



Priest Rapids Fish Forum

Conference Call

Wednesday, 3 May 2023

9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

FINAL MINUTES

PRFF Members

RD Nelle, USFWS
Ralph Lampman, YN
Nathan and Clayton Buck, Wanapum
Jason McLellan, Bret Nine, CTCR
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

Meeting Attendees

Ralph Lampman, YN
Mike Clement, Grant PUD
Patrick Verhey, WDFW
Tracy Hillman, Facilitator

Laura Heironimus, WDFW
RD Nelle, USFWS
Erin Harris, Grant PUD

Action Items:

- PRFF will review the presentation prepared by Grant PUD for the PRCC Policy Committee and provide comments to Mike Clement by 2 June 2023.
- Tracy Hillman and Ralph Lampman will coordinate with the Detroit River Fish Laboratory on a time to present their Lake Sturgeon modeling and reef building work to the PRFF.
- Ralph Lampman will share papers describing construction of spawning reefs for Lake Sturgeon in the St. Clair and Detroit rivers.
- Laura Heironimus will share papers describing the spawning habitat requirements of White Sturgeon.

- Ralph Lampman will provide the name and contact information for the new Pacific Lamprey Conservation Initiative coordinator.

Decision Items:

- The PRFF approved a one-year extension of the 2016 Statement of Agreement: Priest Rapids Project White Sturgeon Stocking Program for Population Rebuilding, Mitigation, and Enhancement.¹

I. Welcome and Introductions

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

II. Agenda Review

The PRFF reviewed and approved the May agenda.

III. Approve March Meeting Notes

The PRFF reviewed and approved the 1 March 2023 meeting minutes.

IV. Review Action Items

The PRFF reviewed the following action items from the March meeting:

- Mike Clement will provide Bao Le with Matt Young's contact information. **Complete.**
- PRFF comments on the draft 2022 white sturgeon annual report are due to Grant PUD by 7 March 2023. **Complete.**
- PRFF comments on the draft 2022 Pacific lamprey annual report are due to Grant PUD by 7 March 2023. **Complete.**
- PRFF comments on the draft 2022 resident fish report are due to Grant PUD by 21 March 2023. **Complete.**
- PRFF comments on the draft 2022 aquatic invasive species annual report are due to Grant PUD by 1 April 2023. **Complete.**

V. White Sturgeon

White Sturgeon Rearing, Health, and Release – Mike Clement reported that they (Grant PUD, Yakama Nation, and Blue Leaf Environmental) tagged yearling sturgeon at the Yakama Nation Sturgeon Hatchery on 27-31 March. A total of 3,318 yearling sturgeon were tested for autoploidy with 60 (1.8%) fish testing positive. These fish were euthanized. Following autoploidy testing, 3,258 fish were PIT tagged. A total of 7 fish died following tagging. Mike said they released 3,252 into the project area on 20 April 2023. These fish were released into Priest Rapids and Wanapum reservoirs.

2023 White Sturgeon Broodstock Collection (Extend 2016 SOA) – Mike Clement reported that they plan to collect broodstock for the 6x6 spawning matrix beginning on 15 May 2023. Broodstock collection will occur downstream from McNary Dam over a two-week period. However, before they can collect broodstock, Mike indicated that the PRFF will need to extend the 2016 "Statement of Agreement: Priest

¹ Jason McLellan provided his approval following the meeting.

Rapids Project White Sturgeon Stocking Program for Population Rebuilding, Mitigation, and Enhancement” for another year. All members present approved extending the 2016 SOA another year. Jason McLellan provided his supporting vote following the meeting.

Habitat Suitability Models and Artificial Spawning Reefs – Ralph Lampman described some of the restoration work researchers are doing in the St. Clair and Detroit rivers. He indicated that the researchers have developed habitat suitability models for Lake Sturgeon spawning habitat and are using those models to guide restoration actions. They have constructed spawning reefs that are being used by Lake Sturgeon. They continue to monitor the use and effectiveness of the reefs. Ralph asked whether the PRFF would like the researchers to present their work during a future meeting. Members present thought it would be useful to hear what the researchers are doing and finding.

Laura Heironimus stated that similar restoration work in Montana and Idaho did not work well. This is likely because the restoration work did not address the factors limiting White Sturgeon. That is, the population needs to be limited by spawning habitat. In addition, Laura stated that Lake Sturgeon and White Sturgeon have different habitat requirements. She said habitat suitability curves are available for White Sturgeon. White Sturgeon require certain water velocities and substrates for spawning. Laura said she will share reports on White Sturgeon habitat requirements with the PRFF.

Ralph asked whether any habitat mapping has been conducted in the project area. Mike Clement responded that there has been some mapping but it was mostly for fall Chinook Salmon. Mike indicated that their White Sturgeon egg-mat sampling always produced eggs but there appears to be poor survival from egg to fry.

Ralph said he will share the reports that describe construction of spawning reefs for Lake Sturgeon in the St. Clair and Detroit rivers.

Other White Sturgeon Items – No other White Sturgeon items were discussed.

VI. Pacific Lamprey

Adult Translocation Efforts in 2023 – Ralph Lampman reported that the Yakama Nation will release adult lamprey this spring depending on the sexual maturity of the fish. They began releases, with help from local High School students, in March and early April. Adults will be released into the Yakima, Wenatchee, Methow, and Columbia rivers. The goal is to release 140 adults into the Wenatchee River, 150 into the Methow River, and 150 into the Columbia River upstream of Wells Dam. No releases occur in the Entiat because it is used as a control stream. Ralph said they will collect new stock at Bonneville Dam during late May and early June. Ralph added that Douglas PUD will continue their fish passage study this year.

RD Nelle asked whether adult lamprey will be released upstream of Tumwater Dam. Ralph said, yes, they will release adults into Jolanda Lake upstream from the dam.

Grant PUD Trapping Efforts in 2023 – Mike Clement reported that he is coordinating with Douglas PUD, who will continue fish passage studies in 2023. Thus, trapping at Priest Rapids Dam will be similar to last year. All fish captured during the first four weeks will be provided to Douglas PUD for their fish passage study. Fish captured during the second four-week period will be either provided to Douglas PUD (depending on whether they received enough fish for their study during the first four-week collection period) or will be released at Kirby-Billingsley Hydro Park upstream from Rock Island Dam. Mike said they will likely begin trapping in mid-July when counts at Priest Rapids Dam are in the double digits.

Other Pacific Lamprey Items – Ralph Lampman indicated that during a future meeting he would like to discuss some of his comments on the recent Pacific Lamprey Annual Report. Specifically, he would like

to discuss some of the conclusions identified in the annual report regarding juvenile passage through hydroelectric projects. Ralph said he does not agree with some of the conclusion in the annual report.

VII. Administration

Tracy Hillman indicated that Grant PUD will host a PRCC Policy Committee meeting on 20 July 2023. The purpose of the meeting is to provide new Policy Committee members with an overview of Grant PUD's programs. This is basically a meet-and-greet gathering. Grant PUD staff will provide presentations to the Policy Committee that describe the purpose, objectives, and accomplishments of each technical group. Tracy sent the draft PRFF presentation to the group last week. The PRFF has 30 days to review the presentation and send comments/edits to Mike Clement (comments are due by 2 June). Mike will update the presentation based on comments from the PRFF.

Ralph Lampman reported that the Pacific Lamprey Conservation Initiative has a new coordinator. Ralph will provide the name and contact information for the coordinator to the PRFF.

Ralph Lampman noted that the Pacific Lamprey Passage Subgroup is preparing a white paper on trap and haul. They are looking to include case studies in the paper. Ralph encouraged the PUD to provide a case study for the paper. Mike Clement indicated that he would provide information on their trap-and-haul program.

VIII. Adjourn

With no additional business to discuss, Tracy Hillman adjourned the meeting at 11:30 am.

IX. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the PRFF will be on 7 June 2023.