

Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee Meeting

Microsoft Teams
Tuesday, February 27, 2024
10:00 a.m. to 10:45 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

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

Meeting Attendees

Kristi Geris, Anchor QEA
 Bryan Nordlund, Facilitator
 Tom Lorz, CRITFC
 Kirk Truscott, CTCR
 Curt Dotson, GPUD
 Tom Dresser, GPUD

Rod O'Connor GPUD
 Tim Taylor, GPUD
 Scott Carlon, NMFS
 Chad Jackson, WDFW
 Andrew Murdoch, WDFW
 Keely Murdoch, YN

Action Items

- Anchor QEA will distribute a revised 2024 Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)/PRCC meeting schedule with the updated in-person Wenatchee, Washington, venue. *(Note: a revised meeting schedule was distributed to the PRCC by Kristi Geris on February 28, 2024.)*
- Curt Dotson will inform the PRCC of any updates to the 2025–2027 Smolt Survival Study data plan, should they arise.
- Keely Murdoch will ask about funding sources for the 2024 Sub-yearling Chinook Salmon Workshop during the HCP Coordinating Committees meeting, notably as it relates to No Net Impact (NNI) funding contributions, and will report back to the PRCC.

Review Items

- The updated draft 2024 Sub-yearling Chinook Salmon Workshop Agenda was forwarded to the PRCC following the meeting on February 20, 2024.
- The request for No Net Impact (NNI) fund support of the 2024 Sub-yearling Chinook Salmon Workshop was distributed on January 22, 2024.

Decisions and Approvals

- None.

I. Welcome, Announcements, and Agenda Review

Bryan Nordlund welcomed everyone to the meeting. He asked for any additions or changes to the agenda. No additions or changes were requested by PRCC members. B. Nordlund added a follow-up discussion on the request for NNI funding to partially support the 2024 Sub-yearling Chinook Salmon Workshop, to be covered under Item IV.

B. Nordlund said, regarding the 2024 HCP/PRCC meeting schedule, next month will be in person, hosted by Chelan PUD. Kristi Geris said Chelan PUD is looking into changing the venue from the Chelan PUD Service Center to the Confluence Technology Center, which will be discussed during today's HCP Coordinating Committees meeting. She will distribute a revised 2024 HCP/PRCC meeting schedule with the updated venue. *(Note: a revised meeting schedule was distributed to the PRCC by K. Geris on February 28, 2024.)*

B. Nordlund reviewed Decisions and Approvals from last month, and asked Grant PUD to provide an update on the *Northern Pikeminnow Fishing Derby 2024*. Tom Dresser said he spoke with the sponsor, Quincy Valley Chamber of Commerce/Tourism Association, about the prizes. The sponsor was appreciative. Grant PUD plans to help with this moving forward, including modifying the project specification sheet to use the existing \$10,000 to purchase prizes. This is not beyond the \$25,000 allocated by the PRCC. Additionally, he discussed the need to immediately report any adult steelhead collections. He asked that if an angler encounters a steelhead, the fish be kept in the water and released alive. The sponsor was supportive of this. He discussed the issues expressed by Chad Jackson about non-native exotic predators (e.g., walleye, channel cat, etc.). T. Dresser encouraged the sponsor to exclude these species from the derby. Currently, he is waiting to hear back from the sponsor. He was not planning to distribute the updated specification sheet to the PRCC but can if there is interest. B. Nordlund asked whether PRCC members would like to see the updated specification sheet. No requests were made. T. Dresser said he plans to attend the event on behalf of Grant PUD.

II. Meeting Minutes Status

The January 8 PRCC meeting minutes were distributed by Kristi Geris on February 23, with revisions due by February 27. Bryan Nordlund said Grant PUD provided edits, and he asked whether other PRCC members had edits. No further edits were requested.

B. Nordlund said Bill Gale approved the January 8 minutes via email. The January 8, 2024, PRCC meeting minutes were approved by PRCC members present. Curt Dotson noted that Kirk Truscott is not in attendance, and Grant PUD needs approval of these minutes

by all PRCC members to move forward with the Real Time Research (RTR) contracting process. K. Truscott joined the meeting late. He said the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CTCR) were not present during the January 8 meeting; therefore, they abstain from approving these minutes.

The January 23 PRCC meeting minutes were distributed by K. Geris on February 23, with revisions due by February 27. B. Nordlund said Grant PUD provided edits, and he asked whether other PRCC members had edits. No further edits were requested. K. Truscott said he needs to review these minutes and will provide his vote via email by end of day. The January 23, 2024, PRCC meeting minutes were approved by PRCC members present. (Note: K. Truscott approved the January 23 minutes via email on February 28, 2024.)

III. Action Items Review

- *Curt Dotson will inform the PRCC of the 2025-2027 Smolt Survival Study data plan.*

C. Dotson recalled that this plan has been submitted and voted on. If anything new arises between now and the study startup, he will bring this to the PRCC for discussion. This action item will be carried forward.

- *Keely Murdoch will send information on passive integrated transponder (PIT)-tagging of upper Columbia Basin hatchery groups to RTR for use in their avian predation evaluation.*

K. Murdoch said she met with Allen Evans (RTR) and reviewed different PIT-tag groups, notably what can and cannot be done. This action item is complete.

- *Andrew Murdoch and Chad Jackson will discuss with the PRCC in an upcoming meeting a specific request to Grant PUD from WDFW for acoustic tag data, including how those data may be used in new analyses.*

C. Jackson recalled submitting this request in writing. However, unintentionally, a technical memorandum on letterhead triggers a Freedom of Information Act request for Grant PUD and Chelan PUD. Since then, WDFW has withdrawn this data request and plans to work through a different process with Grant PUD and Chelan PUD. As information worth reporting arises, WDFW will request this as an agenda topic. For now, this action item is closed.

IV. Sub-yearling Chinook Salmon Workshop Planning

Bryan Nordlund recalled that last month, PRCC members requested more time to review within their organizations whether funding portions of the workshop would be an appropriate use of the NNI funds. Keely Murdoch asked, if Grant PUD used NNI funds to pay for the 2016 workshop, would it be reasonable to ask Chelan PUD and Douglas PUD to fund the 2024 workshop? Tom Dresser clarified that although Chelan PUD and Douglas PUD did not contribute NNI funds, because they do not have this type of funding, he believes they helped cover costs in other ways. He knows all three PUDs worked collaboratively. B. Nordlund suggested raising this topic during the HCP Coordinating Committees meeting. K. Murdoch said she can do this and will report back.

B. Nordlund said in terms of the agenda, he obtained a commitment from NMFS to provide an update on federal-specific requirements for testing sub-yearling Chinook Salmon survival and policy frameworks, either from Ritchie Graves or another NMFS representative. B. Nordlund believes Graves was hoping for a video conference option. Scott Carlon agreed and said travel might be an issue, so a call-in option will be helpful.

Kirk Truscott said he is inquiring internally about a possible presentation by the CTCR on the natural-origin summer Chinook Salmon PIT-tagging effort at the mouth of the Okanogan River.

V. Wild Smolt Survival

Andrew Murdoch recalled that this data request was in hopes of making inferences about what is happening with wild fish using existing acoustic telemetry data. Bryan Nordlund asked whether WDFW would like to retain this placeholder for future discussions. Chad Jackson suggested removing this agenda item for now as WDFW works with the PUDs. When there is something to discuss, WDFW can add the topic back to the agenda.

VI. Survival Study Analysts

Curt Dotson recalled that Grant PUD has a check-in survival study coming up. There is a 2017 statement of agreement (SOA) that memorializes the statistical analyses for these check-in survival studies, which specifies using the model developed by John Skalski (University of Washington). The draft study plan submitted to the PRCC also cites this 2017 SOA. Since that time, Skalski retired; however, the same team that worked with Skalski, including Rebecca Buchanan, Rich Townsend, and Jim Lady, will be conducting the statistical analyses for the check-in study. C. Dotson wanted to notify the PRCC that although the study plan and SOA lists Skalski, he is retired, but the same group will run the statistical models.

VII. 2024 Fish Passage Operations Report

A. Fish Ladder Inspections

Curt Dotson said this is the same update as last month. Fish ladder maintenance at Wanapum (WAN) and Priest Rapids dams (PRD) is ongoing, taking one ladder out of service at a time.

B. Fish Spill Updates

No updates until fish spill is reinitiated in spring 2024.

C. Fish Counts for 2023 (April 15 to November 15)

The following are final fish counts for 2023:

Project	Spring Chinook Salmon (Adult + Jack)	Summer Chinook Salmon (Adult + Jack)	Fall Chinook Salmon	Sockeye Salmon	Coho Salmon	Steelhead
Priest Rapids	18,888	51,102	44,970	235,270	16,651	7,617
Wanapum	19,152	57,251	27,884	228,172	11,461	7,522
Rock Island	17,619	51,574	17,628	247,772	17,690	8,326

UPDATES

VIII. Review of Outstanding NNI-Funded Projects

- **Lower Wenatchee Instream Flow Enhancement Project Phase II**
No update anticipated.
- **Northern Pike Removal (2022 to 2024)**
Bryan Nordlund asked whether updates are anticipated. Kirk Truscott said he can confirm with Holly McLellan, but he believes a final report is still forthcoming, and it does not make sense to present data if the final report is still a ways out.
- **WDFW PIT-Tag Detection Barge**
No update anticipated.
- **2024 Quincy Northern Pikeminnow Derby**
No update anticipated.
- **2024 RTR Avian Predation Study**
No update anticipated.

Curt Dotson said that on February 15, 2024, annual funding was deposited into the respective accounts, including: \$705,232.57 into NNI Fund 601; \$1,387,197.71 into Habitat Supplement Fund 602; and \$495,538.14 into Habitat BiOp Fund 603. Total PRCC Habitat Funds equaled \$2,587,968.42. Additional deposits, apart from the PRCC but required under the Settlement Agreement, include: \$171,704.14 into Native Resident Fish Fund 604 and \$40,000 into Wildlife Management Plan Fund 605. Total funding equaled \$2,799,672.56.

B. Nordlund asked whether Grant PUD still distributes fund balance sheets. C. Dotson said it does on a quarterly basis, typically 1 to 2 months after end of quarter. This includes an update on funds and active contracts associated with those funds.

IX. Subcommittee Updates

Subcommittee updates have been distributed by email.

X. SOAs Discussed in 2024

SOA number	Key Words	Last Discussed	Status
--	--	--	--

-- = none to date

Bryan Nordlund suggested adding the NNI funding SOA for the 2024 Sub-yearling Chinook Salmon Workshop. Curt Dotson said the SOA number for this is not setup yet. B. Nordlund suggested revisiting this next month.

XI. Next Meetings

The next PRCC meeting is scheduled for March 26 at 9:00 a.m., in person, at a location in Wenatchee, Washington (TBD). A Microsoft Teams link will be included in the agenda.

XII. Future PRCC Facilitation (PRCC members only)

Bryan Nordlund and Kristi Geris left the meeting.