



Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee Meeting

FINAL APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 23, 2021

1:00 pm

PRCC Representatives

Scott Carlon, Justin Yeager (Alt), NMFS
Keely Murdoch, Brandon Rogers (Alt), YN
Chad Jackson, P. Verhey (Alt) WDFW
Curt Dotson, Peter Graf (Alt), GCPUD
Denny Rohr, D. Rohr & Assoc, Facilitator

Jim Craig, USFWS
Kirk Truscott, Casey Baldwin (alt), CCT
Tom Skiles, CTUIR
Erin Harris, Admin Ass't, GPUD

PRCC Meeting Attendees

Curt Dotson, GPUD
Denny Rohr, D. Rohr & Assoc, Facilitator
Tom Skiles, CTUIR
Kirk Truscott, CCT

Keely Murdoch, YN
Chad Jackson, WDFW
Jim Craig, USFWS
Erin Harris, GPUD

Meeting Minutes

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Rohr welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the meeting.
- II. **Agenda Review** – No additions were made to the agenda.
- III. **Meeting Minutes** –
 - A. February 23, 2021 – edits were received and will be included in the meeting minutes; Rohr will conduct an Email Vote of edited minutes.
 - B. March 2, 2021 – edits were received and will be included in the meeting minutes; Rohr will conduct an Email Vote of edited minutes.
- IV. **Review of Actions Items from February 23, 2001 Meeting** –
 1. Zoom meeting to be scheduled Tuesday, 3/2/2020 at 1:00 pm for PRCC committee and RTR staff, plus committee members to email their questions for RTR to Rohr asap. - **Completed**

V. **DECISION ITEM** –

1. *(Note that SOA 2021-02 below was discussed prior to SOA 2021-01)*

PRCC SOA 2021-01 – “Methodology used to Determine Adult Conversion Rates for the Priest Rapids Project”, dated March 10, 2021.

Dotson introduced the SOA and shared that this SOA is taking methods from the white paper-PNNL report provided to the PRCC last September 2020, wherein the white paper used the University of Washington’s DART conversion rate estimation data and the PNNL paper used a CJS survival model to Rock Island. Murdoch said conversion rates and CJS rates do not represent all the adults that enter the Project. She stated that, citing data from a paper in review by Andrew Murdoch of WDFW, that 44% of steelhead that pass Priest Rapids Dam are overshoots, and that this is not unique to just Grant Projects, but may be more prevalent due to their location. She stated that another issue not discussed is what years of adult survival would be used when applied to survival standards and how often estimates would be updated, plus should jacks be included. Dotson shared using the wild fish vs fin clipped fish was the same approach that Andrew Murdoch’s paper used for the very same reason, that it is difficult to account for fin clipped steelhead that are available for harvest. Dotson also stated that Grant does provide surface spill for fallbacks through November 15th and has for over 20 years at both Priest Rapids and Wanapum Dams. Dotson asked Murdoch if the Andrew Murdoch paper has gone yet to print or if it was still in review. Murdoch shared that the paper has not yet been finalized and that if anyone has edits or comments associated with the paper, they should be sent directly to Andrew Murdoch. Graf stated that the survival standards should include representative samples of fish but also be representative of Project effects with respect to the adult survival standards. Graf stated that for example, hatchery summer chinook are being caught in Grant’s project by recreational fishermen and those losses should not be part of the estimates. He questioned how to account for this “mortality” when looking at survival passage through the project. He continued that universally hatchery fish do have the same or higher survival, and that in total using all tags, over 11,000, we see the same 98-97% result, which to GPUD indicates that we are capturing project effects. Even with steelhead, using the fish tagged at the OLAFT in the study mentioned above, 95% were subsequently detected at other upper Columbia locations. Murdoch said adult survival means all the fish reaching the projects, including hatchery fish, and there may be reasons for differences in survival rates between hatchery and wild like lipid content or age at return. Murdoch commented that she supports Jackson’s comment to the SOA to convene a technical group to discuss the issue. Grant asked Murdoch if an adult Chinook is detected upstream of the Priest Project would it count as a successful conversion. Murdoch replied that possibly with spring Chinook but not necessary with summer Chinook. Skiles shared that he is struggling with defining the project effects. He agrees that the intent was to measure the survival of adults passing upstream through the project, but that should not preclude us from looking further at overshoot and fallback. Dotson shared the settlement agreement was developed in late 2005 and the authors

could only work with the data they had at that time to develop the standards, and here we are 16 years later and a number of studies have taken place that look at fallback. Murdoch shared the settlement agreement does have a section that addresses new information that we should consider and amend. Truscott is supportive of a working group to discuss new information that results in looking at survival with new data. Skiles asked about Priest Rapids Project License. Dotson shared it was implemented in 2008 for a 50-year license that covers two projects. Craig shared others FERC license go through 2052. Graf shared Action 25 of the license discusses steelhead fallback. Jackson shared that the comments made by Murdoch and Skiles is how the state feels about this discussion, and he also agrees with Truscott to put together a working group to talk about these topics. Craig thanked Murdoch for her deep dive and agrees with creating a working group. Dotson shared he appreciates the conversation and stated that Grant would like to review the SOA to consider making some changes based on this discussion. Committee members agreed that Rohr would conduct an email vote of SOA 2021-01 with Grant's changes to the SOA, if any, after he receives notification from Dotson.

2. **PRCC SOA 2021-02 – “Juvenile Salmonid Survival Estimates used to Represent Performance Standards within the Priest Rapids Project”, dated March 10, 2021.** Murdoch prior to today's meeting made edits to this SOA and Rohr distributed copies to all committee members for review. Dotson shared Grant is good with the comments and edits made by Murdoch. Dotson stated that Grant will update the SOA to show the edits and send to Rohr by the end of the month for the committee to review. Accordingly, Rohr will distribute the amended SOA and conduct an email vote at that time. Skiles asked why we are making this record. Dotson shared all the years/data have been put into one document to present to FERC. Skiles asks if there is a relationship with SOA 2021-01 and SOA 2021-02, and Dotson stated yes if you are looking at combined species through the project. Skiles asked what Grant plans to do with this SOA. Dotson shared the SOA is approved data that will be put into one place, with a table for easy access. Truscott shared it's good to all be put into one document but feels it's redundant from an SOA standpoint. Dotson shared these SOA's are documents that we can use as one document rather than several documents. Graf shared the discussion on the 91% and combined juvenile studies in 2023 and past SOAs is scattered, and the intent is to put it all in one document. Murdoch likes the idea of having all the survival data in one location but agrees with questioning the need to be an SOA with all this data having already been approved. Skiles shared he does not plan to agree with this SOA until SOA 2021-01 is resolved.

- VI. **Grant County PUD's Draft 2020 Activities Under Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project (P&I Report) - FOR REVIEW and COMMENT (April 3, 2021 Comment Deadline) (D. Rohr)** – No additional discussion and the review is ongoing with an April 3, 2021 comment deadline.

VII. Potpourri

1. USACE meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2021, 1–4:00 pm, to review Final Avian Synthesis Report. Rohr will forward meeting details to committee members and keep members advised of any additional information received. Dotson shared RTR has requested additional time to respond due to the number of comments coming in. The report is a little over 700 pages and has been pushed back to June.
2. The contract for RTR that was approved at the March 2nd meeting is being finalized and contracting is getting things in place. Skiles shared he had to clarify to some that the 2021 RTR contract that he and other PRCC members voted to approve has nothing to do with the SMP debate of using Rock Island in the 2022 SMP program.

UPDATES

VIII. Avian Predation Activities – No additional information to report.

IX. FCRPS BiOp – Corps/BOR Avian Predation Management in Columbia Plateau Region – Nothing new to report.

X. Review of Outstanding NNI Funded Projects

- A. Lower Wenatchee Instream Flow Enhancement Project Phase II – Rohr shared that the Habitat Subcommittee continues to monitor this project and there is no new information to report.
- B. “Non-Native Predator Recruitment Reduction – Phase I” – Nothing to report. Forthcoming updates are expected to be received over the next several months.
- C. “Northern Pike Removal in Lake Roosevelt” – Nothing to report.
- D. **(Placeholder)** 2020 Quincy Valley Tourism Association Northern Pikeminnow Fishing Derby (moved to 2021 due to Covid-19) – They plan on going forward with the Derby, depending on the Covid-19 phase the state will be in at the time of the Derby.
- E. Avian Predation on ESA-listed Juvenile Salmonids on the Mid-Columbia River, 2020, Real Time Research – Project Approved March 2, 2021 -Nothing new to report.
- F. **(Placeholder)** Barkley Irrigation Co Permanent Point of Diversion, Completing Implementation of the Permanent Solution -Forthcoming information as the Habitat Subcommittee is being to discuss a path forward for this project.

XI. Committee Reports – email distribution completed.

XII. NNI and Habitat Funds Report 2021 – February 15th Annual Deposits plus Status of Q4 Report were shared by email with committee members.

XIII. Next Meeting – April 27, 2021, 1:00, Zoom Webinar Meeting

Action Items from March 23, 2021 meeting

- Grant will revise the SOAs' as necessary and will send to Rohr for distribution to committee members.
- Rohr will conduct an email vote of the SOAs'.