



Grant County
PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT
Excellence in Service and Leadership

Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee Meeting

Final Approved Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 26, 2020

1:00 pm

Microsoft Teams

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
Keely Murdoch, YN
Scott Carlon, NMFS- Not Present
Tom Skiles, CTUIR
Chad Jackson, WDFW
Johnny Buck, Wanapum
Aaron Penvose, Trout Unlimited

Peter Graf, GPUD
Denny Rohr, D. Rohr & Assoc, Facilitator
Erin Harris, GPUD
Jim Craig, USFWS
Kirk Truscott, CCT
Justin Yeager, NOAA

Decisions made during May 26, 2020 meeting

1. April 28, 2020 meeting minutes approved.
2. UPDATE & NNI Funding Request - Barkley Irrigation Co Permanent Point of Diversion, Completing Implementation of the Permanent Solution - Aaron Penvose/Trout Unlimited, Justin Yeager (D. Rohr) – Not Approved

Meeting Minutes

- I. Welcome and Introductions** – Denny Rohr welcomed everyone.

II. **Agenda Review (D. Rohr)** – The agenda was reviewed with no additions.

III. **Meeting Minutes (D. Rohr)**

A. April 28, 2020 - **Approved**

IV. **Review of Actions Items from April 28, 2020 Webinar Conference (D. Rohr)**

1. Committee members agreed to provide any comments they may have to Dresser by close of business on Tuesday, May 12, 2020 regarding the Right Bank Embankment Project. - **Completed**
2. Dotson will keep PRCC advised of scheduling of 2020 Quincy Valley Tourism Association Northern Pikeminnow Fishing Derby. – **Completed with update given today.**

V. **Wanapum Dam Gate Seal Investigation – Completion Report, Tom Dresser (C. Dotson)** – Grant PUD provided a presentation informing the PRCC that the Wanapum Dam Gate Seal Investigation (Article 406) was officially completed in January of this year (2020). The presentation provided an overview of the specific license requirement, consultation history with NOAA-Fisheries and PRCC members, extension of times filed by Grant PUD, and approvals received from FERC.

The key component of the presentation were illustrations and photos of the design work that was implemented to attach the wedge seal to the bottom edge of the spillway gate. This included a custom designed clamping bar that incorporated countersunk bolt heads. This design addressed concerns raised by NOAA-Fisheries (during relicensing) that the exposed bolt heads and clamping bar design posed a strike risk for juvenile salmonids passing through the tainter gate.

Grant PUD also stated that they were not planning on any after-the-fact testing, for the reason raised during the development of the plan; difficulty in designing a statistically sound evaluation. Grant PUD did report to the PRCC that the FERC order issued in February 2012 did leave open the possibility for future evaluations if the PRCC deemed it necessary. No comments were received nor did the PRCC request additional testing at this time.

VI. **UPDATE: Avian Predation Activities (T. Skiles, C. Dotson)** – Denny Rohr shared that a lot more discussion is occurring at the monthly NWPC meetings in Portland regarding avian predation. Denny stated he is hopeful the regional momentum is increasing regarding addressing the avian predation problem. Curt Dotson shared RTR is currently monitoring avian activities on Goose Island, Potholes region and other “tern” areas on the Columbia Plateau. Curt shared information of the number of terns present and there has been no nesting taking place on Goose Island. RTR is provided weekly updates to Curt of the activities occurring in several areas of the Columbia Plateau, and there appears to be a downward trend of terns in the area, albeit nesting in the Blalock Islands has increased this year. Tom Skiles shared there are fewer birds on East Sand Island in the Columbia River estuary. Tom Skiles briefly discussed a research article he had recently seen titled ***Avian Predation on Steelhead is Consistent***

with Compensatory Mortality, a study of smolts eaten by birds with a focus on compensatory versus additive effects. He went on to say the study shows no effects of additive mortality and only compensatory and limited to the Snake Basin. **ACTION: Tom Skiles will email the study to Denny Rohr for distribution to the committee members.**

VII. UPDATE & NNI Funding Request - Barkley Irrigation Co Permanent Point of Diversion, Completing Implementation of the Permanent Solution - Aaron Penvose/Trout Unlimited, Justin Yeager/NMFS PRCC Habitat Subcommittee Representative (D. Rohr) - Justin Yeager and Aaron Penvose joined the meeting and shared a brief history of the project, including the final dollar amount needed per the lowest bid to complete the last phase of the project – the Barkley Pressure Pipe Phase which includes installation of approximately 9,600 linear feet of piping necessary to deliver water at pressure from the new pump station to Barkley irrigators while eliminating approximately 7,000 linear feet of earthen canal. Penvose stated that TU needs an additional \$550,000 to complete the project. Penvose stated a funding request was made to WDOEc but not approved. Justin Yeager stated a funding request was also made to the Chelan PUD Mitigation Fund and has been approved for \$300,000. Accordingly, TU is requesting the remaining \$250,000 from the PRCC NNI Fund to complete the project. Peter Graf asked if there was discussion in the PRCC Habitat SC meeting about the funding being requested. Yeager shared the PRCC Habitat SC had contributed \$400,000 for this last phase of the project, and they were under the impression that if funding was not received from WDOE, PRCC would consider funding the remaining \$250,000. Yeager commented this understanding was shared within the PRCC HabitatSC and discussed during the last meeting. At this point Yeager and Penvose exited the meeting and the committee members continued their review and discussion of the proposal. Accordingly, after deliberation the PRCC did not approve, by a 4-3 vote, the \$250,000 funding request. Rohr will contact Yeager and Penvose to share this decision.

VIII. 2020 Fish Spill Update (C. Dotson) –

A. May 12th Fish Mode Exception Event - Curt Dotson reported that the fish spill is continuing at both Wanapum and Priest Rapids Dams. Additionally, he discussed a Fish Mode Operations Exception Event that occurred on May 12th. Curt explained that SOA 2010-04 outlines that when a Fish Mode Operation Exception Event occurs, Grant PUD is to provide (within 5 business days) the PRCC an incident report explaining the incident and actions taken.

Curt further explained that the afternoon of 5/12/2020, wind generation plants (i.e. “windmills”) experienced high wind gusts and their “high-speed cutouts” engaged and shut down the wind machines for safety purposes. This sudden and unexpected drop in power production by wind-generation dropping off-line put the power grid in a major deficit (934 MW). To quickly fill this power shortage, the turbines at WAN and PRD were “turned-up” for additional power production, but this action also took them out of Fish-Mode. The turbines were out of Fish-Mode for 53 minutes, until the electrical grid was brought back into balance (i.e. power produced equals power demand – in real-time).

Curt Dotson also went on to say SOA 2010-04 has existed for 10 years and this is only the third time it has been used during that period of time. The SOA is there if needed and it was created to address these extraordinary conditions when necessary.

IX. Potpourri (D. Rohr)

- A. **Pinniped Management Below BONN** – Denny Rohr shared the lower pinniped management plan was to be in effect this summer, but Covid-19 pandemic shut it down. Chad Jackson shared WDFW received a permit to help with sea lion control. It is essential work during the Covid-19 shutdown and the end of spring Chinook is when we see a lot of the sealion problems.
- B. **Alligator Gar Update** – Nothing new on the alligator gar issue, and Chad Jackson shared that recently WDFW is starting to get back to normal with Covid-19 shutdown.

GENERAL UPDATES

- X. **Avian Predation Activities (C. Dotson)** – Nothing additional to report.
- XI. **FCRPS BiOp – Corps/BOR Avian Predation Management in Columbia Plateau Region (C. Dotson)** – Nothing additional to report.
- XII. **Review of Outstanding NNI Funded Projects**
 - A. Continued Support for UC Fish Screen Program (C. Jackson) – Chad Jackson will work with Danny Didricksen to schedule his report at a future meeting.
 - B. Lower Wenatchee Instream Flow Enhancement Project Phase II (C. Jackson, D. Rohr) - Denny Rohr will keep PRCC members advised on this project as it appears to be moving ahead.
 - C. “Non-Native Predator Recruitment Reduction – Phase I” (K. Murdoch) – Nothing new to report on this. Curt Dotson shared an adjustment will be made to the 2020 contract through Grant PUD Procurement staff to move the work schedule to 2021 as was approved by the committee. Action: Keely Murdoch will notify Geoff McMichael that Curt will be in touch with him regarding the specific details.
 - D. “Northern Pike Removal in Lake Roosevelt” (K. Truscott) – Kirk Truscott shared there is work being done on plans to return to work within Covid-19 pandemic requirements. No netting has been occurring due to the Covid-19 shutdown.
 - E. 2020 Quincy Valley Tourism Association Northern Pikeminnow Fishing (C. Dotson) – Curt Dotson shared this event has been moved to September with the specific dates to be determined. NOAA was alright with the date change and Curt Dotson will follow up.
 - F. Avian Predation on ESA-listed Juvenile Salmonids on the Mid-Columbia River, 2020, Real Time Research (C. Dotson) – No further information to share.

- XIII. Committee Reports (D. Rohr) -PRFF meeting report was emailed to PRCC committee members.**
- XIV. NNI and Habitat Funds Report, 2020 / Q1 (D. Rohr) – Emailed out to PRCC members.**
- XV. Next Meeting – Tuesday, June 23, 2020, 1:00 pm, Location TBD**

Action Items from May 26, 2020 meeting

1. Tom Skiles will send the research article *Avian Predation on Steelhead is Consistent with Compensatory Mortality* to Denny Rohr for distribution.
2. Continued Support for UC Fish Screen Program (C. Jackson) – Chad Jackson will work with Danny Didricksen to schedule his report on this at a future meeting.
3. “Non-Native Predator Recruitment Reduction – Phase I” (K. Murdoch) – Action: Keeley Murdoch will notify Geoff McMichael that Curt Dotson will be in touch with him.
4. 2020 Quincy Valley Tourism Association Northern Pikeminnow Fishing (C. Dotson) –Curt Dotson will double check with NOAA.

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