



Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee Meeting

Microsoft Teams
Tuesday, July 23, 2024
12:00 p.m. to 1:45 p.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, Jason Romine (Alt), USFWS

Chad Jackson, Andrew Murdoch (Alt), WDFW
 Keely Murdoch, Brandon Rogers (Alt), YN
 Bryan Nordlund, Facilitator
 Larissa Rohrbach, Anchor QEA, Technical Support

Meeting Attendees

Larissa Rohrbach, Anchor QEA, Interim Facilitator
 Kristi Geris, Anchor QEA, Technical Support
 Curt Dotson, GPUD
 Rod O'Connor, GPUD
 Tim Taylor, GPUD
 Tom Dresser, GPUD

Scott Carlon, NMFS
 Bill Gale, USFWS
 Chad Jackson, WDFW
 Andrew Murdoch, WDFW
 Keely Murdoch, YN
 Tom Lorz, CTUIR
 Nathan Buck, Wanapum

Action Items

- C. Dotson will inform the Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee (PRCC) of any updates to the 2025–2027 Smolt Survival Study data plan, should they arise. *(This item is ongoing.)*
- L. Rohrbach will work with T. Dresser to identify a date for a 2024 PRCC Policy Committee meeting. *(This item is ongoing.)*
- L. Rohrbach will reach out to K. Truscott to obtain his approval of the June 25 minutes. *(K. Truscott's approval was obtained and the final minutes were distributed on August 8.)*
- C. Dotson will accept tracked changes and update the date in the revised Fish Mode Exceptions Statement of Agreement (SOA), as approved during today's

meeting, and will provide the final SOA to L. Rohrbach for distribution. (*The final SOA was distributed on August 5.*)

- C. Dotson will redistribute instructions for accessing the internal and external PRCC SharePoint sites.
- A. Murdoch will develop a draft agenda for further discussing the Sub-Yearling Chinook Salmon Workshop.
- L. Rohrbach will coordinate with J. Ferguson (Habitat Conservation Plan Coordinating Committees [HCP-CC] Chair) about possibly convening a joint session to further discuss the Sub-Yearling Chinook Salmon Workshop during the PRCC and HCP-CC meetings on October 22.
- C. Dotson will inquire about installing gage placards at Priest Rapids Dam, similar to what was installed at Wanapum Dam, to assist with fish ladder inspections.

Review Items

- None.

Decisions and Approvals

- The PRCC approved the Fish Mode Exceptions SOA (SOA 2024-1), as revised.

I. Welcome, Announcements, Agenda Review, and Meeting Minutes Approval

L. Rohrbach served as interim facilitator for the meeting. (*Note: B. Nordlund is ending his role as PRCC Facilitator. He called in at the end of the meeting, said he is doing well, and wished the PRCC farewell.*)

L. Rohrbach reviewed the agenda. No additions or changes were requested by PRCC members, and the agenda was approved by all parties in attendance.

The draft minutes from the June 25 meeting were distributed on July 11. No revisions were received, and the minutes were approved by members who attended that meeting.

C. Jackson abstained. L. Rohrbach will reach out to K. Truscott to obtain his approval of the June 25 minutes. (*K. Truscott's approval was obtained and the final minutes were distributed on August 8.*)

II. Actions Items Review

Action items from the PRCC June 25 meeting and follow-up discussions were as follows: (*Note: Italicized text corresponds to agenda items from the June 25 meeting.*)

- *C. Dotson will inform the PRCC of any updates to the 2025–2027 Smolt Survival Study data plan, should they arise.*
C. Dotson said updates from contractors may arise, but there is nothing at this time. This item is ongoing.

- *L. Rohrbach will work with T. Dresser to identify a date for a 2024 PRCC Policy Committee meeting.*

L. Rohrbach asked about attendance, notably Grant PUD staff. T. Dresser said for Grant PUD, include J. Grizzel, R. Hendrick, T. Dresser, C. Dotson, T. Taylor, and R. O'Connor. Last time, the meeting was open to the PRCC, Priest Rapids Fish Forum (PRFF), and Hanford Reach Fall Chinook Work Group (FCWG), but he is unsure this is necessary. This is a question for the PRCC. B. Gale said it depends on which issues are on the table. If all issues are PRCC-specific, attendance should be limited to the PRCC Policy Committee. L. Rohrbach said the objective of this meeting is to convene to maintain relationships. Issues within the subcommittees are not quite ready for policy-level discussion. T. Dresser suggested reaching out to the respective subcommittee representatives to inquire whether there are issues to discuss. The known developing topics are the White River Hatchery Program and Sub-Yearling Chinook Salmon. K. Murdoch suggested, at the very least, providing updates to the PRCC Policy Committee on these topics. L. Rohrbach asked which forums have policy committees. T. Dresser said the PRCC and PRFF do. The FCWG does not have a requirement for a policy committee, so these representatives are the same as the technical representatives. S. Carlon asked about a meeting date. L. Rohrbach suggested dialing in potential dates around key staff and deciding whether to expand the invite to other groups afterwards. This item is ongoing.

- *L. Rohrbach will distribute the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) 2023 Annual Report that was shared during today's discussion of the Fish Mode Exceptions SOA, and C. Dotson will provide future NERC annual reports to the PRCC to track regional Energy Emergency Alert (EEA) level declarations.*

The NERC 2023 Annual Report was distributed on June 28.

- *L. Rohrbach will distribute the revised Fish Mode Exceptions SOA for PRCC approval during the next PRCC meeting on July 23.*

The revised SOA was distributed on June 28.

- *K. Truscott will provide the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation's vote on the revised Fish Mode Exceptions SOA before July 12.*

This will be discussed during today's meeting.

- *In the event that Grant PUD may need to declare an EEA Level 3 (EEA 3), before the next PRCC meeting on July 23, the PRCC will be consulted about the Fish Mode Exceptions SOA via email or conference call.*

This was not needed. C. Dotson said during the latest heat wave, Grant PUD did initiate a restricted operations stage where all power resources (i.e., turbines, etc.) that were not needing critical maintenance done were to be left online. A

peak record for load was set (1,081 megawatt), but still, an EEA 1 was never reached.

III. DECISION: Fish Mode Exceptions Statement of Agreement

A revised Fish Mode Exceptions SOA (SOA 2024-1) was distributed to the PRCC on June 28. Last month, M. Willis explained from a power generation perspective the likelihood an emergency would occur and the frequency. This information is also included in the background of the SOA. The need for this SOA was discussed and language was added, which provides the PRCC an opportunity to re-evaluate and reconsider this agreement as more data are collected in the coming years.

L. Rohrbach asked for questions. None were expressed. PRCC representatives present approved the Fish Mode Exceptions SOA (SOA 2024-1), as revised. K. Truscott approved the SOA via email prior to the meeting, provided there were no major changes.

The final Fish Mode Exceptions SOA, as approved during today's meeting, will also be posted to the SharePoint site and was distributed on August 5.)

S. Carlon said he does not recall how to access the SharePoint site. L. Rohrbach noted that there is an external website and internal SharePoint site. C. Dotson said he will redistribute instructions for accessing the internal and external PRCC SharePoint sites.

IV. PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee Update – White River Hatchery Program

L. Rohrbach recalled that the PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee (HSC) would like to convene a panel of experts to assess whether the White River might benefit from a hatchery supplementation program. For the past months, the PRCC HSC has been working toward convening this panel, including developing a list of potential panelists and compiling their biographies. The PRCC HSC discussed whether potential panelists should be excluded due to perceived views or opinions. There was agreement to not exclude based on this to avoid introducing bias, and panel members should be selected based on expertise. The PRCC HSC is also drafting a memorandum for the potential panelists that describes the "charge" and a scope of work (SOW). This draft SOW is modeled after the Independent Scientific Advisory Board expert review process. Lastly, the PRCC HSC is developing a bibliography of literature and compiling datasets.

L. Rohrbach reviewed the Policy Committee SOA 2013-01 (White River Spring Chinook Mitigation), No. 7, which says, "Prior to initiating the independent scientific review, the PRCC will review and approve the framework and structure of the review. Once the framework and structure of the scientific review is approved by the PRCC, the review should be complete within one year."

The PRCC HSC would like to have a package that describes the "framework and structure of the review" for PRCC review by August, for PRCC approval in September. This package will include the following: 1) the list of potential panelists and their biographies; 2) the memorandum; 3) the draft SOW; and 4) the bibliography of literature. This package will not include the compiled datasets. Once this package is approved by the PRCC, T. Hillman (PRCC HSC Facilitator) will reach out to the list of panelists. L. Rohrbach asked whether the PRCC agrees that these contents reflect what

they would want to be able to review and approve and agree with the suggested path forward toward approval of the framework and structure.

A. Murdoch asked whether the expectation is that panel members will volunteer their time. L. Rohrbach said Grant PUD is working on how to support panel members. This is difficult because panelists may be traveling from different locations, and some might be retired. The PRCC HSC actually sought out potential panelists who are recently retired and are familiar with the issues because they likely have more availability.

A. Murdoch asked whether the panelists will be expected to perform any analyses, or will sufficient data be provided to address the tasks in the SOW? L. Rohrbach said the PRCC HSC debated this. Perhaps a modeler would be helpful, but the expectation is that all data will be provided to panelists. If a panelist wants to perform analyses, this will be welcomed. The goal is to have all skillsets represented on the panel. R. O'Connor further clarified that the PRCC HSC identified different roles to support this process. There will be panelists to address the questions in the SOW. There will also be technical experts with skills and knowledge to support the panelists. If a panelist is looking for more information than what was provided, this will be relayed to T. Hillman, who will relay the question to the appropriate technical expert, and then the answer will be relayed back through T. Hillman to the panelist.

L. Rohrbach said the technical information will continue to be refined up until the panelists are convened. They may develop more as they work independently, and then the group will come back together again in a workshop to benefit from sharing findings through their different areas of expertise. A. Murdoch asked whether the panel will be providing a range of options, or does there need to be a consensus-based single option? Will this be stipulated in the SOW? L. Rohrbach said there are a lot of questions to answer that are spelled out in the SOW, and the PRCC HSC envisioned that there may be scenarios where the panelists arrive at different answers. Ultimately, everything comes back to the PRCC HSC as the deciding body. If there is no clear path forward, this is elevated to the PRCC, and lastly to the PRCC Policy Committee, if needed. The idea is to encourage different responses by working independently, but also encourage consensus by bringing the panelists back together to inform each other.

B. Gale asked, what the PRCC is approving and whether they are approving the action to convene a panel.

L. Rohrbach said that the PRCC needs to approve "the framework and structure of the review," which is the package the PRCC HSC is preparing. The PRCC Policy Committee developed a Decision Tree that was followed by the PRCC HSC, and through this process, the PRCC HSC landed on convening an expert panel. The decision to convene a panel does not come back to the PRCC. T. Dresser added, unless there is a dispute. No further comments or questions were expressed on the contents of the package and this path forward.

V. Sub-Yearling Chinook Salmon Workshop Follow-Up

L. Rohrbach said the final workshop notes were distributed to the attendees of the workshop by K. Geris on July 15 (the presentations were distributed on June 12). There

were no requests for topics to discuss today, but this agenda item is to provide an opportunity for open discussion or thoughts.

K. Murdoch said, as suggested this morning in the HCP forum, that she would like to identify a date to discuss what was learned, how it applies to planning a study, and identify any outstanding issues or questions that would preclude implementing a study. C. Dotson noted that the PRCC will be reviewing and approving the White River package in August and September. S. Carlon said the HCP-CC plans to have this discussion in October. The PRCC agreed to plan this discussion for October, as well.

T. Taylor asked about convening a joint session with the HCP-CC. C. Dotson said this will need to be discussed internally. There is a little overlap, but these committees, projects, and governing documents are still separate. A. Murdoch offered to draft a structured agenda that covers both forums. B. Gale suggested a joint discussion to address whether conducting a sub-yearling survival study is feasible. After this, convene separate discussions for each project. A. Murdoch said he does not believe the problem will be a project-specific issue. He thinks the issue will be constant throughout, but the magnitude may change farther downstream.

C. Dotson agreed drafting an agenda is a good idea and might provide clarity about which topics are joint or separate. C. Dotson said a joint topic might be a discussion about the 18°C river temperature threshold. Active migrants are specific to Grant PUD. Phase designations are specific to the HCPs. B. Gale suggested addressing terminology, such as the definitions of “residualism” and “active migrants.” He believes a juvenile is an active migrant if it is moving downstream. If it stops to rear, it does not turn into a residual until it turns back upstream. Residual fish do not leave the natal stream, or when it gets to the mainstem, it turns around. Further, when the PRCC talks about measuring survival of active migrants, he thought the No Net Impact standard around project survival included the reservoir. There seems to be a disconnect. T. Dresser said the authors of the Priest Rapids Salmon and Steelhead Settlement Agreement (SSSA) determined that sub-yearlings do not behave the same as other species, so there was no consensus on sub-yearlings. B. Gale asked whether active migrants only apply to sub-yearlings. C. Dotson said this is correct. T. Dresser said the language for summer sub-yearlings is different from all the other salmonids referenced in the SSSA.

A. Murdoch will develop a draft agenda for further discussing the Sub-Yearling Chinook Salmon Workshop. L. Rohrbach will coordinate with J. Ferguson about possibly convening a joint session to further discuss the Sub-Yearling Chinook Salmon Workshop during the PRCC and HCP-CC meetings on October 22.

B. Gale said if this is a joint session, he suggested convening in Ephrata, Washington, so there is more flexibility in timing. K. Murdoch also suggested covering joint topics during one month, and separate topics the next month.

VI. 2024 Fish Passage Operations Report

A. Fish Ladder Inspections

K. Murdoch said that last month, she met with M. Clement for the fishway inspections for June. N. Campbell from Fish Passage Center is new and attended the inspections. K. Murdoch said the new gage placards at Wanapum Dam were really helpful. C. Dotson will

inquire about installing gage placards at Priest Rapids Dam, similar to what was installed at Wanapum Dam, to assist with fish ladder inspections.

B. Fish Spill Updates

C. Dotson said there have been no changes since the last update.

C. Adult Fish Counts for 2024 (April 15 to November 15)

L. Rohrbach reviewed the adult fish counts through July 13, shown below, which are progressing as expected.

Project	Spring Chinook Salmon (Adult + Jack) ^a	Summer Chinook Salmon (Adult + Jack) ^a	Fall Chinook Salmon	Sockeye Salmon	Coho Salmon	Steelhead
Priest Rapids ^b	15,720	32,729	0	593,294	0	841
Wanapum ^b	16,810	28,671	0	559,110	4	663
Rock Island ^c	15,676	30,892	0	505,699	1	552

Notes:

a. Chinook Salmon counted from April 15 through June 13 are considered the spring Chinook Salmon. Chinook Salmon counted after June 13 are considered summer Chinook Salmon.

b. April 15 through July 13.

c. April 15 through July 11.

UPDATES

VII. Review of Outstanding No Net Impact-Funded Projects

- **Lower Wenatchee Instream Flow Enhancement Project Phase**
- **Northern Pike Removal (2022 to 2024)**
- **Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Passive Integrated Transponder Tag Detection Barge**

A. Murdoch said WDFW is developing a model to estimate overwinter survival in the Wenatchee and possibly the Chiwawa and Nason. This model also looks at release to smolt survival for steelhead and other hatchery groups detected at the barge. B. Chasco might have a presentation of these data ready by fall 2024.

- **2024 Quincy Northern Pikeminnow Derby**
- **2024 Real Time Research Avian Predation Study**

VIII. Subcommittee Updates

L. Rohrbach will continue to forward subcommittee notes and materials to PRCC members and alternates.

- Priest Rapids Fish Forum—met July 3, next meeting August 7.
- Habitat Subcommittee—met July 11, next meeting August 8.
- Fall Chinook Work Group—met May 7, next meeting October 1.
- Hatchery Subcommittee—met July 17, next meeting August 21.

IX. SOAs Discussed in 2024

SOA number	Key Words	Last Discussed	Status
SOA-2024-1	Fish Mode Exceptions	July 23, 2024	Approved

X. Next Meetings

The next meeting of the PRCC will be August 27, in person, at the Wanapum Dam Hydro Building, with a Teams meeting for virtual attendance.