

PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee Meeting
Thursday, November 15, 2018
Grant PUD Wenatchee Office and via Conference Call
Meeting Summary

PRCC HSC Members

Matt Cooper, USFWS
Brett Farman, NOAA (via phone)
Bill Gale, USFWS
Peter Graf, GPUD (alt)
Keely Murdoch, Yakama Nation
Todd Pearsons, GPUD
Mike Tonseth, WDFW
Kirk Truscott, CCT

Other Participants

Deanne Pavlik-Kunkel, GPUD
Elizabeth McManus, Facilitator (via phone)
Ryan Benson, ONA (for joint agenda item)
Dave Duvall, GPUD (for joint agenda item)
Catherine Willard, CPUD (for joint agenda item)

Decisions

- A. Approved the September 2018 meeting summary as amended

Actions

1. Ross Strategic will update the draft White River 2026 memo to simplify it and reflect the potential for agreement that emerged during the discussion. The memo will be distributed with a request for review by email with a view toward finishing the update in 2018.
2. Ross Strategic will distribute HGMP updates for immediate voting.

I. Okanagan Sockeye Program (Joint HSC-HCP Agenda Item)

- A. Update on Skaha Lake Sockeye Reintroduction Program –** an ONA representative provided an overview of their long-term project to re-introduce sockeye into Skaha Lake. The presentation included information on ONA hatchery operations and production numbers, Skaha Lake pre-smolt and natural production estimates, and fry production data. ONA staff also discussed the Okanagan Lake program and estimates of potential in-lake rearing.
- B. Questions and Comments**
- HSC and HCP members thanked the ONA representative for his work and for the update.

II. Updates and Meeting Summary Review

- A. September 2018 Meeting Summary –** HSC members approved the September 2018 meeting summary as amended.
- B. HCP –** *Note: See Appendix A for summary of joint HSC-HCP discussion during November HCP meeting.*

III. White River 2026 Memo

- A. Updates to White River Memo** – The PRCC requested that the HSC review the White River 2026 Decision Framework memo and provide any updates. This is the third HSC discussion of memo updates. As in previous discussions, the group was in general agreement that most of the memo continues to be complete and accurate. Discussion focused on trying to clearly identify and narrow (or eliminate) areas of remaining disagreement. After a lengthy discussion of conceptual models, the group realized that the conceptual models themselves likely were not the area of disagreement; rather differences seemed to center around to what extent information on limiting factors and associated mechanisms, particularly with respect to survival in Lake Wenatchee, is needed. Yakama Nation and others felt strongly that specific information is needed on what mechanisms are limiting survival through Lake Wenatchee. Grant PUD felt that because there is a work-around for the lake (i.e., release smolts below the dam) and because Grant’s mitigation is focused on hatcheries, information on mechanisms affecting in-lake survival might be less critical from a hatchery mitigation perspective. Other parties had different perspectives that fell somewhere between those two. The group also discussed when, and by whom, consideration of alternatives to hatchery-based mitigation might come into play and to what extent information needed to support those discussions should be captured in the White River memo, without resolution. At the end, there was some tentative convergence around trying to create a much simpler update to the memo to capture new information that has become available in the past few years to see if that could serve the PRCC request.
- B. Next Steps**
- Ross Strategic will update the draft White River 2026 memo to simplify it and reflect the potential for agreement that emerged during the discussion. The memo will be distributed with a request for review by email with a view toward finishing the update in 2018. [Note: a memo was sent to the PRCC in December, 2018]

IV. HGMP Addenda for Fall Chinook and Methow Summer Chinook

- A. Discussion** – The HGMPs will be updated with addenda at the request of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS); the modified proposed action resulted from consultation as addenda to this HGMPs. The other content of the HGMPs and the content of the modified proposed actions are not being changed from what was previously reviewed, this is housekeeping step to include the modified proposed actions as part of the HGMPs.
- B. Next Steps**
- Ross Strategic will distribute the HGMP updates for immediate voting.

V. Wrap Up and Next Steps

- A. Next Meeting:** December 19, 2018 *Note: Due to HSC members’ availability in December this meeting will likely be cancelled.*
- B. Potential Agenda Items:**
- White River 2026 memo

- Other topics of interest, TBD

Meeting Materials

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

- November meeting agenda
- Revised WR framework memo
- PRH M&E monthly update for September
- White River Rotary Trap Monthly Report
- Nason Creek Rotary Trap Monthly Report
- August 2018 PUD Hatchery Report
- September PUD monthly hatchery report

Appendix A: Summary of Joint Discussion from September 2018 HC Meeting

II. Joint HCP-HC/PRCC HSC

A. Genetic Monitoring (Tracy Hillman)

Tracy Hillman welcomed Ilana Koch (Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission) to the call and asked for an update from the geneticist panel. Koch said the geneticist panel is working on the questions posed by the Hatchery Committees. She said they are continuing to share information and draft responses and do not have a set date to report back to the Hatchery Committees with their findings. Hillman asked whether she has any questions for the committees, or the committees have any questions for the geneticists. There were no questions. Hillman asked Koch to please let him know if the geneticists need any further information and to please communicate with him when a draft product will be available, so the committees can schedule a time to discuss it.

B. NMFS Consultation Update (Brett Farman)

Brett Farman thanked the Hatchery Committees for their comments on the draft Environmental Assessment for the Upper Columbia River Steelhead and Summer/Fall Chinook Salmon programs. He said HGMP addenda are complete for these programs and should reflect what is described in the Biological Opinion. He said next, the Environmental Assessment will go out for public comment along with the HGMPs that are ready. He said for the HGMPs that are not complete yet, the next step is review by the Hatchery Committees. Deanne Pavlik-Kunkel said the Wenatchee summer Chinook salmon HGMP was initially approved in 2009 but has been updated to focus solely on the Wenatchee program. She said a preamble has also been added per Emi Kondo's request and there are no other substantial changes to the document. Pavlik-Kunkel said the Wenatchee HGMP and the Priest Rapids fall Chinook salmon HGMP were both sent to Kondo.

Todd Pearsons said the Hatchery Committees are being asked to review the Wenatchee summer Chinook salmon HGMP because it is a shared program with Chelan PUD. He said the Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee Hatchery Subcommittee (PRCC HSC) will be asked to review the Methow summer Chinook salmon and Priest Rapids fall Chinook salmon HGMPs. Pearsons said the primary change throughout is that each HGMP now addresses a single program. Hillman asked what is the review period for the HGMP? Pavlik-Kunkel said aligning public comment on the HGMP and Environmental Assessment would be ideal; therefore, she requested comments back within 2 weeks of the HGMP being distributed. She said she will coordinate with Catherine Willard to distribute the document for review. She clarified that the content of the HGMP has already been through consultation and is included in the Biological Opinion, so it is unlikely that any major changes will be made based on review. She said the PRCC HSC is required to approve any addenda to HGMPs; therefore, a review period is needed. Farman clarified that the Biological Opinion has already been signed, so the addenda to the HGMP should be approved in its current state—changing the HGMP would reopen consultation. Willard said the Rocky Reach

and Rock Island Hatchery Committees are not required to approve HGMP addenda; however, approval by the committees will be tracked as a decision item regardless.

C. Coho Salmon Acclimation at Twisp Pond (Keely Murdoch)

Keely Murdoch welcomed Tom Scribner (YN) to the call to provide additional information about the request to acclimate coho salmon at Twisp Pond. She said YN's coho salmon reintroduction project is ready to begin the natural implementation phase. As part of making this phase successful, YN has been considering acclimating coho salmon in the Twisp Pond, as described in the memorandum, "Request Committee approval to acclimate 110,000 coho smolts in the Twisp Acclimation Pond in spring 2019" (Attachment B), which was distributed to the Hatchery Committees on November 15, 2018. She said the Hatchery Committees have previously approved co-acclimating spring Chinook salmon in the Twisp Pond with steelhead and coho salmon. Specifically, she said the committees approved acclimating Douglas PUD's 37,000 coho salmon with an option to acclimate additional fish. She said the Twisp Pond will not have any coho production component from Douglas PUD in 2019, because that component will start in 2020. She said YN requests approval to acclimate a total of 110,000 coho salmon (YN production only) in the Twisp Ponds in 2019 along with spring Chinook salmon. She said YN and Douglas PUD have discussed this and the density indices would be at a low (i.e., acceptable) range.

Greg Mackey said Douglas PUD staff have discussed the densities and the intent of the Twisp Pond. He said the pond was designed to acclimate 225,000 spring Chinook salmon, so acclimating 110,000 coho salmon plus about 30,000 spring Chinook is well below a density that would be concerning. He said while touring the Twisp Pond and surrounding area, Douglas PUD staff noticed extensive fire damage in the Twisp River Basin, particularly, evidence of fire damage on the high slopes above the Twisp Pond. He cautioned that the Twisp River may have a heavy debris load of mud, ash, and fire debris over the next 5 years (depending on how the landscape recovers), so fish managers should plan for the potential to release fish early if fish health becomes compromised. Mackey said one contributing factor to the concern about debris is Douglas PUD's experience with the Twisp Pond last year. He said a small stream enters the Twisp River above the pond and weir site. A large load of mud from this stream filled a quarter of the pond last spring, which had to be excavated. He said Douglas PUD is interested in working with YN on this acclimation strategy and plans to acclimate the Douglas PUD coho program component there in 2020.

Mike Tonseth asked whether different species of fish were comingled in past instances of multispecies acclimation and whether a barrier net is proposed for this acclimation. Murdoch said a divider net was initially proposed when the Statement of Agreement for Douglas PUD's coho salmon mitigation was approved [note: the SOA states, "...accommodate the YN's actions to modify that pond to allow co-acclimation of coho with spring Chinook and steelhead in a manner that allows the separate release of co-acclimated species."]. She said the Hatchery Committees decided that divider nets were not needed nor desirable for steelhead or spring Chinook, and this may apply to coho as well. She said she envisioned this acclimation as comingled (as previously approved for other species) but the decision to use a divider net is up to the Hatchery Committees and hatchery managers. She said coho and Chinook salmon are much

closer in size to each other than the larger steelhead, so there might be less concern about negative interactions. Mackey said when steelhead and Chinook salmon were comingled, staff monitored for fin-nipping and unusual mortality but did not find anything out of the ordinary. He said the intent of the divider described in the original Statement of Agreement was to facilitate releasing fish at different times, not to limit interaction. He said a divider in the pond is difficult to maintain and can complicate release strategies. Without a divider, both species undergo volitional release over the same period—an approach Douglas PUD and YN are both comfortable with. He said WDFW was operating the ponds at the time of comingling Chinook and steelhead, so he assumes WDFW was also comfortable with this approach. Scribner said spring Chinook and coho salmon have been comingled in the backchannel at Winthrop NFH and there were no indications of health or growth issues. Tonseth asked what the ratio was between spring Chinook and coho salmon at Winthrop NFH. Murdoch said she will find that information and distribute it. She said she expects fin-nipping would be more related to the overall density than the ratio of species, and the ratio of species proposed at Twisp Pond is four coho salmon to one spring Chinook salmon.

Regarding ponding, sampling, and release, Murdoch said if the fish are going to be monitored and sampled, more coho salmon will need to be handled than spring Chinook salmon due to the ratio. Tom Kahler asked whether coho salmon are ponded at a smaller size than spring Chinook salmon. Tonseth said spring Chinook salmon are ponded at 15 to 18 fish per pound (fpp) and coho salmon are ponded around 20 to 23 fpp. Tonseth asked what the PIT-tag component of the comingled fish is. Mackey said there will be 5,000 PIT-tagged spring Chinook salmon. Murdoch said she is not sure about the PIT-tagging strategy for the coho salmon, but she will find out and communicate it to the committees. Mackey said there is a PIT-tag reader at the pond outlet. Kirk Truscott asked why the ponding size and release size is the same (15 to 18 fpp) for spring Chinook salmon. Mackey said the river is cold and the fish are only in the pond for approximately 1 month, so they do not grow much. Truscott asked Murdoch and Scribner where the fish would otherwise be reared and released if not at the Twisp Pond. He suggested spreading the production to different areas to protect them from environmental conditions. Murdoch said the coho salmon component at Twisp Pond is new and intended to distribute fish into spawning habitat. She said some of these fish would have been released in the lower (Twisp Pond (owned by the Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation), further downstream, and some perhaps would be released from Winthrop NFH. She said the natural production phase involves increasing the total release in the basin, so some of the production is new. She said acclimation options in the Twisp River are limited for access to spawning habitat; therefore, Twisp Pond is the only proposed location. Truscott asked whether all the spring Chinook salmon are sourced from fish with nondetectable or very low enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) results. Tonseth said yes. Truscott said he is comfortable with the densities proposed. He asked whether Douglas PUD staff will operate the pond. Mackey confirmed. Bill Gale asked whether the Hatchery Committees are being asked to approve this for 2019 only, or for multiple years. Murdoch says the 2015 Statement of Agreement addressing acclimation at Twisp Pond states acclimation can occur with annual approval. The Wells Hatchery Committee approved acclimation of 110,000 coho salmon at Twisp Pond as follows: WDFW, NMFS, CCT, USFWS, Douglas PUD, and YN approved during the meeting on November 15, 2018.