



Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee Meeting

FINAL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 16, 2021

1:00 pm

ZOOM Webinar Conference

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), GPUD
Bryan Nordlund, FPE (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
Scott Carlon, NMFS
Chad Jackson, WDFW
Tom Skiles, CTUIR
Kirk Truscott, CCT
Bryan Nordlund, FPE (facilitator)

Keely Murdoch, YN
Peter Graf, GPUD - Absent
Erin Harris, GPUD
Jim Craig, USFWS

Meeting Minutes

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – B. Nordlund welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- II. **Agenda Review** – No additions were made to the agenda.
- III. **Meeting Minutes Approval**
 - A. **October 26, 2021, PRCC meeting minutes** – These minutes were distributed via email by Bryan Nordlund on November 12, 2021. Please review and provide comments or approval by December 12, 2021. Several PRCC members have already sent edits to Nordlund. Bryan Nordlund will incorporate comments and distribute to the PRCC who will be asked for final

approval at the December PRCC meeting. Final approval pending edits updates.

IV. Review of Decision Items from October 26, 2021, Meeting

1. NNI Fund proposal – Northern Pike Removal 2022 to 2025 (CCT) – **Approved** for \$100,000 per year
2. NNI proposal – PIT Tag Barge (WDFW) – **Approved** 1/3 of a cost share, no more than \$81,934.00. J. Craig stated the PRCC committee members want to share with Habitat committee members that the PRCC supports up to 1/3 of the cost in a cost share with Chelan PUD as the information will be useful for other PUD's.
3. Non-Native Predator Recruitment Reduction NNI report – **Approved** Geoff McMichael to post report to ResearchGate website. K. Murdoch shared with committee members that she has not shared with Geoff McMichael's and she said she will reach out to him via email to share the news. B. Nordlund shared he let G. McMichael know and he hasn't heard back from Geoff. **ACTION:** B. Nordlund will send G. McMichael an email notice of the committee's approval.
4. September 28, 2021, PRCC meeting minutes were **Approved**.

V. Review of Actions Items from October 26, 2021, Meeting

- **In progress** - Follow-up on Corp/BOR Avian Predation Management
- **Complete and On-Going** - Email distribution of PRFF, Habitat and Hatchery SC reports
- **On-Going** - K. Murdoch to update committee at November meeting on internal YN status of recording the meetings for accurate minutes.
- **On-Going** - E. Harris to accumulate and post all PRCC SOA's on the Grant PUD website by end of 2021, at the latest.

VI. 2021 Fish Passage Operations Report

Adult Fishways

Bryan Nordlund provided fish counts for Priest Rapids Dam through November 8, 2021:

Spring Chinook – 13,105 adults, 1,447 jacks (complete)
Summer Chinook – 49,315 adults, 2,298 jacks (complete)
Sockeye – 76,854 (complete)
Fall Chinook – 50,629 adults, 2,213 jacks (10's/day still passing)
Steelhead – 2,783 adults (10 steelhead since Oct 21)
Coho – 47,571 adults, 1,637 jacks (10's/day still passing)

It was asked if there was any update on reasons for fish count discrepancy?

Curt Dotson discussed inhouse issues at Priest Rapids and Wanapum Dam with committee members. Grant PUD has had internal meetings to address

possible causes. One concern was inhouse training. Grant PUD has returning veteran fish counters and new staff that go through training at the start of their season, including identifying fish species, processes, and equipment use.

In season, video is recorded for staff to review and count after their work breaks and these counts are added to the previously tabulated counts. As such, there are no estimates with this process.

Some identification of fish may include coding issues with particular fish counters. Staff will investigate this to make sure they are coding the correct fish type.

Curt also mentioned that they are working to ensure good seals around all fishway components leading up to the fish count station. This is part of the annual ladder maintenance and can only be conducted when the ladder is de-watered.

Curt explained how vegetation flowing down the river gets caught on picket leads near the count station and will cause alarms in the control room when water differentials exceed criterion. Staff is required to go out and remove accumulated vegetation when this occurs, because this may deter fish passage through the count station. When limited staff are available and vegetation can't be removed, picket leads are sometimes left open, and fish can bypass the count station. GPUD is working on further training of the operators on limiting open picket leads and documenting this clean-up process.

Chad Jackson requests that an update be provided at future PRCC meeting regarding GPUD's internal discussions including fixes that are proposed. He stated that WDFW has concern because their preseason planning for collecting steelhead broodstock depends heavily on accurate Priest Rapids fish counts. He requests that this update be ongoing until there is a plan for the problem to be resolved. Curt Dotson agreed. Bryan Nordlund added that this and similar topics will be covered under the Fish Passage Operations Report at every PRCC meeting.

Generally, committee members were concerned about inaccurate fish counts and that GPUD needs to work at both Priest Rapids and Wanapum Dams to assure accurate fish counts. This is important for fisheries management in the Upper Columbia River basin. In no way should fish counts at Rock Island Dam be higher than at Wanapum and Priest Rapids Dams.

Concern was raised regarding the possibility that operators leave the picket leads open too and many fish are missed. This could especially be true with sockeye, since they seem to delay as a group, then burst through when the reason for their delay is removed. A process to record picket lead open time opening and closings was suggested, but a method to extrapolate these open

times to adjust fish counts is lacking. GPUD providing additional staff was also suggested, particularly when vegetation mats break free and start moving down the river.

Keely Murdoch asked if other fish count stations at dams on the Columbia and Snake River had vegetation accumulation affect their fish count process. Nordlund replied that there were problems at any location where debris laden water flows through picket leads. An automated trash collection and removal system can be an answer, but this depends on whether a project has an area of sufficient size to install this device. Priest Rapids does have a fairly long and accessible forebay control section in the ladder.

It was asked if COVID affected the number of staff on site to maintain the fish ladders. Curt Dotson shared there was some COVID restrictions at Priest Rapids and Wanapum dam and he's not sure if that would have caused issues with fish counts.

Fishway Inspections

Tom Skiles performs monthly ladder inspections at the GPUD dams for the fisheries agencies and tribes. He has reported that this year's inspections are now complete. T. Skiles shared he has compiled all the data; the differentials of the fish ladder entrance and the tail waters usually seem to comply, and he updated the committee members on his inspections and questions he has for GPUD. Tom asked about the inoperable sluiceway he observed and the Federal water passage requirement (in KCFS) and if it's year-round. Curt Dotson shared there no Federal requirement of sluiceway flows beyond those included in the SSSA which is part of the FERC license. After juvenile spill season, the sluiceway is used for adult fall back as a bypass. Tom mentioned that he will look further into hourly spills between August and October.

Fish Spill

Curt Dotson updated the committee on fish spill data; Adult fish spill season ended on November 15th at both Priest Rapids and Wanapum Dams.

- VII. Continued discussion of using Zoom recording to help with note taking. B.** Nordlund noted that all the committee members except for Keely Murdoch have agreed to recording the PRCC meetings for help with producing accurate meeting minutes and asked her if she had a chance to discuss the matter with other committee members in the Yakama Nation. Keely said she didn't investigate it further yet. She wants to assure that her stance on recordings is consistent with other YN committee members. Nordlund reminded that he would delete/destroy the recording as soon as the minutes are approved and finalized.

Action: E. Harris will investigate any GPUD requirement for the retention of recordings used short term for helping with accurate note taking.

- VIII. Missing SOA's** –Two SOA's have been located by three committee members for 2018-2019. Keely Murdoch stated that she has two final SOA's that she will forward to Erin Harris. Curt Dotson has SOA 2018-01 and SOA 2019-01, and that he spoke with Denny Rohr who also confirmed the same two SOA's in his records. It was assumed that these two SOA's were the only two produced. Erin will check meeting minutes and try to verify whether this assumption is accurate.
- IX. Other** – No other items were discussed.

UPDATES

X. Review of Outstanding NNI Funded Projects –

A. Lower Wenatchee Instream Flow Enhancement Project Phase II –

Bryan Nordlund called Aaron Penvose (Trout Unlimited) on 11-8-21. A message was left requesting a discussion and an update to the PRCC at a future meeting. No response.

Per some earlier research he did on this project on correspondence from Trout Unlimited, Bryan learned the project is on hold due to permitting requirements for the second phase of project.

B. Avian Predation on ESA-listed Juvenile Salmonids on the Mid-Columbia River, 2021 – Curt Dotson shared RTR is working on the report. PIT tag recovery is complete and has been entered into the database to estimate the percentage of steelhead predation.

C. Barkley Irrigation Co Permanent Point of Diversion, Completing Implementation of the Permanent Solution – ACTION: C. Dotson will reach out to D. Duvall to see if the agreement has been completed.

D. Northern Pike Removal (2022-2024) – Further information will be provided once agreement has been created. C. Dotson updated the committee that a change order will be created on the Northern Pike Removal contract, updating the old contract.

XIV. Committee Reports–

No PRFF or PRFC meetings were conducted in September. The next meeting of the Habitat sub-committee is scheduled for November 18. A Fall Chinook Work Group meeting was held October 5. Bryan Nordlund provided all the committee reports out via email on November 12.

XV. Next Meetings

The next PRCC meetings are scheduled for December 14, 2021, and January 25, 2022.

Action Items from November 16, 2021 meeting

- Non-Native Predator Recruitment Reduction NNI report – Approved Geoff McMichael to post report to ResearchGate website. ACTION: Bryan Nordlund will send Geoff McMichael an email notice of the committee’s approval.
- SOA’s – Keely Murdoch will email SOA 2018-01 and SOA 2019-01 to E. Harris.
- Curt Dotson will continue discussions within GPUD and will update the PRCC on progress for correcting inaccurate fish counts.
- Erin Harris will investigate any requirement within GPUD regarding the temporary retention of recordings used for producing meeting minutes.
- Curt Dotson will check with Dave Duvall on status of the NNI project “Barkley Irrigation Co Permanent Point of Diversion, Completing Implementation of the Permanent Solution Habitat Project”.