPUD noted that questions 1 and 2 in the decision tree will be the result of NMFS's interpretation of the importance of White River spring Chinook to overall VSP criteria.
 - NMFS commented that the next stock status report is expected in March 2016; the next VSP report will be issued in June 2015.
- B. Next Steps**
- Ross Strategic will circulate the revised White River decision tree.

V. Updates and Meeting Summary Review

- A. Fall Chinook Working Group:**
- 2015 emergence (as defined in the Fall Chinook Protection Program) is approaching.
 - The deadline for comments on the implementation feasibility plan was 2/13.
- B. January 2015 Meeting Summary** – HSC members approved the January meeting summary as amended, pending NOAA approval.

VI. Review of Joint HCP-HC and PRCC-HSC Items (items discussed jointly during the 2/18 HCP-HC meeting)

- A. Draft Broodstock Collection Protocols** – The most recent draft document was circulated for review on 2/6; comments are due by 3/6. WDFW will circulate a revised draft broodstock collection protocol document on 3/10 for discussion at the March committee meetings.
- WDFW noted that the protocols are a living document and activities are subject to change. The committees should consider developing a mechanism to document any amendments that occur so that the report on annual activities is accurate.
- B. YN Remote Acclimation Proposal** – YN is preparing a revised draft acclimation proposal to address concerns about success criteria. The document will be distributed on 2/20 with a revised SOA that captures changes made during the HCP-HC meeting.
- C. NOAA Consultation** – During the 2/18 HCP-HC meeting, committee members approved a joint letter from the HCP-HC and PRCC-HSC requesting NOAA incorporate a preferred alternative for Wenatchee broodstock collection into the agency's consultation.
- D. Next Steps**
- HSC members will provide comments on the draft broodstock collection protocol document by 3/6.
 - WDFW will circulate a revised draft broodstock collection protocol document on 3/10 for discussion at the March committee meetings.
 - HSC members will vote on the revised remote acclimation proposal SOA by 3/4,

concurrent with the HCP-HC.

- Ross Strategic will coordinate with Anchor QEA on signing the joint HCP-HC/HSC-HC letter to NOAA supporting incorporation of a preferred alternative for Wenatchee broodstock collection into the agency's consultation.

VII. Priest Rapids Hatchery Otolith Reading and Alternative Mating Strategy

- A. Proposed 2015 Activities** – GPUD recommends repeating the strategy adopted in 2014 during peak spawning with some adaptation based upon lessons learned.
- WDFW commented that one of the reasons for extra fish in 2014 was over-collection due to observed pre-spawn mortality in 2013.
 - CCT requested a comparison of survival-to-eye for 1x4 matings and 1x2 matings.
- B. Next Steps**
- GPUD will revise the proposed 2015 otolith reading and alternative mating strategy talk and circulate it to the HSC.

VIII. Priest Rapids Hatchery M&E

- A. Draft M&E 2015-2016 Implementation Plan** – GPUD circulated minor changes to the draft plan on 2/10.
- B. Next Steps**
- HSC members will provide comments on the draft M&E 2015-2016 Implementation Plan by 3/6.

IX. Size Target and Volitional Release

- A. Draft Size and Volitional Release Targets for Carlton and Nason** – GPUD will meet with NMFS on 2/25 and will table its recommendations on size targets until after that meeting. For volitional release, GPUD suggests following the 2014 timetable.
- WDFW suggested setting the release date several days prior to spill program initiation. Natural immigration from Nason Creek typically begins by April 1 but natural immigrants have poorer smolt-to-smolt survival to McNary because the spill program has not yet begun.
 - CCT noted that if fish are released early, the Rocky Reach bypass might shut off earlier than May 30, which would create a gap between spring and summer bypass operations.
 - GPUD suggested syncing the Carlton and Nason release dates with Chiwawa, since they are comparable groups.
 - USFWS noted that Leavenworth hatchery spring Chinook releases begin April 18th. Coho releases begin April 15th, and volitional steelhead releases from Winthrop Hatchery begin April 13th and run through May 15th.
- B. Next Steps**
- WDFW will check on Chiwawa dates for volitional release (note that steelhead on-station at Chiwawa are a constraint).

X. Wrap Up and Next Steps

A. Next Meeting: Thursday, March 19, 2015

B. Potential March Meeting Agenda Items

- Broodstock collection protocols
- Priest Rapids Hatchery otolith reading and alternative mating strategy
- Draft size and volitional release targets for Carlton and Nason
- White River 2026 planning
- White River productivity

Meeting Materials

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

- February meeting agenda
- White River decision tree
- Draft January meeting summary
- GPUD analysis of fish performance of White River spring Chinook hatchery fish with different levels of BKD
- Summary of LWSNFH ELISA results and culling results
- Draft 2015 broodstock collection protocols
- PRH M&E 2015-2016 implementation plan