



Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee Conference Call

Microsoft Teams
Tuesday, August 27, 2024
1:00 p.m. to 2:10 p.m.

Conference Call 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
 Larissa Rohrbach, Anchor QEA, Interim
 Facilitator
 Kristi Geris, Anchor QEA, Technical Support

Meeting Attendees

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

Tom Dresser, GPUD
 Scott Carlon, NMFS
 Andrew Murdoch, WDFW
 Keely Murdoch, YN
 Kirk Truscott, CTCR
 Tom Lorz, CTUIR

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.)*
- A. Murdoch will develop a draft agenda for further discussing Sub-Yearling Chinook Salmon Workshop topics. *(This item is ongoing.)*

- T. Dresser will reach out to D. Duvall for an update on the Lower Wenatchee Instream Flow Enhancement Project Phase II. (*An update from D. Duvall was forwarded on September 24.*)
- K. Truscott will reach out to H. McLellan (CTCR) for an update on the Northern Pike Removal (2022 to 2024) effort.
- L. Rohrbach will review the PRCC approval of Grant PUD's request for No Net Impact (NNI) funding for the 2024 Quincy Northern Pikeminnow Derby (PRCC meeting on February 27), regarding the request to review results of the derby for assessing the success of the derby compared to previous years.

Review Items

- None.

Decisions and Approvals

- None.

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

L. Rohrbach served as interim facilitator for the meeting.

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 July 23 meeting were distributed on August 20. No revisions were received, and the minutes were approved by members who attended that meeting. K. Truscott abstained. (*Note: B. Gale and C. Jackson approved the minutes via email on August 28, and the final minutes were distributed on August 29.*)

II. Actions Items Review

Action items from the PRCC July 23 meeting and follow-up discussions were as follows: (*Note: Italicized text corresponds to agenda items from the July 23 meeting.*)

- *C. Dotson will inform the 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.*
Since the last meeting, E. Harris resent email invites to access the internal SharePoint site. Reach out to E. Harris with questions.
- *A. Murdoch will develop a draft agenda for further discussing Sub-Yearling Chinook Salmon Workshop topics.*
This will be discussed during today's meeting.
- *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.*
This will be discussed during today's meeting.
- *C. Dotson will inquire about installing gage placards at Priest Rapids Dam (PRD), similar to what was installed at Wanapum Dam (WAN), to assist with fish ladder inspections.*
This request was communicated, and the plan is to have gage placards at both projects for ladder inspections.

III. PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee Update – White River Hatchery Program

R. O'Connor provided a status update on the PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee's (HCS's) progress toward convening an expert panel to evaluate whether a hatchery program would contribute to population recovery. Last week, the PRCC HSC convened a separate meeting to discuss White River Hatchery Program topics. This included reviewing the suite of documents that will be submitted for PRCC review that describe the expert panel process framework. The PRCC HSC worked through and approved 4 of 6 documents, including the: 1) Panel Scope (description of task); 2) Expert Panel Invitation Letter; 3) Conflict of Interest Form; and 4) Expert Panel Answer Form. The two outstanding documents include the: 1) Panel Reading List (bibliography); and 2) Panel Candidate List. Grant PUD would like to obtain approval of all documents during the next PRCC HSC meeting, before moving the documents to PRCC review. L. Rohrbach said the email distributed to the PRCC HSC, just before today's PRCC meeting, requested final edits by September 6. If there is another approval step during the next PRCC HSC meeting on September 18, this only provides 6 days for PRCC review before the PRCC September meeting. R. O'Connor was supportive of PRCC approval in October, if needed, as this still aligns with convening the expert panel in early 2025. L. Rohrbach encouraged PRCC HSC members to communicate these details internally to PRCC members, so everyone is aware of what is needed and when.

IV. Sub-Yearling Chinook Salmon Workshop Follow-Up

L. Rohrbach recalled discussing possibly convening a joint session. She had an action item to discuss this with J. Ferguson, which she did. She understands the HCP-CC discussed this topic this morning. K. Murdoch said the HCP-CC did discuss this, but it was unclear whether Chelan PUD or Douglas PUD is interested in convening a joint session. S. Carlon added that Chelan PUD and Douglas PUD have an action item to reach out to Grant PUD. K. Truscott agreed with this summary and added that he is supportive of a joint session, for meeting efficiency, and notably if the meeting is in-person. He suggested addressing items germane to all PUDs jointly and addressing project-specific items separately. T. Dresser said Grant PUD will wait to hear from Chelan PUD and Douglas PUD. A. Murdoch said he hopes to have a draft framework for a joint agenda ready by next week and will provide this to L. Rohrbach for distribution and discussion next month. This document is intended to provide a synopsis of what was shared during the workshop, so discussions can be more efficient. He will request that committee members review and edit it, and hopefully from this, develop a joint agenda that is advantageous for all PUDs and committee members.

V. 2024 Fish Passage Operations Report

A. Fish Ladder Inspections

K. Murdoch said inspections are continuing each month, including an in-person inspection every other month.

B. Fish Spill Updates

C. Dotson said juvenile fish spill ended on August 16, at both PRD and WAN, at which time both projects immediately transitioned into adult fallback fish spill. This non-turbine passage will continue through November 15 at both projects.

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

L. Rohrbach reviewed the adult fish counts through August 17, shown below, which are progressing as expected.

VI. Project	Spring Chinook Salmon (Adult + Jack) ^a	Summer Chinook Salmon (Adult + Jack) ^b	Fall Chinook Salmon ^c	Sockeye Salmon	Coho Salmon	Steelhead
Priest Rapids	15,720	40,766	486	698,968	9	3,654
Wanapum	16,810	37,622	382	696,905	1	3,120
Rock Island	15,676	44,621	476	727,688	2	2,695

Notes:

a: Chinook counted from April 15 to June 13 are considered spring Chinook Salmon.

b: Chinook counted from June 14 to August 13 are considered summer Chinook Salmon.

c: Chinook counted from August 14 to August 17 are considered fall Chinook Salmon.

T. Dresser recalled that Grant PUD routinely logs crowder cleaning activities at PRD and WAN. There is an alarm in the powerhouse that notifies operators to operate the picketed leads (or crowdors) to let debris float down. During these activities, information is collected such as when the crowdors were open, for how long, and whether there were any fish passing while the crowdors were in the open position. Based on these data, other metrics can be calculated such as the average amount of time the crowdors

were open per year. While meeting with the operators in August, he discovered that WAN had not been collecting these data this year, primarily due to substantial turnover and miscommunication beginning at the start of bypass season until now. Therefore, there will be no daily data for WAN. In speaking with the operators at WAN, there have been no fish observed passing while the crowdors were open. At PRD, there is a stable crew with the same operators, and daily metrics will be shared as usual. In speaking with the operators at PRD, there have been no fish observed passing while the crowdors were open, and operators have not had to open the crowdors as much compared to last year.

UPDATES

VI. Review of Outstanding NNI-Funded Projects

- **Lower Wenatchee Instream Flow Enhancement Project Phase II**
T. Dresser will reach out to D. Duvall for an update.
- **Northern Pike Removal (2022 to 2024)**
K. Truscott will reach out to H. McLellan for an update. A presentation will likely occur when there is a full dataset to share. L. Rohrbach asked about an end date for the current funding. C. Dotson said this current 3-year contract ends December 31, 2024.
- **Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Passive Integrated Transponder Tag Detection Barge**
A. Murdoch said a presentation may be ready by November 2024, at the earliest. Staff are analyzing survival estimates out of the Wenatchee, which will also inform how well the barge is functioning to capture wild fish. Staff are also analyzing a few hatchery groups. L. Rohrbach suggested presenting the hatchery data to the PRCC HSC.
- **2024 Quincy Northern Pikeminnow Derby**
T. Dresser said this event is scheduled for October 4 to 6. L. Rohrbach suggested a presentation of outcomes in November 2024. She recalled earlier this year, the PRCC approved Grant PUD's request for NNI funding for this derby, including rescheduling the derby from spring to fall in hopes of better participation and better catch. The PRCC wanted to be sure the derby still met the objectives of NNI funding. She suggested reviewing this PRCC approval (PRCC meeting on February 27, 2024) regarding the request to review results of the derby for assessing the success of the derby compared to previous years. T. Dresser recalled these metrics included number of fish, fish size, number of anglers, among other things. Grant PUD plans to collect these data, which should address the PRCC's request. The goal (for the PRCC) is to remove a higher number of predators. Non-target species cannot be a part of the derby, but anglers will be encouraged to retain and report incidental catch of non-native predators.

- **2024 Real Time Research (RTR) Avian Predation Study**

L. Rohrbach said there have been no updates since June 28, except the notification to attend a presentation by RTR on August 13. C. Dotson expects a draft report by late fall, and will plan for a presentation to the PRCC in late 2024 or early 2025, as was prepared in previous years.

VII. Subcommittee Updates

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

- Priest Rapids Fish Forum – met August 7, next meeting September 4.
- Habitat Subcommittee – did not meet in August, next meeting September 12.
- Fall Chinook Work Group – met May 7, next meeting October 1.
- Hatchery Subcommittee – met August 21, next meeting September 18.

VIII. SOAs Discussed in 2024

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

IX. Next Meetings

The next meeting of the PRCC will be September 24, in person, at the Wanapum Dam Hydro Building, with a Teams meeting for virtual attendance.