



Priest Rapids Fish Forum Conference Call

Wednesday, 5 May 2021
9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

FINAL MINUTES

PRFF REPRESENTATIVES

Steve Lewis, USFWS
Ralph Lampman, Donella Miller, YN
TBD, Wanapum
Jason McLellan, Bret Nine, CCT
Mike Clement, Chris Mott, Grant PUD
Tracy Hillman, Facilitator

Patrick Verhey, Laura Heironimus, WDFW
Breean Zimmerman, WDOE
Aaron Jackson, Carl Merkle, CTUIR
Marchelle Foster, BIA
Tom Skiles, CRITFC/CTUIR
Erin Harris, Grant PUD

ATTENDEES

RD Nelle, USFWS
Mike Clement, Grant PUD
Breean Zimmerman, WDOE
Jason McLellan, CCT
Erin Harris, Grant PUD

Ralph Lampman, YN
Patrick Verhey, WDFW
Laura Heironimus, WDFW
Chris Mott, Grant PUD
Tracy Hillman, Facilitator

Action Items:

- Grant PUD will check with Chelan PUD on percentages of non-8N sturgeon Chelan PUD identified within each family group at Columbia Basin Hatchery.
- Ralph Lampman will contact the Warm Spring Tribe to see if they intend to tag adult lamprey with HDX PIT tags this year in the Lower Columbia River.

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Tracy Hillman welcomed everyone to the call and participants introduced themselves. Tracy noted that the meetings are now recorded for meeting minutes. Once the notes are finalized, the recording will be destroyed.

- II. **Agenda Review** – Members reviewed and approved the May agenda with the following additions or updates. Mike Clement requested a discussion on the status of lower river HDX PIT-tagging activities this year. Tracy Hillman added a discussion on the restructuring of USFWS offices within Washington State and how it will affect the role of Steve Lewis on the PRFF.

- III. **Approve March Meeting Notes** – The 3 March 2021 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.
 - A. **Review Action Items from March Meeting**
 - 1. Tracy Hillman will add Nathan Patterson (Yakama Nation) to the PRFF distribution list. **Complete. Donella Miller provided Tracy with Nate Patterson’s contact information.**
 - 2. Grant PUD will work on a plan for using Upper Columbia larvae if Broodstock cannot be collected. Grant PUD will share the plan and timeline with Jason McLellan. **Complete. Grant PUD will collect broodstock, so no plan for using larvae is needed.**
 - 3. Tracy Hillman will set up a meeting/conference call with the PRFF, RFFF, and ASWG following the first four weeks of adult lamprey trapping at Priest Rapids Dam. The purpose of the call is to determine if adults collected during the second four weeks of trapping will be translocated to sites upstream from Wells Dam or released at Kirby Billingsley Hydro Park. **Complete. The three forums will convene during early July and late July or early August (see discussion below).**
 - 4. Comments on the draft 2020 white sturgeon annual report are due on 11 March 2021. **Complete. Edits and comments from WDFW and CCT were addressed in the final report, which was submitted to FERC.**
 - 5. Comments on the draft 2020 aquatic invasive species annual report are due on 1 April 2021. **Complete. The final report was submitted to FERC.**

- IV. **PRFF Administration**
 - A. **USFWS Restructuring** – Tracy Hillman reported that the USFWS offices in Washington State are going through restructuring. As a result, Steve Lewis has been reassigned as the Federal Activities State Coordinator for hydro, transmission, and energy storage projects. This means that Steve will no longer be the USFWS technical representative on the PRFF. Rather, he will become the USFWS representative on the PRFF Policy Committee. The USFWS will soon identify who will be their technical representative on the PRFF. Steve will provide more information during the next PRFF meeting (note, Steve was unable to attend the PRFF meeting today).

- V. **White Sturgeon**
 - A. **Juvenile Tagging, Testing, and Release** – Mike Clement reported that Grant PUD and Yakama Nation staff (12 staff total) worked four days from 5-8 April 2021 tagging and testing juvenile sturgeon at the Yakama Nation Sturgeon Hatchery. They PIT tagged, scute marked, and drew blood (for autopolyploidy testing) from 1,486 juvenile sturgeon. Mike said 922 of those fish were released into Wanapum Reservoir and 564 into Priest Rapids Reservoir on 20-21 April 2021. They used two transport vehicles and given the size of the fish (500-600

mm), they had to make several trips. Because they needed to make several trips, they elected to release the fish at the Vantage Boat Launch (into Wanapum Reservoir) rather than Frenchman Coulee Boat Launch, which would have added an extra hour to each trip. Only 8N fish were released.

Additional time was needed to set up the Coulter Counter, be trained on it, and to collect blood samples. Chris Mott said it took a half day to set up the Coulter Counter and about 2.5 days to learn how to use the machine. He said staff processed around 550 fish a day. He expects that number to increase over time as they become more proficient with the machine. Based on previous sampling by UC Davis, they expected to see 50-60 non-8N fish. Instead, they found 14-18 non-8N fish. Chris noted that juveniles from one of the families that showed a 2% non-8N rate during previous testing had no non-8N fish detected during recent testing. Tracy Hillman suggested Grant PUD discuss this with Chelan PUD, because Chelan PUD reported percentages from recent testing of their fish at Columbia Basin Hatchery that were consistent with percentages from previous testing. Recall that fish at Columbia Basin Hatchery came from the same families as those at the Yakama Nation Sturgeon Hatchery.

Laura Heironimus asked whether non-8N rates for all the families were lower than estimates from previous testing. Chris responded they are looking into that. Mike indicated that fish used for initial screening may not have been representative of the population of hatchery fish; however, Chris noted that sampling was mostly random and not based on fish behavior or size. Another hypothesis is that non-8N fish may have had a differential mortality rate that reduced their abundance within the hatchery population.

Mike Clement thanked Nate Patterson, Donella Miller, and other Yakama Nation staff for their help during tagging, testing, and releasing fish.

- B. **2021 White Sturgeon Broodstock Collection, Spawning, and Rearing** – Mike Clement reported that Grant PUD staff received the green light to collect sturgeon broodstock downstream from McNary Dam. The collection dates are 17-28 May 2021, depending on water temperatures. Current COVID-19 restrictions require Grant PUD employees to wear masks and socially distance during certain job duties. Mike noted that they will use the same guide boats as before and Blue Leaf will process the fish. He added that they will not be working with ODFW this year. Thus, all mature fish captured will be used for broodstock. They will, however, PIT tag immature sturgeon for the ODFW study. Mike thanked Laura Heironimus for coordinating with ODFW.
- C. **Other White Sturgeon Items** – None.

VI. Pacific Lamprey

- A. **Translocation Coordination Among Forums** – Tracy Hillman reminded the PRFF of the adult lamprey translocation efforts scheduled for this year. He noted that the Rocky Reach Fish Forum (RRFF) (specifically Chelan PUD) requested that they be included in discussions on translocation efforts. As a result, the Aquatic Settlement Work Group (ASWG) discussed in their recent meeting the need to coordinate with the PRFF and RRFF regarding adult lamprey translocation work to be conducted this year. The ASWG would like to have the three groups convene a conference call in early July and another call-in late July or early August. During the early July meeting, the groups will review Bonneville ladder counts and run-size estimates, identify translocation requests, discuss translocation plans, and finalize logistics. During the second call (in late July or early August), the groups will review counts at Priest Rapids Dam, number of fish trapped and translocated, and discuss translocation plans for the remainder of the passage season. Tracy will continue to coordinate with John Ferguson (ASWG chair) on translocation efforts in 2021.
- B. **Other Pacific Lamprey Items** – Mike Clement asked whether anyone is tagging adult lamprey with HDX PIT tags in the lower Columbia River this year. He knows there was no

tagging in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions but wonders if tagging will occur this year. He said he has tried to contact biologists with the Warm Springs Tribe, but they are not responding to his emails. Ralph Lampman responded that there is an interest in tagging fish, but he is unaware of anyone actually tagging lamprey with HDX PIT tags this year. He said he will contact Lindy Collamer with the Warm Springs Tribe and see if they intend to tag fish this year. Ralph will also send Lindy's contact information to Mike Clement.

VII. **Bull Trout**

- A. **Update on USFWS Five-Year Status Review** – RD Nelle reported that the Species Status Assessment Team has been meeting to work on the status development project. He added that the State Managers meeting is scheduled for 25 May 2021.
- B. **Other Bull Trout Items** – None.

VIII. **Next Meeting:** 2 June 2021.