Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee Meeting

Webex Meeting
Tuesday February 28, 2023
9:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

Final Meeting Minutes

PRCC Representatives and Alternatives

Curt Dotson, Tom Dresser (Alt), GPUD
Kirk Truscott, Casey Baldwin (Alt), CTCR
Tom Skiles, CTUIR
Scott Carlon, Justin Yeager (Alt), NMFS
Jim Craig, Bill Gale (Alt) USFWS
Chad Jackson, A. Murdoch (Alt) WDFW
Keely Murdoch, Brandon Rogers (Alt), YN

Meeting Attendees

Bryan Nordlund, Facilitator
Larissa Rohrbach, Anchor QEA
Tom Skiles, CTUIR
Curt Dotson, GPUD
Rod O'Connor, GPUD
Tim Taylor, GPUD
Jim Craig, USFWS
Chad Jackson, WDFW
Andrew Murdoch WDFW
Keely Murdoch, YN

Actions Items

- Request for K. Truscott to coordinate a presentation by the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CTCR) on 2022 Northern Pike Removal Efforts.
- C. Dotson will inquire with RTR whether comments on the draft 2022 Avian Predation Report should be shared in a meeting prior to the next PRCC meeting.
- K. Truscott will identify a PRCC Policy Representative for the CTCR.
- C. Dotson will distribute comments on the revised draft survival study plan with Grant PUD responses.

Review Items

- RTR's *Avian Predation in the Columbia River Basin 2022 Draft Annual Report* was distributed by B. Nordlund on February 11 and is available for review through the end of February.

- A. Murdoch gave the presentation entitled *UCR Overshoot Steelhead, Part 2* in today's meeting. It is available for review and further discussion in the March 28 meeting.
- Grant PUD's draft *2022 Activities Under Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project* report (P&I report) was distributed by D. Firestone (Grant PUD) on March 6, with comments due to her or T. Dresser by April 6, 2023.

Decision Item(s)

- The PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee-approved statement of agreement (SOA) regarding *Grant PUD Hatchery Production Objectives, Release Years 2024-2033* was approved by the PRCC in today's meeting (S. Carlon approved via email the same day).

I. Welcome, Announcements and Introductions

- B. Nordlund welcomed everyone to the meeting. T. Dresser and S. Carlon were unable to attend.

II. Agenda Review

- The 2022 RTR Avian Predation Study will not be presented today and will be coordinated for presentation in the next meeting on March 28, 2023.
- A presentation by A. Murdoch entitled *Upper Columbia River Overshoot Steelhead (Part 2)* was added to the agenda.

III. Meeting Minutes Status

- The December 16, 2022, minutes were distributed by B. Nordlund on December 26, 2022, and no revisions were received. The draft January 24, 2023, minutes were distributed by L. Rohrbach on February 3, with revisions due by February 17. Revised versions of both sets of minutes were distributed on February 23 for approval in today's meeting.
- K. Murdoch provided additional minor edits to the January 24 minutes in today's meeting.
- Both sets of meeting minutes were approved by representatives present in today's meeting, and by S. Carlon via email the same day.

IV. Fish Passage Operations Report

Update on Investigations for Fish Count Discrepancy

In the January 24 meeting, T. Dresser summarized Grant PUD's decision not to post the 2022 fish count data from Wanapum Dam (WAN) and Priest Rapids Dam (PRD) on public-facing databases, specifically the Fish Passage Center's (FPC) database. J. Craig agreed that it would be prudent not to allow outside contractors use of those data. C. Dotson said T. Dresser is still in discussions with FPC regarding their concerns

that those data would not be available on the public-facing site. C. Jackson summarized FPC's outreach to comanagers via email when they heard of Grant PUD's request; the two main concerns were that there needs to be some comanager agreement on whether to include the data, and a write up provided by Grant PUD about why those data are in doubt and why they are not available on the site.

Fish Ladder Inspections

No updates at this time.

Fish Spill Updates

No updates until fish-spill is reinitiated in spring 2023.

Fish Counts for 2022

No updates until fish counts are reinitiated in April 2023.

V. Approval/Discussion of Hatchery Sub-Committee SOA 2022-02 (Re-Calc)

K. Murdoch summarized the intent of the recalculation effort to recalculate and adjust hatchery production numbers based on changes in juvenile survival, adult survival, and adult abundance. There were differences related to No Net Impact (NNI) that remained unresolved, and the PRCC HSC is slowly working on a document to summarize matters for consideration by the PRCC Policy Representatives.

All representatives of the PRCC that were present approved the SOA; S. Carlon approved via email the same day.

VI. Policy Meeting Planning — Timing, Format, and Discussion

B. Nordlund summarized the intent to convene the PRCC Policy Representatives in mid-2023 to meet and become introduced to each other and for Grant PUD to present process highlights from the PRCC and subcommittees. The intent is to ensure participants have a broad understanding of what the various committees associated with the Priest Rapids Salmon and Steelhead Settlement Agreement (SSSA) have worked on across the Mid-Columbia. Grant PUD is asking for input on the format of that meeting. Some concerns have been shared in the PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee that Grant PUD would be preparing presentations of the highlights of the year with no opportunity for other members to review or contribute. B. Nordlund asked the PRCC representatives for feedback on the policy meeting format.

K. Murdoch noted that when this topic was discussed in the PRCC HSC, it sounded like the presentations would summarize how the committees were going, based on Grant PUD's perspective. In the PRCC HSC, some members raised concerns that Grant PUD is only one signatory, and it doesn't feel right that only one signatory presents their perspective without other signatories presenting how they felt the committees were going. It might be more appropriate for the neutral facilitators of each of the committees to give the presentations.

B. Nordlund said, speaking for himself, he would ask Grant PUD or others to prepare a presentation, then could consider presenting. K. Murdoch said, if asked, Tracy Hillman

could probably provide presentations for the Habitat, Hatchery, and Fall Chinook Workgroup subcommittees.

J. Craig liked the idea of being able to review what may be presented. USFWS will be making some adjustments to representation in the coming year; Bill Gale will be the alternate for PRCC and PRCC Policy Representatives.

K. Truscott said he will need to communicate internally on who should represent CTCR as their policy representative.

C. Jackson confirmed Brock Hoenes is WDFW's PRCC Policy Representative. He said the planned approach for the meeting seems consistent with other recent Policy meetings: providing a chance for the other PUDs to talk about what's been going on since previous meetings. He said he is comfortable with this format, assuming it would be followed up fairly soon with a more issue-driven meeting.

T. Skiles asked whether the format will be any different than what was planned in December 2022 but ultimately cancelled due to weather concerns. B. Nordlund said the only difference is that Grant PUD is now asking for feedback on the format. Skiles said his main feedback is that the presentation of material feels somewhat skewed if given by Grant PUD. Skiles confirmed that Brent Hall will be the Policy Representative for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

C. Dotson deferred final thoughts to T. Dresser, who is convening the meeting on behalf of Grant PUD. T. Dresser will provide additional detail in the March 28 meeting.

VII. Steelhead Overshoot and Fallback — Coordination and Discussion

A. Murdoch gave the presentation entitled *UCR Overshoot Steelhead, Part 2*. He said that when he gave an overview presentation in the past PRCC meeting (December 16 2022), he was asked to analyze the data at a higher level of detail to try to identify project-specific impacts. The following are highlights of his presentation:

- Overshoot and fallback success (survival to spawning tributaries) was shown as a function of the number of dams crossed. The data shown are the means across years, but there is variability around the interannual observation data. PRD has low interannual variability compared to Rock Island, Rocky Reach, and Wells dams, in part due to sample size but also in part due to operations.
- The cumulative count of overshoot fallbacks was shown over the spill periods. C. Dotson asked why the month of June is missing and not represented in the graph. A. Murdoch said spring spill starts in April, and by end of May, no more downstream passage was observed. By June, all the overshoots have already passed back downstream.
- "Known overshoots" are fish that are PIT tagged as juveniles, then detected as passing upstream at PRD, and later detected passing through the hydrosystem and/or tributary PIT-tag arrays.

- In 2015 and 2016, a group of fish were radio tagged at PRD as part of a WDFW-conducted study in support of our PIT-tagging operations. This 2-year radio telemetry study was conducted to help validate PIT-tag data being used in models and to test modeling assumptions and to look at overwinter survival in the tributaries. This work was done by Nate Fuchs at University of Idaho in Chris Caudell's lab. These radio-tagged fish could be included in the group of overshoot observations to be able to make inferences about project-specific impacts. A subset of the radio-tagged fish, "unknown overshoots," were detected migrating downstream of PRD. Before making inferences that these are truly overshoots, A. Murdoch said he wanted to ensure these unknown overshoots are representative of the known overshoots. A. Murdoch found a similar distribution between the unknown overshoots and known overshoots based on most upstream detections. T. Skiles said he does not understand the association between radio-tagged fish and unknown overshoot. A. Murdoch said the PIT-tagged fish numbers are driven by tag rates and downstream populations. For unknown overshoots that lack PIT tags, it's not known who those fish are until they are observed at a downstream location, or in the case of the radio-tagged fish, they were observed moving downstream through PRD. T. Skiles said he understood that if they are radio tagged and were not detected by a PIT array in the ladder, its not known if they actually ascended a ladder into a forebay before falling back.
- A. Murdoch said the proportion of fallback that occurred in fall versus spring, based on most upstream detection with radio tags, shows the number of spring migrants increases with each project upstream, and the median fallback period shifts later. This is presumably due to a combination of distance and lack of fall spill at the upstream projects. There are survival implications for this, because the earlier the fish return to their natal stream, the better survival to spawn.
- Pooling the data for PIT-tagged fish and radio-tagged fish shows most successful overshoots (later observed downstream and then in their natal stream) were observed above PRD, then the second largest group was observed above Wells Dam. A. Murdoch reported that K. See reviewed all wild fish detected in each of the four Upper Columbia River tributaries; based on detection probability of lower tributary arrays as they go on their spawning migration, there was a high probability of detecting fish in the tributaries (98%) assuming overshoot fish select similar habitat as wild fish. If there were a lot of overshoot fish in tributaries, they would be observed on the numerous PIT-tag arrays. Out of all the years, there are 13 known overshoots entering a spawning tributary. Approximately five fish were observed in the fall that were considered "dip-ins" to tributaries because they were not detected in the spring entering a known spawning area.

- A higher proportion of overshoots occur at Wells Dam that remain above the dam (mostly observed during spawning in Methow and Okanogan rivers) and do not fall back compared to the other projects. Fallback success by project shows 50.1% passed down over Wells Dam, and of those, 32.7% made it back down past PRD.
- K. Truscott asked whether the fallbacks include kelts. A. Murdoch said no but added that N. Fuchs did look at kelting rate. Steelhead were assigned as kelts after they completed a spawning migration, and kelts migrate downstream later than fallbacks.
- The mean annual estimated number of overshoots by project, based on last detection in Mid-Columbia, shows most fish only pass over PRD/WAN and do not continue farther upstream.
- Project overshoot survival for wild steelhead and the proportion of overshoots with unknown survival status were calculated for each project as a metric of project impact. The percent with unknown survival status was shown to identify where the unknown final movements or mortality may be occurring.
- The proportion of successful or unsuccessful overshoots (surviving to detection downstream of PRD or not) can be calculated for downstream populations (Snake, Yakima, and Walla Walla/Touchet rivers and others) based on last known downstream detections. Sites downstream of the Walla Walla River can be influenced by the federal hydrosystem. There is some variability, but the overshoot success ranges within 50% to 78% for those populations.

A. Murdoch concluded that these data show a good signal from operational changes that were implemented at PRD and WAN to spill for overshoots/fallbacks. As a result, the other projects are benefiting because their fish have to pass through PRD and WAN first. The fish will benefit the most if every project participates in providing downstream passage during this critical period.

C. Jackson noted that this information has not yet been previously shared with the PRCC members and suggested the PRCC review the information presented and continue the discussion in the March 28 meeting.

VIII. New GPUD Requirement for Insurance for Funded Projects

C. Dotson said this topic is intended for the awareness of the PRCC going forward. There are new layers of insurance requirements in Grant PUD's contracting processes. There may be additional insurance requirements that the contractor or consultant may not be aware of when preparing a proposal, requiring them to come back to the PRCC to ask for additional funds for additional insurance costs. T. Dresser will provide more detail on insurance and risk concerns in the March 28 meeting.

IX. Spill Representatives for 2023

Every year, a group is convened to address issues that arise during the spill season. Two PRCC members will work with C. Dotson and Grant PUD to mitigate any issues that arise, make short-term decisions for the committee, and report back to the representative. T. Skiles volunteered as a 2023 spill representative, and S. Carlon agreed to serve as the second representative via email following the meeting.

X. Update on Fund Contributions

NNI habitat fund deposits have been made (February 15 is the deadline). C. Dotson reviewed the amounts that have been deposited to three funds associated with the PRCC and subcommittees. B. Nordlund distributed the invoice for the annual funding to habitat accounts during the meeting to show these amounts. T. Dresser will provide an additional update in the March 28 meeting.

XI. Continuing Preliminary Discussion — Survival Study Talking Points

B. Nordlund summarized briefly the ongoing discussion on potential next steps if survival standards are met or are not met.

K. Murdoch emphasize that if the standards are not met, then a repeat of the survival study test should be a mandatory next step before making adjustments to operations. That is consistent with the way this was approached at the beginning of the SSSA, to take the average of three survival study results. The other point of discussion is whether the NNI fund should be reinstated for non-survival mitigation or not, at least until the survival standards are retested and it's proven they are being met. C. Dotson said Grant PUD shares the assumption that a retest would be performed in a subsequent year if survival standards are not met. In the SSSA, the average of three consecutive years of survival study results is to be calculated; partly to account for interannual variability that cannot be controlled (e.g., in flow and temperature). B. Nordlund said he does not fully understand how test results would be averaged. K. Murdoch said there is an SOA (2019-01) that says one value can be used, and if the standard is not met, an additional year of study can be performed, which can be averaged with the previous year's results. The SSSA doesn't discuss whether retesting is necessary if the standard is not met; but that would be consistent with YN interpretation, and it would be consistent with the habitat conservation plans for upstream projects. B. Nordlund said a check-in survival study was conceived to make sure survival standards are still being met. C. Dotson said he agrees; the survival check in is a one-time test. If survival standards are met, the study is done; if survival standards are not met, they should be retested for another year. If standards are still not met, another year of testing may be performed, but Grant PUD could consider looking into operations or other issues (e.g., flow and predation) influencing why survival standards are not met.

J. Craig agreed with the mandatory retest to calculate an average with the results of the preceding year, not the test result from 10 years prior. If standards are not met after 2 years of study, it would be a decision for the PRCC to consider whether testing for a third year should be done or to move forward with operational changes.

K. Truscott said he had no other feedback in addition to what has already been stated but said that while developing the survival study methodologies and analysis, it will be

beneficial to be as detailed as possible when working with a multiple-project study. If survival study fish are only released at the Rock Island Dam tail race and PRD tail race, we will not be able to know whether a problem occurred in the WAN project or PRD project. This lack of detailed understanding would open Grant PUD up to additional years of study, would not be good for the resource, and would open Grant PUD up to risk of being unable to meet standards across both projects. K. Truscott suggested there should be separate results for each of the projects.

C. Jackson and T. Skiles had not other comments to add to the conversation.

B. Nordlund reminded the PRCC that they have talked in the past about study objectives, species, and life stages, and Grant PUD has developed the study plan for each of those elements to some extent. C. Dotson said Grant PUD has expanded upon the initial draft sent out several months ago. Comments were received from YN and WDFW, and Grant PUD will send those comments with responses out to the committees soon. Those comments have also been incorporated into the next version of the survival study plan. For instance, Grant PUD is planning to segment the study area to understand where problems arise. Grant PUD is looking into adding detection sites in the WAN reservoir at Crescent Bar, Sunland Estates, Vantage Bridge and in the WAN forebay, and two sites in PRD reservoir and at the forebay.

T. Dresser asked for a study plan for steelhead and yearling Chinook salmon to start in 2025 and to also make it inclusive of the sockeye salmon component. If the PRCC is designing a study plan, design one study plan for all species to take place in 2025, 2026, and 2027 using the same concept for all species with the same detection sites in the river. The study would start in 2025 with steelhead and yearling Chinook salmon, then sockeye salmon in 2026. If standards are not met for steelhead or Chinook salmon, a retest would occur in 2026 for those species. If needed, a retest for sockeye salmon would occur in 2027. Carrying out survival studies for three species at once is challenging; there is some fluidity needed in the overarching schedule to adapt if retesting is needed.

C. Dotson said Grant PUD is still planning around using Rock Island Dam as the collection point for test fish. The number of fish collected would be based on the percentage of populations mixed in the mainstem. Rocky Reach Dam is a good collection point but lacks the Wenatchee population component. Grant PUD has met with Chelan PUD to discuss use of the Rock Island facility, and Chelan PUD is comfortable with contracting with Grant PUD to do that. Fish would be collected at the Rock Island smolt index facility, then transported to Wanapum Fish Town for release into the river. B. Nordlund asked whether there are still any monitoring structures on the Wenatchee River from which a subsample fish could be collected. K. Murdoch said there are no diversion points; there are only smolt traps. A. Murdoch said that a long time ago, he operated a trap that doesn’t exist anymore in the Dryden Canal.

K. Truscott said it is important to have the most representative study fish in terms of stock composition, but prior migration experience is also important (i.e., the number of projects the fish have navigated prior to entering the WAN/PRD project area).
K. Truscott said his preference be to collect fish out of the WAN forebay by gatewell dipping. C. Dotson said collection at the WAN gate wells creates much more variability

because the ability to collect is affected by weather and wind. Also, once the WAN bypass facility was installed, the number of fish in the gatewells was much reduced; thus, gatewell-collected fish from PRD were also used by transporting them back up to WAN and mixing them with the WAN gatewell-collected fish. By collecting at Rock Island smolt index bypass, they would be handling many fewer fish because collection by gatewell dipping at WAN required Grant PUD to over-collect in the past and hold extra fish to make up for days when fish could not be collected during windy weather. B. Nordlund asked whether Grant PUD is feeling comfortable with the ability to collect fish at Chelan PUD's facility. C. Dotson said, based on numbers and species of fish passing through that facility observed by Chelan PUD, they are comfortable with how they would collect the fish, move them into totes, and transport fish to WAN Fish Town in a manner that is similar to the procedure that was done to transport fish from the WAN gatewells. It would be new, and Grant PUD would be contracting for Chelan PUD to do the work. However, Chelan PUD staff know how to do this, and Grant PUD would be on site working with them, so Grant PUD is comfortable with that approach.

Updates

XII. Review of Outstanding NNI Funded Projects

- **Lower Wenatchee Instream Flow Enhancement Project Phase II.**
  No update since last month. This item will be removed from the agenda for next month.
- **2022 RTR Avian Predation study.** RTR is currently finishing their 2022 annual report to Grant PUD and the Bonneville Power Administration. The draft report was distributed by B. Nordlund on February 11, 2023, for review by PRCC members by the end of February. The final report will be available at the end of March. K. Murdoch asked whether comments on the draft report should be provided in advance of the next meeting now that the presentation has been delayed until March 28. C. Dotson suggested setting up a conference call prior to next month's PRCC to discuss comments on their draft report or extending the final deadline in a change order for their report. C. Dotson will inquire with RTR regarding what contractual deadlines they may have for their lower river technical report for Bonneville Power Administration, which may determine whether a meeting should be scheduled prior to the next PRCC meeting. Their presentation to the PRCC will be moved to the March meeting.
- **Northern Pike Removal (2022–2024).** K. Truscott will coordinate a presentation for a future meeting.
- **WDFW PIT-tag detection barge**. C. Jackson and A. Murdoch will provide a presentation in mid-summer, following the 2023 yearling outmigration, focused on detection results and overwinter survival.
- **2023 RTR Avian Predation study.** The study is being kicked off this month.

XIII. Sub-Committee Updates

B. Nordlund has forwarded the latest subcommittee distributions he has received to date via email to PRCC members and alternates.

- Priest Rapids Fish Forum—next meeting is March 1, by conference call.
- Habitat Subcommittee—met on February 9. No March meeting is planned.
- Fall Chinook Work Group—no meeting was held in February. An update was distributed by B. Nordland following the meeting.
- Hatchery Subcommittee—met February 15. Next meeting is March 15, 2023.

XIV. SOAs Discussed in 2023

SOA number	Key words	Last Discussed	Status
2022-03	Fish Mode revision	January 24, 2023	Closed
2023-01	Sockeye Salmon Program	January 24, 2023	Closed

XV. Next Meetings

The next PRCC meetings are scheduled for March 28 and April 25, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at the Douglas PUD auditorium.