



## Priest Rapids Fish Forum

### Conference Call

Wednesday, 2 October 2024

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

### FINAL MINUTES

#### PRFF Members

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RD Nelle, Emily Orling, USFWS  
Ralph Lampman, Keely Murdoch, YN  
Nathan and Clayton Buck, Wanapum  
Jason McLellan, Bret Nine, CTCR  
Mike Clement, Chris Mott, Grant PUD  
Tracy Hillman, Chair

Patrick Verhey, Benjamin Cox, WDFW  
Chad Brown, WDOE  
Aaron Jackson, Carl Merkle, CTUIR  
Steve Lewis, BIA  
N/A, CRITFC

#### Meeting Attendees

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Mike Clement, Grant PUD  
Ralph Lampman, YN  
Patrick Verhey, WDFS  
Laura Heironimus, WDFW  
Todd Miller, WDFW

RD Nelle, USFWS  
Chris Mott, Grant PUD  
Tygh Schuster, YN  
Joseph LeMoine, Grant PUD  
Tracy Hillman, Chair

#### Action Items:

- Ralph Lampman will update the Upper Columbia Juvenile Source Lamprey Datasheet and send it to Tracy Hillman for distribution to the PRFF.

#### Decision Items:

- None.

## I. Welcome and Introductions

Tracy Hillman welcomed everyone to the meeting and identified all attendees.

## II. Agenda Review

The PRFF reviewed and approved the October agenda with one addition: Wanapum Annual Archaeology Days.

## III. Approve August Meeting Notes

The PRFF reviewed and approved the 7 August 2024 meeting minutes with an edit from RD Nelle.

## IV. Review Action Items

The PRFF reviewed the following action item from the August meeting:

- Ralph Lampman will update the Upper Columbia Juvenile Source Lamprey Datasheet and send it to Tracy Hillman for distribution to the PRFF. **Ongoing.**

## V. White Sturgeon

**Juvenile White Sturgeon Rearing** – Tygh Schuster provided an update on the status of juvenile White Sturgeon at the Yakama Nation Sturgeon Hatchery. He reported that they moved about 700 juveniles to the larger, 10-foot tank. About 300 remain in the smaller (6 foot) tanks. Fish average 63.4 fish per pound. Tygh indicated that all fish are doing well, and the period of relatively high mortality rate (period of transition from feeding endogenously to exogenously) ended in August. Tygh said there are enough fish to meet stocking goals.

**Adult and Juvenile White Sturgeon Monitoring** – Mike Clement reported that the adult White Sturgeon indexing work was completed in August and September. As before, two sampling sessions were conducted in the project area. Blue Leaf fished over a two-week period from the Priest Rapids forebay to Wanapum tailrace; WSP (Golder) fished for two weeks from Vantage Bridge to Rock Island tailrace.

Mike indicated that WSP provided some preliminary results from their sampling effort. He noted that during the first session, 59 adult sturgeon were captured in the Priest Rapids reservoir and 161 were captured in the Wanapum reservoir. Of the fish captured in Priest Rapids reservoir, 1 was wild. Of those captured in Wanapum reservoir, 2 were wild. During the second session, 48 adults were captured in the Priest Rapids reservoir and 104 were captured in the Wanapum reservoir. Of the fish captured in Wanapum reservoir during the second session, 2 were wild; no wild fish were captured during the second session in Priest Rapids reservoir.

Mike then provided an update on juvenile monitoring within the project area. He said the total catch of juvenile White Sturgeon in Priest Rapids reservoir was 179 juveniles (29 from the lower reservoir, 47 from mid-reservoir, and 103 from the upper reservoir). The distribution of catch was consistent with past sampling efforts. During sampling within Wanapum reservoir, crews captured 406 juvenile White Sturgeon (78 from the lower reservoir, 145 from mid-reservoir, and 183 from the upper reservoir). Again, the distribution of catch was consistent with previous years. Mike noted that the overall catch of juveniles in 2024 was less than total catch last year. They are not sure why this is, but it may be related to lower river flows this year and fish moving up into the tailraces where no sampling can occur.

Mike reported that WSP will give a presentation next month on adult and juvenile index monitoring within the project area this year.

**Other White Sturgeon Items** – None.

## **VI. Pacific Lamprey**

**Grant PUD Trapping Efforts in 2024** – Mike Clement reported that they began trapping adult Pacific Lamprey at Priest Rapids Dam on 16 July 2024 and ended on 5 September 2024. Adult lamprey collected during the first four-week sampling period were picked up by Douglas PUD and translocated upstream from Wells Dam. In fulfillment of Grant PUD's SOA, all adult lamprey collected during the second four-week sampling period were transported to Kirby-Billingsley Hydro Park. All those fish were transferred to Douglas PUD, and Douglas PUD translocated those fish to areas upstream from Wells Dam. Thus, all adult lamprey collected in 2024 at Priest Rapids Dam were translocated to areas upstream from Wells Dam.

Mike indicated that during the eight-week collection period, they collected 860 adult Pacific Lamprey. Mike was not certain of the specific locations where this fish were released upstream from Wells Dam. He indicated that some of the fish were provided to CTCR for release in the Okanogan Basin. He also noted that increasing numbers of adult lamprey have been counted at Wells Dam. Mike and Ralph Lampman agreed that this suggests that the translocation efforts are working. Mike added that collections at Priest Rapids Dam represent about 13-17% of the run at Priest Rapids Dam depending on how the percentage is calculated. Ralph noted that 6,589 adult lamprey have been counted at Priest Rapids Dam; therefore, about 13% of the run was collected and translocated.

**Other Pacific Lamprey Items** – Ralph Lampman reported that there will be a Pacific Lamprey Conservation Initiative Mainstem Columbia/Snake Regional Management Unit (RMU) meeting on 16 October 2024 (10:00 am to noon). In addition, there will be a Lamprey Information Exchange meeting on 11-12 December 2024 in Seattle at the Charter Hotel. The meeting will be in-person; however, they are providing a virtual option for those who cannot attend in person. In-person is limited to 100 people and will include a fee of about \$25 per person, which covers lunch. The deadline to register for the meeting is 4 November. This will be the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Lamprey Information Exchange meeting. More information can be found here: [Lamprey Information Exchange](#).

## **VII. Miscellaneous**

Mike Clement reported that the Wanapum will be hosting the Annual Archaeology Days at the Wanapum Heritage Center on 8-9 October 2024. Mike thanked the Yakama Nation and US Fish and Wildlife Service for offering to set up public outreach displays. Mike also thanked Nate Patterson and his staff for offering to provide juvenile sturgeon for the festivities and a juvenile sturgeon display.

Ralph Lampman asked whether anyone from the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) or the Confederated Umatilla Tribes is participating on the PRFF. Mike indicated that Aaron Jackson and Carl Merkle are the representatives for the Umatilla Tribes, and they are on the PRFF distribution list. Tracy Hillman added that CRITFC has not participated or identified a representative since Tom Skiles participated on the PRFF.

Ralph asked whether a Google Calendar invite could be provided to the PRFF. This will block out times on calendars for the PRFF meetings. Tracy said they use Teams but should be able to send out a Teams invite that blocks out times for the PRFF meeting.

## **VIII. Adjourn**

With no additional business to discuss, Tracy Hillman adjourned the meeting at 11:00 am.

## **IX. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the PRFF will be on 6 November 2024.