



Grant County
PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT
Excellence in Service and Leadership

**Priest Rapids Fish Forum
Conference Call**

**Wednesday, 4 November 2020
9:00 – 10:00 a.m.**

FINAL MINUTES

PRFF REPRESENTATIVES

Steve Lewis, USFWS

Ralph Lampman, Donella Miller, YN

TBD, Wanapum

Jason McLellan, Kirk Truscott, 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

Steve Lewis, USFWS

Tom Skiles, CRITFC/CTUIR

Erin Harris, Grant PUD

Ralph Lampman, YN

Patrick Verhey, WDFW

Laura Heironimus, WDFW

Donella Miller, YN

Tracy Hillman, Facilitator

Action Items:

- Tracy Hillman will contact Jason McLellan and ask whether CCT agrees with postponing juvenile sturgeon acoustic tagging in the Priest Rapids Project Area.

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** - Tracy Hillman welcomed everyone to the call and participants introduced themselves.
- II. **Agenda Review** - Members reviewed and approved the November agenda with the addition of a discussion on bull trout off-season fishway counts.
- III. **Approve October Meeting Notes** - Draft October Meeting Notes were reviewed, edited, and approved.
 - A. **Review Action Items from the October Meeting**
 - 1. Tracy Hillman will discuss the proposal to suspend juvenile sturgeon acoustic telemetry studies in the Priest Rapids Project Area with Donella Miller, who was unable to attend the PRFF meeting in October. **Completed**
- IV. **White Sturgeon Management Plan**
 - A. **Update on Juvenile Rearing** – Donella Miller reported that juvenile sturgeon rearing is going well. She said they have experienced a few losses, primarily among smaller sturgeon that have slow growth rates. She said this is normal and is not a concern. She added there are several, larger, healthy fish on station. Mike Clement asked whether there are at least 2,000 sturgeon on station. Donella responded that there are at least 2,000 sturgeon on station. Mike noted that 12N testing and tagging will need to occur sometime soon. He added that Grant PUD, Golder, and Blue Leaf are discussing the testing and tagging process. Donella agreed that testing and tagging should occur soon.

Acoustic Telemetry Monitoring - Tracy Hillman reminded the PRFF of the discussion they had in October regarding acoustic telemetry monitoring. He said 2021 is the next year for conducting juvenile acoustic telemetry monitoring; however, Grant PUD asked the PRFF whether it is necessary to repeat the work given that ten years of telemetry work consistently shows the same results. Tracy added that he discussed this with Donella following last month's meeting. Donella said she concurs with postponing acoustic work until it is needed to address specific questions or objectives. Steve Lewis asked about the requirement to do the work. Mike Clement responded that the original requirement was to use acoustic tags to evaluate the movements of juvenile sturgeon in the Priest Rapids and Wanapum reservoirs. He added that based on ten years of acoustic tagging, they have determined the movements of tagged sturgeon in the project area. Laura Heironimus asked whether there are active tags in the project area and whether additional information can be obtained from monitoring any active tags in the project area. Mike responded that there are no functioning acoustic tags in the project area; thus, there is no new information that can be obtained from monitoring these tags. Tom Skiles said he has no issues with postponing acoustic telemetry studies. Patrick Verhey shared he also supports postponing the study. Mike reminded the PRFF that postponing acoustic studies does not preclude it from occurring in the future if there is a need to do it. Tracy Hillman called for a vote and all members present agreed to postpone juvenile acoustic studies until they are needed to address specific questions or objectives. Tracy will contact Jason McLellan (CCT) to secure his vote on postponing juvenile acoustic telemetry work in the project area. *[Following the meeting, Jason McLellan approved postponing juvenile acoustic studies in the project area.]*
 - B. **Other White Sturgeon Items** – None.
- V. **Pacific Lamprey Management Plan**
 - A. **Lamprey Report Reorganization** – Mike Clement reported that Grant PUD will reorganize the 2020 Pacific Lamprey Annual Report based on comments received from Steve Lewis and Ralph Lampman on the 2019 report. He said much of the information contained at the beginning of the report (e.g., institutional knowledge of lamprey passage) will be moved to the end of the report. He said the report will contain all information as before; it will be

organized differently than in previous reports. Steve and Ralph thanked Mike for reorganizing the annual report.

- B. **Other Pacific Lamprey Items** – RD Nelle reported that there will be a Pacific Lamprey Technical Workgroup meeting in December. He indicated that the Policy group will also meet in December.

VI. **Bull Trout**

- A. **Off-Season (Winter) Fishway Counts** – Steve Lewis asked Mike Clement if Grant PUD will again conduct bull trout counts in Priest Rapids and Wanapum fishways during the off-season. Mike reminded the PRFF that based on a request from USFWS last year, Grant PUD conducted bull trout counts in open fishways at Priest Rapids and Wanapum dams during 15 November 2019 to 1 April 2020. Mike said that because Grant PUD does not have a requirement to conduct bull trout counts during the winter and no bull trout have been observed in the fishways during the off-season, Grant PUD will not conduct off-season counts this winter.

VII. **Next Meeting: 2 December 2020**