



Conference Call Minutes

Aquatic Settlement Work Group

To: Aquatic SWG Parties

Date: April 12, 2023

From: John Ferguson, Chair, Anchor QEA, LLC

Re: Final Minutes of the March 8, 2023, Aquatic SWG Conference Call

The Aquatic Settlement Work Group (SWG) met by conference call on Wednesday, March 8, 2023, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Attendees are listed in Attachment A of these conference call minutes.

Summary of Action Items

1. Anchor QEA, LLC, will set a reminder to revisit this action item in November 2023: *Douglas PUD will coordinate with Wells Dam mechanical staff to do the following: 1) ask about the feasibility of widening the 3-inch plating around diffuser gratings with regards to hydraulics through the area; 2) request any additional photographs taken of reducing gaps in the east fishway during the 2022/2023 Wells Dam winter maintenance period; and 3) make note to recheck measurements of the areas depicted in the photographs shared during today's Aquatic SWG conference call (Attachment B to the Aquatic SWG February 8, 2023, conference call minutes) (Item I-C). (Note: Kristi Geris set this reminder, as discussed.)*
2. Anchor QEA will update the Yakama Nation (YN) Aquatic SWG Policy Representation and Technical Alternate designations to replace Donella Miller with David Blodgett, III (Item II-A). *(Note: Kristi Geris updated Aquatic SWG email lists and extranet access following the Aquatic SWG conference call on March 8, 2023.)*
3. Anchor QEA will share with Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) any new edits made to the *2023 Aquatic Settlement Agreement and Workgroup Action Plan (2023 ASA Action Plan)* after Ecology approved the action plan and left the conference call (Item II-B). *(Note: Kristi Geris notified Breean Zimmerman that there were no further edits to the action plan after Ecology approval.)*
4. Douglas PUD and the YN will discuss possibly convening an annual regional meeting to discuss the latest literature on Pacific Lamprey passage improvements and technology (Item II-B). *(Note: Douglas PUD and the YN discussed this over the phone on March 16, 2023.)*
5. Douglas PUD and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will discuss possible approaches to address regional Bull Trout data gaps under the Recovery Planning Participation and Regional Coordination objectives of the Bull Trout Management Plan (MP) and will report back to the Aquatic SWG (Item II-B).

6. Anchor QEA will share with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CTCR) the new edits made to the 2023 ASA Action Plan, as approved by the Aquatic SWG members present (Item II-B). *(Note: Kristi Geris shared these new edits with Jason McLellan, which he approved via email following the Aquatic SWG conference call on March 8, 2023.)*
7. Douglas PUD will share with the CTCR and Ecology the discussion and Agreement (see the Agreements section) about White Sturgeon spontaneous autoploidy (SAP) screening of Douglas PUD Program brood year (BY) 2022 White Sturgeon and will report back to the Aquatic SWG before Monday, March 13, 2023, when SAP screening of Douglas PUD Program fish is currently scheduled to be performed (Item II-C). *(Note: Jason McLellan suggested postponing SAP screening until screening of Chelan PUD fish is complete in April or early May 2023, as distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on March 10, 2023.)*
8. The Aquatic SWG meeting on April 12, 2023, will be held by conference call (Item III-B).

Summary of Decisions

1. Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2023 ASA Action Plan, as revised (Item II-B). *(Note: the CTCR approved the plan, as revised, via email following the Aquatic SWG conference call on March 8, 2023.)*

Agreements

1. Aquatic SWG members present agreed to postpone and possibly forgo White Sturgeon SAP screening related to the 328 BY 2022 White Sturgeon slated for the Douglas PUD mitigation Program, contingent on the following: 1) the high injury and mortality associated with the blood-draw process is not resolved; 2) detection of abnormal ploidy BY 2022 White Sturgeon for other programs remains low; and 3) CTCR and Ecology agree to postpone or forgo screening after Douglas PUD shares with the CTCR and Ecology the discussion and this Agreement about White Sturgeon SAP screening of Douglas PUD Program BY 2022 White Sturgeon (Item II-C). *(Note: Jason McLellan suggested postponing SAP screening until screening of Chelan PUD fish is complete in April or early May 2023, as distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on March 10, 2023.)*

Review Items

1. The draft *Annual Report Calendar Year 2022 Activities Under the Aquatic Settlement Agreement* (2022 ASA Annual Report) and appended *2022 Annual Report White Sturgeon Management Plan, 2022 Bull Trout Management Plan and Incidental Take Annual Report, 2022 Annual Report Water Quality Management Plan* and appended *2022 Water Temperature Annual Report, Pacific Lamprey Management Plan 2022 Annual Report, Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan 2022 Annual Report, and Resident Fish Management Plan 2022 Annual*

Report were distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on March 10, 2023, and are available for a 45-day review with edits and comments due to Geris by April 24, 2023 (Item III-A).

Documents Finalized

1. The final 2023 ASA Action Plan was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris following the Aquatic SWG conference call on March 8, 2023 (Item II-B).

I. Welcome

A. Review Agenda (John Ferguson)

John Ferguson welcomed the Aquatic SWG members (Attachment A). Ferguson asked for any additions or changes to the agenda.

- Ralph Lampman added YN Aquatic SWG representation designation.
- Breean Zimmerman said she will need to leave the call by 10:30 a.m.
- Ferguson added a reminder about the draft 2022 ASA Annual Report timeline.

B. Meeting Minutes Approval (John Ferguson)

The revised draft February 8, 2023, conference call minutes were reviewed. Kristi Geris said all comments and revisions received from members of the Aquatic SWG were minor, and clarifying edits were incorporated into the revised minutes. She also closed out one action item for Douglas PUD and added distribution of the final study plan, *Wells Reservoir White Sturgeon Reproduction Assessment* under *Documents Finalized*. This study plan was approved during the Aquatic SWG conference call on May 11, 2022, and was distributed for the administrative record. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the February 8, 2023, conference call minutes, as revised. USFWS abstained because a representative did not participate in the February 8, 2023, meeting. (*Note: the CTCR approved the revised minutes via email on March 7, 2023.*)

C. Review of Action Items (John Ferguson)

Action items from the Aquatic SWG conference call on February 8, 2023, are as follows (*Note: The following italicized item numbers correspond to agenda items from the February 8, 2023, meeting*):

1. *Anchor QEA will request from USFWS a vote via email on the 2022 Annual Report Total Dissolved Gas Abatement Plan and 2023 Total Dissolved Gas Abatement Plan and appended Wells Bypass Operating Plan, which were approved by Aquatic SWG members present during today's Aquatic SWG conference call (Item II-A and Item II-B).*

Kristi Geris sent this request following the Aquatic SWG conference call on February 8, 2023, and USFWS approved via email on February 9, 2023.

2. *Douglas PUD will verify that juvenile Pacific Lamprey collected and passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagged at the Carlton rotary screw trap are released upstream of the trap to help monitor trap efficiency and estimate overall run size (Item II-C).*
John Rohrback provided a response from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) on February 22, 2023, which Kristi Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day.
3. *The YN will provide a lamprey bait flyer to Douglas PUD for posting around the Wells Project (Item II-C).*
Ralph Lampman said he just provided this flyer, which Kristi Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG following the Aquatic SWG conference call on March 8, 2023. (Note: the lamprey bait flyer was posted by Douglas PUD staff at all boat launch facilities on March 28, 2023).
4. *The YN will let The River Mile Network know that Douglas PUD is supportive of sharing crayfish monitoring data collected in the Wells Reservoir upon request (Item II-C).*
Ralph Lampman said he just emailed The River Mile Network, which Kristi Geris forwarded to the Aquatic SWG following the Aquatic SWG conference call on March 8, 2023.
5. *WDFW will ask internally about the timeline and schedule for releasing the Northern Pike Rapid Response Statewide Plan (Item II-C).*
Laura Heironimus provided an update indicating the plan will be complete on July 1, 2023, which Kristi Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG on February 21, 2023.
6. *Anchor QEA will notify USFWS that Douglas PUD plans to request approval of the 2023 ASA Action Plan during the Aquatic SWG conference call on March 8, 2023 and to reach out to Douglas PUD with questions (Item I-C).*
Kristi Geris sent this notification following the Aquatic SWG conference call on February 8, 2023.
7. *Douglas PUD will coordinate with Wells Dam mechanical staff to do the following: 1) ask about the feasibility of widening the 3-inch plating around diffuser gratings with regards to hydraulics through the area; 2) request any additional photographs taken of reducing gaps in the east fishway during the 2022/2023 Wells Dam winter maintenance period; and 3) make note to recheck measurements of the areas depicted in the photographs shared during today's Aquatic SWG conference call (Attachment B to the Aquatic SWG February 8, 2023, conference call minutes; Item II-D).*
Chas Kyger said this is on his radar to address next maintenance period and suggested closing out the action item for now. Patrick Verhey suggested setting a reminder to add this back to the agenda in November 2023. Anchor QEA will set this reminder. (Note: Kristi Geris set this reminder, as discussed.)

8. *Douglas PUD will resend or provide the location of the latest photographs taken of the Pacific Lamprey improvements installed in the Wells Dam count window areas (Item II-D).*
Chas Kyger provided this location on March 8, 2023, which was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris that same day.
9. *Douglas PUD will follow up with USFWS regarding PIT tagging of Bull Trout incidental captures in the Methow River Basin for inclusion in the Bull Trout Movement and Life History Investigation 2022 (2022 Bull Trout PIT Study) (Item II-F).*
Andrew Gingerich said that, since the last meeting, he and RD Nelle touched base on this topic, both on the phone and via email. Gingerich said Nelle discussed this internally, and this coordination is moving forward. That is, if Bull Trout are incidentally encountered during steelhead brood collection for Douglas PUD and Winthrop National Fish Hatchery (NFH), crews are PIT tagging these fish to support the ongoing 2022 Bull Trout PIT Study.

II. Summary of Discussions

A. YN Aquatic SWG Representation Designation (Ralph Lampman)

Ralph Lampman said Donella Miller accepted a position with the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, and David Blodgett, III, will fill Miller's role in the interim.

Anchor QEA will update the YN Aquatic SWG Policy Representation and Technical Alternate designations to replace Miller with Blodgett. *(Note: Kristi Geris updated Aquatic SWG email lists and extranet access following the Aquatic SWG conference call on March 8, 2023.)*

B. DECISION: 2023 ASA Action Plan (Andrew Gingerich)

The draft 2023 ASA Action Plan was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on February 7, 2023. Andrew Gingerich recalled having a comprehensive discussion on this document during last month's meeting, including inserting real-time edits in tracked changes. Gingerich shared these edits on WebEx and reviewed the revisions that were discussed last month. He said no additional comments or edits have been received. John Ferguson noted that the CTCR approved the action plan, as revised, via email on March 7, 2023. Gingerich asked whether there were any additional edits before requesting approval. Specific items were discussed, as follows:

Bull Trout MP

Judy Neibauer said she has a question about the timing of the 2022 Bull Trout PIT Study. She recalled the change in methodology from radio telemetry to PIT detection, which also changed what data can be collected. While the same data cannot be collected, with PIT tags, these fish can be tracked longer, so why only track these study fish for 1 year? Gingerich said he and Nelle discussed this. The requirement in the Bull Trout MP is for a 1-year study. The intention has always been to conduct a

1.5-year study to account for any handling effects. Ultimately, this report will include 2 years of data. That is, fish will be tagged during the spring of 2022 and 2023. Because these fish migrate downstream after spawning, typically in November, the plan is to include detection histories through the post-spawn period of 2023 and then file a final report with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. This will complete the actual Bull Trout MP requirement. He understands there is interest in continuing to track these fish, and Douglas PUD can provide verbal updates on study fish that continue to carry a tag and are detected in PIT-tag arrays each year. Over time, there will be natural mortality, and sample size will decrease. Neibauer said this is what she was thinking. The goal should be to get as much data out of these PIT-tagged fish as possible. She asked whether this annual update on PIT-tag detection histories for study fish can be added to the action plan. Gingerich said yes, and he added this item, as requested.

Pacific Lamprey MP

4. Juvenile lamprey PIT tagging and migration monitoring Methow River at Carlton RST – March to August 2023

Ralph Lampman requested a similar addition, specifically, to add an annual update on PIT-tag detection histories for juvenile Pacific Lamprey PIT tagged at the Carlton Rotary Screw Trap. Gingerich said Douglas PUD can accommodate these modest requests but cautioned to be mindful of creeping outside the scope of MP requirements. This item was added, as requested.

Bull Trout MP

Neibauer asked whether there are plans to conduct a subadult study. Gingerich said there is no specific subadult requirement in the Bull Trout MP aside from the ongoing 2022 Bull Trout PIT Study. Neibauer said this is a big data gap. Fish should be living a good amount of time, and it is unknown why these fish are not making it back to the spawning grounds for more than 2 to 3 years. She requested that addressing this data gap be added to the action plan as well. Gingerich said, regarding not getting back to the spawning grounds, it is more about fish getting off the spawning grounds. He is not sure whether this movement is energetically intensive, or fish become entrapped somewhere, or something else. That aside, Douglas PUD is fascinated with this species and has an obligation to have these discussions, but this action plan outlines activities that are required under the Bull Trout MP and Biological Opinion. Neibauer asked whether this discussion would be more appropriate under regional coordination, and Gingerich agreed that this is exactly where the discussion belongs.

Pacific Lamprey MP

1. Continued implementation of Adult Approach and Passage Study – January to July 2023

Lampman said this year's migration will start soon, and he asked whether there is a plan for a 2023 study. John Rohrback said that he queried the Columbia Basin PIT Tag Information System this

morning, and for the 170 dual-tagged study fish and approximately 640 PIT only-tagged study fish, there has been no additional PIT detections after the one fish was detected at the Wells Fish Hatchery voluntary channel in late 2022. The acoustic tags are still in winter mode but should be “waking up” and starting to ping more frequently this month into April. Typically, Douglas PUD checks the acoustic receivers in April. After April, an updated “Last Seen” table can be provided. Douglas PUD will check the acoustic receivers again after October when the acoustic tag battery life will expire. Douglas PUD will then produce a draft report for Aquatic SWG review. Because the study fish also have a PIT tag, Douglas PUD can also provide a PIT detection update in July. Lampman asked, so the plan is to let the adults from last year reach their destination before starting a new study? Rohrback said he thinks so and suggested to wait for this study to run its course. Lampman said, based on initial results, there are a lot more fish approaching Wells Dam compared to earlier studies—approximately 60% compared to 25%. He said it seems attraction is increasing overall, and he asked whether this is Douglas PUD’s interpretation as well. Rohrback said yes, to date the approach rate to Wells Dam in the current study is higher than in the last approach study. While translocation is one variable, other things could be affecting this outcome, and he cannot say with a high degree of certainty what is causing this change.

Laura Heironimus joined the conference call.

John Ferguson asked, being mindful of Breean Zimmerman’s time, is Ecology comfortable with voting on this action plan, as revised? Zimmerman said yes, Ecology approves the action plan as revised thus far. Ferguson said Anchor QEA will share with Ecology any new edits made to the 2023 ASA Action Plan, if any, after Zimmerman leaves the conference call. Zimmerman left the conference call. *(Note: Geris notified Zimmerman that there were no further edits to the action plan after Ecology approval.)*

8. Update lamprey literature review document libraries – November 2023

Lampman said other fish forums maintain these libraries as well. Douglas PUD has done a good job at updating these libraries, but he thinks it would be more useful to convene a regional coordination meeting with all PUDs to discuss the latest literature, design ideas, what each PUD is working on, and any new understandings, techniques, and approaches. He believes this is what the literature reviews were intended to accomplish. He wants to make sure everyone is learning from each other. He suggested that instead of just updating these libraries, this action should include a regional meeting of the PUDs to discuss the libraries. Rohrback said he prefers not to commit other PUDs in Douglas PUD’s action plan, but he is open to further discussing this idea. Douglas PUD and the YN will discuss possibly convening an annual regional meeting to discuss the latest literature on Pacific Lamprey passage improvements and technology. *(Note: Douglas PUD and the YN discussed this over the phone on March 16, 2023).*

Bull Trout MP

10. Recovery planning participation/regional coordination – Throughout 2023

Neibauer requested a similar action, specifically, to create an action item for Douglas PUD and USFWS to discuss possible approaches to address regional Bull Trout data gaps under the Recovery Planning Participation and Regional Coordination objectives of the Bull Trout MP and then report back to the Aquatic SWG. Gingerich said Douglas PUD is supportive of this.

Neibauer said, also as part of recovery planning, USFWS is funding the development of a Bull Trout action plan for the Methow River Basin and has intentions to develop action plans for the Wenatchee and Entiat river basins. There is already an action plan for the Yakima River Basin. The goal across a 3-year period is to link and prioritize actions ongoing within the region. She would like for Douglas PUD and the Aquatic SWG to participate in this effort. Gingerich said Douglas PUD is interested in participating in all regional planning efforts, but he does not believe an edit is needed in the action plan for this since regional coordination is already included under the Bull Trout MP section of the Action Plan.

Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2023 ASA Action Plan, as revised.

Anchor QEA will share with the CTCR the new edits made to the 2023 ASA Action Plan, as approved by the Aquatic SWG representatives present. *(Note: Geris shared these new edits with Jason McLellan, which he approved via email following the Aquatic SWG conference call on March 8, 2023.)*

The final 2023 ASA Action Plan was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris following the Aquatic SWG conference call on March 8, 2023.

C. BY 2022 White Sturgeon Rearing Update (Chas Kyger)

A BY 2022 White Sturgeon Rearing Update (Attachment B) was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris prior to the conference call on March 8, 2023. Chas Kyger said the blue shaded rows represent fish for the Douglas PUD program. Fish are averaging 412.7 grams per fish, which already exceeds the 350-gram target. These fish were scute marked and PIT tagged last month. The current schedule is to conduct SAP screening next Monday, March 13, 2023; however, there has been an abnormally high injury and mortality rate in Chelan PUD program fish screened for SAP to date. Initially, crews thought this was due to the location of the blood draw; however, after switching locations the injury and mortality rate is still high. Douglas PUD is concerned about killing fish such that the number released will drop below the -10% threshold stipulated in the current Statement of Agreement (SOA).¹ Mortality associated with SAP screening for Chelan PUD program fish has exceeded

¹ The SOA, *Statement of Agreement Regarding Wells Reservoir White Sturgeon Supplementation 2023–2026*, approved by the Aquatic SWG on August 10, 2022, stipulates releasing 325 (±10%) White Sturgeon into the Wells Reservoir annually between 2023 and 2026.

10% in some cases. Kyger said he discussed this with Jason McClellan, and the cause of this mortality is unknown. It does not appear to be associated with fish size. Kyger said McLellan also shared SAP screening results thus far. To date, the CTCR have sampled 1,245 fish and there have been no detections of abnormal ploidy in individual fish. Five of these samples need to be rerun because the samples were bad. Douglas PUD would like to open this up for discussion. That is, should Douglas PUD go forward with screening for something that has not been prevalent to date and potentially fall below the stocking target if mortality continues to be high?

Ralph Lampman asked whether the approximate 1,000 fish remaining to be screened are the same group of fish that have already been sampled. Kyger said yes, these are the same batch of larvae from Lake Roosevelt that were collected and delivered to Wells Fish Hatchery by the CTCR. The tanks have been graded by size, fish remaining to be sampled are smaller, and crews are waiting for them to grow larger. Initially, the thought was that smaller fish would not handle the blood draw as well; however, this was not the case for the last batch.

Kyger said of the approximate 1,000 fish remaining left to be screened, 328 fish will go to the Douglas PUD program, and the remainder are Chelan PUD program fish. Douglas PUD is asking about moving forward with SAP screening of the 328 fish for the Douglas PUD program.

Laura Heironimus asked whether anything else has changed, such as who conducted the sampling or diet. Kyger said the only change has been the location of the blood draw. After switching locations, the injury and mortality rates decreased but then spiked again, so staff switched back to the original location. He thought there was something to do with fish size, but it is not necessarily only the smaller fish that are becoming injured. In the past, he has observed only a handful of injured fish resulting from blood draws, but this is not the case this year. Heironimus said this makes her think there is a secondary stressor, like water temperature or something else. Kyger said the injuries are the same: paralysis, so the fish cannot move or take feed. Douglas PUD thinks it is an injury not a stressor.

John Ferguson said Douglas PUD has 328 fish. If there is a 10% loss, this leaves the program right at the edge of 325 ($\pm 10\%$), or 295 fish or so. This is a resource question. Does sampling for SAP, when there have been no detections out of 1,245 fish sampled, outweigh the loss of up to 30-plus fish?

Lampman said, considering there have been no detections and sampling mortality rate is high, the YN votes to forgo sampling.

Heironimus said she understands this logic. However, she also does not want to set a precedent to not test because staff are not good at testing. Managers need to work through what is causing this mortality and do better. That said, in this case, she is supportive of forgoing sampling to meet the stocking target, given the low likeliness of SAP presence in this group of fish, but she does not want

to see this again and again. Kyger agreed and said once more is understood about mortality rates associated with SAP screening, this will be taken into consideration during larval collection to meet program requirements in subsequent years. Ideally, the goal is to reduce the mortality rate.

Heironimus said she has additional SAP screening results from McLellan. For Wells, among 1,256 fish sampled, there were 0 fish with abnormal ploidy. For Lake Sherman, among 502 fish sampled, there were 2 fish with abnormal ploidy. For another population, among 1,879 fish sampled, there were 3 fish with abnormal ploidy. Across all populations, the prevalence of SAP has been low this year.

(Note: McLellan clarified SAP screening results to date, via email on March 21, 2023. For BY 2022 White Sturgeon, in January and February 2023 at Wells Fish Hatchery, the CTCR screened 1,256 fish, and 0 fish had abnormal ploidy. For BY 2021, in winter/spring 2022 at Wells Fish Hatchery, the CTCR screened 1,377 fish for the Chelan PUD program, and 1 fish had abnormal ploidy. Additionally, in November 2022 at Sherman Creek Hatchery, the CTCR screened 502 fish, and 2 fish had abnormal ploidy. In total, for BY 2021 White Sturgeon, the CTCR screened 1,879 fish, and 3 had abnormal ploidy. All BY 2022 and BY 2021 fish were captured as larvae from Lake Roosevelt.)

Judy Neibauer said she has no strong position on this but asked whether staff are monitoring water quality and are other conditions similar across all tanks. Kyger said there are few differences across rearing tanks. Some tanks are larger, and some water temperatures are higher to increase growth rates, but there are no significant differences in water quality parameters to explain this mortality. There is no evidence that fish husbandry is playing a role in this.

Ferguson asked, to Heironimus's point about learning, will the CTCR sample more Chelan PUD fish so that Aquatic SWG representatives might learn more about what is going on this year? Kyger said he understands that the CTCR still plan to screen the remainder of Chelan PUD's fish in April 2023. He and McLellan discussed this high injury and mortality rate, and McLellan was also surprised and perplexed by this issue. Kyger said he did not discuss weighing the risk of sampling or not sampling and meeting the stocking rate with McLellan. Ferguson suggested including McLellan in this conversation before Monday when SAP screening is scheduled for Douglas PUD fish.

Andrew Gingerich agreed and suggested contacting Breean Zimmerman as well. Without the CTCR and Ecology formally agreeing to forgo screening, the default is to sample, per the SOA. Regarding environmental differences at the hatchery, when staff PIT tag and scute mark these fish, mortalities are unexpected, in fact have been zero in each of the last five years of PIT and scute marking. The issue seems to be linked to the blood-draw process. Douglas PUD is in the same camp as the YN and WDFW. This year, SAP prevalence is low, mortality is associated with the blood-draw process, and Douglas PUD does not want to risk missing their White Sturgeon mitigation targets.

Aquatic SWG members present agreed to postpone and possibly forgo White Sturgeon SAP screening related to the 328 BY 2022 White Sturgeon slated for the Douglas PUD mitigation

Program, contingent on the following: 1) the high injury and mortality associated with the blood-draw process is not resolved; 2) detection of abnormal ploidy BY 2022 White Sturgeon for other programs remains low; and 3) CTCR and Ecology agree to postpone or forgo screening after Douglas PUD shares with the CTCR and Ecology the discussion and this Agreement about White Sturgeon SAP screening of Douglas PUD Program BY 2022 White Sturgeon.

Douglas PUD will share with the CTCR and Ecology the discussion and Agreement about White Sturgeon SAP screening of Douglas PUD Program BY 2022 White Sturgeon and will report back to the Aquatic SWG before Monday, March 13, 2023, when SAP screening of Douglas PUD Program fish is currently scheduled to be performed. *(Note: McLellan suggested postponing SAP screening until screening of Chelan PUD fish is complete in April or early May 2023, as distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on March 10, 2023.)*

D. Bull Trout Update (Chas Kyger)

Chas Kyger said after approximately 3 weeks of steelhead brood collection in the Methow River Basin, there have been four Bull Trout incidental encounters; none of the fish were previously PIT tagged. These fish were given a PIT tag, and a tissue sample was obtained. These fish add to the existing 11 fish tagged and sampled last year. There are approximately 2 to 3 weeks left of this brood collection effort to potentially capture more Bull Trout for inclusion in the ongoing 2022 Bull Trout PIT Study.

Judy Neibauer asked whether the target sample size is still 60 fish. Kyger said 60 fish was the original goal, but this likely will not be reached. Currently, there are 15 fish in the study. Neibauer asked about other options to increase sample size. Kyger said there is no targeted effort to capture Bull Trout for the study (there is no trapping at Wells Dam or the Twisp Weir). The main reason to operate the trap at the weir is to collect spring Chinook Salmon broodstock, which has not been needed since brood collection moved to Wells Dam. Neibauer asked about hook and line sampling and suggested contacting USFWS staff at Winthrop NFH, who likely have good information on locations where Bull Trout can be targeted. She recently learned that Bull Trout are becoming entrapped in the upper Methow River Basin and freezing to death. She suggested hook and line sampling in these areas. Kyger said Douglas PUD is already coordinating with Charles Frady (USFWS) and staff at Winthrop NFH. These folks are aware that Douglas PUD is trying to tag more fish for the study, and they plan to contribute to the effort.

Neibauer said RD Nelle was interested in whether Douglas PUD had a plan if not enough Bull Trout are encountered for the study. She said 15 fish is quite a bit less than 60 fish and asked whether there should be an action item to address what happens if the study does not reach 60 fish. John Ferguson suggested further discussing this topic once there are final numbers. He clarified that

the Aquatic SWG did not expect to get 60 fish. Kyger suggested revisiting this agenda item in April or May 2023. Andrew Gingerich further clarified that the study requirement as stipulated in the Bull Trout MP and Biological Opinion is 10 fish. Douglas PUD believes that 10 fish is a bit light to draw any conclusions on, even with radio telemetry, which is why the target sample size is larger. However, in terms of regulatory requirements, the number of fish needed for this study has already been met.

III. Administration

A. 2022 ASA Annual Report (John Ferguson)

John Ferguson said the draft 2022 ASA Annual Report and six aquatic resource MP annual reports will be distributed this Friday, March 10, 2023, for a 45-day Aquatic SWG review with comments due Monday, April 24, 2023. The final draft reports for approval will be distributed on May 3, 2023, and Douglas PUD will request approval of the reports during the Aquatic SWG meeting on May 10, 2023. The final approved reports are due to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on May 31, 2023.

The draft reports were distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on March 10, 2023, as discussed.

B. Upcoming Meetings (John Ferguson)

The Aquatic SWG meeting on April 12, 2023, will be held by conference call.

Other upcoming meetings include May 10 and June 14, 2023 (conference call).

List of Attachments

Attachment A List of Attendees

Attachment B BY 2022 White Sturgeon Rearing Update

Attachment A – Attendees

Name	Role	Organization
John Ferguson	Aquatic SWG Chairman	Anchor QEA, LLC
Kristi Geris	Administration/Technical Support	Anchor QEA, LLC
Andrew Gingerich	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	Douglas PUD
Chas Kyger	Aquatic SWG Technical Alternate	Douglas PUD
John Rohrback	Aquatic SWG Technical Support	Douglas PUD
Judy Neibauer	Aquatic SWG Technical Alternate	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Patrick Verhey	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Laura Heironimus*	Aquatic SWG Technical Alternate	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Breean Zimmerman*	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	Washington State Department of Ecology
Ralph Lampman	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	Yakama Nation

Notes:

- * Heironimus joined and Zimmerman left the meeting near the end of Item II-B.