



Conference Call Minutes

Aquatic Settlement Work Group

To: Aquatic SWG Parties

Date: June 14, 2023

From: John Ferguson, Chair, Anchor QEA, LLC

Re: Final Minutes of the May 10, 2023, Aquatic SWG Conference Call

The Aquatic Settlement Work Group (SWG) met by conference call on Wednesday, May 10, 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 (Anchor QEA) will distribute the typo corrections to the final revised *Pacific Lamprey Management Plan 2022 Annual Report* (2022 Pacific Lamprey MP Annual Report) that were discussed during the Aquatic SWG conference call on May 10, 2023 (Item II-C). (Note: Kristi Geris distributed these corrections following the conference call on May 10, 2023.)
2. Douglas PUD will provide via email a comprehensive summary table (similar to the "Last Seen" table) showing the year that juvenile Pacific Lamprey were captured and passive integrated transponder (PIT)-tagged at the different smolt trap locations, including the PIT-tag size and type and their downstream detections, over the course of the entire tagging effort (2021 to 2022), and these data will also be incorporated into future Pacific Lamprey MP annual reports (Item II-A). (Note: John Rohrback provided this summary on June 12, 2023, which was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris that same day.)
3. Anchor QEA will add "Juvenile Pacific Lamprey Studies" to the Aquatic SWG agenda for June 14, 2023 (Item II-A). (Note: this has been added to the agenda.)
4. Anchor QEA will distribute the edits to the draft Statement of Agreement (SOA), *To translocate adult Pacific Lamprey from Priest Rapids Dam to areas within or upstream of the Wells Project 2023-2024* (2023–2024 Adult Pacific Lamprey Translocation SOA), that were crafted during the Aquatic SWG conference call on May 10, 2023 (Item II-C). (Note: Geris distributed these edits following the conference call on May 10, 2023.)
5. Douglas PUD will coordinate with the Yakama Nation (YN) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on further edits to the draft 2023-2024 Adult Pacific Lamprey Translocation SOA for discussion and decision during the Aquatic SWG conference call on June 14, 2023 (Item II-C). (Note: this draft SOA was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on June 5, 2023.)
6. The Aquatic SWG meeting on June 14, 2023, will be held by conference call (Item III-A).

Summary of Decisions

1. Aquatic SWG members present approved the *Annual Report Calendar Year 2022 Activities Under the Aquatic Settlement Agreement (2022 ASA Annual Report)*, as revised, and appended *2022 Annual Report White Sturgeon Management Plan (2022 White Sturgeon MP Annual Report)*, as revised; *2022 Bull Trout Management Plan and Incidental Take Annual Report (2022 Bull Trout MP Annual Report)*, as revised; *2022 Annual Report Water Quality Management Plan (2022 Water Quality MP Annual Report)* and appended *2022 Water Temperature Annual Report*; *2022 Pacific Lamprey MP Annual Report*, as revised; *Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan 2022 Annual Report (2022 Aquatic Nuisance Species MP Annual Report)*, as revised; and *Resident Fish Management Plan 2022 Annual Report (2022 Resident Fish MP Annual Report)*, as revised (Item II-A).

Agreements

1. There were no agreements discussed during today's conference call.

Review Items

1. The draft 2023–2024 Adult Pacific Lamprey Translocation SOA was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris prior to the conference call on May 10, 2023. An edited SOA was distributed after the conference call that same day (Item-II-C). A revised SOA for approval was distributed on June 5, 2023. The CTCR submitted comments on the revised SOA, which were distributed on June 9, 2023.
2. The draft *White Sturgeon Supplementation and Management Plan Implementation in the Wells Reservoir, 2022* was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on May 17, 2023, and is available for a 45-day review with edits and comments due to Chas Kyger by July 1, 2023.
3. The draft *Wells Reservoir, 2022 White Sturgeon Reproduction Assessment* was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on May 17, 2023, and is available for a 45-day review with edits and comments due to Kyger by July 1, 2023.

Documents Finalized

1. The final 2022 ASA Annual Report and appended 2022 White Sturgeon MP Annual Report, 2022 Bull Trout MP Annual Report, 2022 Water Quality MP Annual Report and appended *2022 Water Temperature Annual Report*, 2022 Pacific Lamprey MP Annual Report, 2022 Aquatic Nuisance Species MP Annual Report, and 2022 Resident Fish MP Annual Report were filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on May 16, 2023, as distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on May 17, 2023 (Item II-A).

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. The following revisions were requested:

- Breean Zimmerman said she needs to leave the meeting at 10:30 a.m.
- Andrew Gingerich added a Water Supply Update.

Jerrmaine Treadwell (USFWS) introduced herself. Treadwell said she works with Judy Neibauer and is attending today's conference call to take notes in Neibauer's absence.

B. Meeting Minutes Approval (John Ferguson)

The revised draft April 12, 2023, conference call minutes were reviewed. Kristi Geris said all revisions received from members of the Aquatic SWG were minor, and clarifying edits were incorporated into the revised minutes. Geris also added distribution of the draft 2023–2024 Pacific Lamprey Translocation SOA. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the April 12, 2023, conference call minutes, as revised.

C. Review of Action Items (John Ferguson)

Action items from the Aquatic SWG conference call on April 12, 2023, are as follows (*Note: The following italicized item numbers correspond to agenda items from the April 12, 2023, meeting*):

1. *The YN will continue planning for an annual regional meeting to discuss the latest literature on Pacific Lamprey passage improvements and technology (Item I-C).*

Ralph Lampman said he is simultaneously working on a juvenile Pacific Lamprey passage regional meeting, which is a little more urgent, so his focus has been on that. The adult portion might be combined with a future Pacific Lamprey Conservation Initiative (PLCI) Upper Columbia Regional Management Unit (RMU) meeting. John Ferguson asked whether the PLCI RMU meeting is scheduled. Lampman said this year's annual meeting already occurred last month and focused on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects. However, maybe next year there can be an opportunity for the PUDs to discuss adult Pacific Lamprey passage improvements and technology. Lampman suggested closing out this action item for now.

2. *Douglas PUD and 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 MP and will report back to the Aquatic SWG (Item I-C).*

Andrew Gingerich said there are no updates since what was shared during the last meeting. This action item is ongoing, and he is not sure it needs to be a recurring item. RD Nelle

recalled this action item was linked to updates on the last PIT-tagging effort, which is now complete, so he suggested closing out this item for now.

3. *Douglas PUD will draft a Pacific Lamprey Translocation SOA, for implementation from 2023 to 2024, that is consistent with the Pacific Lamprey MP and with a commitment to continue discussing a potential study design for implementation in 2025, for discussion and possible decision during the Aquatic SWG conference call on May 10, 2023 (Item II-B).*

This SOA was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on May 10, 2023.

II. Summary of Discussions

A. DECISION: 2022 ASA Annual Report (John Ferguson)

John Ferguson said the draft 2022 ASA Annual Report and six aquatic resource MP annual reports have been out for a 45-day Aquatic SWG review. He suggested Kristi Geris review comments received on the draft 2022 ASA Annual Report and then have Andrew Gingerich cover the six aquatic resource MP annual reports.

Geris said for the draft 2022 ASA Annual Report, the only edits received were from Jason McLellan. All edits were minor clarifications that were distributed to the Aquatic SWG in tracked changes.

Gingerich said no edits or comments were received on the draft 2022 Water Quality MP Annual Report and appended *2022 Water Temperature Annual Report*. For the other five aquatic resource MP annual reports, the only edits received were from McLellan. Like the 2022 ASA Annual Report, all edits were minor. In the interest of time, he suggested that McLellan share anything remarkable and then the Aquatic SWG vote to approve the annual report in its entirety. McLellan said he has nothing to report. Ferguson asked whether any members are opposed to approving the 2022 ASA Annual Report and six aquatic resource MP annual reports, in total. No objections were expressed.

Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2022 ASA Annual Report, as revised, and appended 2022 White Sturgeon MP Annual Report, as revised; 2022 Bull Trout MP Annual Report, as revised; 2022 Water Quality MP Annual Report and appended *2022 Water Temperature Annual Report*; 2022 Pacific Lamprey MP Annual Report, as revised; 2022 Aquatic Nuisance Species MP Annual Report, as revised; and 2022 Resident Fish MP Annual Report, as revised.

Ralph Lampman noted two typos in the draft 2022 Pacific Lamprey MP Annual Report. In Section 3.2.3.1 and Section 3.2.4.1, the date 2021 needs to be changed to 2022. Gingerich agreed with these edits. Anchor QEA will distribute these typo corrections to the final revised 2022 Pacific Lamprey MP Annual Report. (*Note: Geris distributed these corrections following the conference call on May 10, 2023.*)

Lampman said in Section 3.2.4.1 of the draft 2022 Pacific Lamprey MP Annual Report, it would be helpful to clarify the type of PIT tag used for tagging juveniles at the smolt traps. Based on the size distribution, most individuals could be tagged with 12-millimeter (mm) tags. The size threshold for 12-mm tags is 3 grams in weight and 130 mm in length. The smaller individuals would receive 10-mm tags. Chas Kyger confirmed that individuals large enough to receive 12-mm tags were tagged with 12-mm tags. Only the small ammocoetes received 10-mm tags. Lampman said it would also be helpful if this section included a summary table, similar to the "Last Seen" translocation table, that shows the year individuals were captured and PIT-tagged at the different smolt traps and their downstream detections over the course of the entire tagging effort. Gingerich said that, because this annual report has already been approved, he suggested providing this information and summary table via email and including these items in future annual reports. Lampman agreed this makes sense. Douglas PUD will provide via email a comprehensive summary table (similar to the "Last Seen" table) showing the year that juvenile Pacific Lamprey were captured and PIT-tagged at the different smolt trap locations, including the PIT tag size and type, and their downstream detections, over the course of the entire tagging effort (2021 to 2022), and these data will also be incorporated into future Pacific Lamprey MP annual reports. *(Note: John Rohrback provided this summary on June 12, 2023, which was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris that same day.)*

Lampman said, lastly, these annual reports provide a good summary of what has been done; however, he would like more clarity on when the next juvenile study can take place. Ferguson suggested that Lampman request this agenda item when he is ready to discuss this topic. Lampman suggested adding this topic to next month's agenda. Anchor QEA will add "Juvenile Pacific Lamprey Studies" to the Aquatic SWG agenda for June 14, 2023. *(Note: this has been added to the agenda.)*

The final 2022 ASA Annual Report and appended 2022 White Sturgeon MP Annual Report, 2022 Bull Trout MP Annual Report, 2022 Water Quality MP Annual Report and appended 2022 *Water Temperature Annual Report*, 2022 Pacific Lamprey MP Annual Report, 2022 Aquatic Nuisance Species MP Annual Report, and 2022 Resident Fish MP Annual Report were filed with FERC on May 16, 2023, as distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on May 17, 2023.

B. PRESENTATION: Water Supply Update (Andrew Gingerich)

Andrew Gingerich said the presentation, *Wells Project Water Year Forecast* (Attachment B), was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris prior to the conference call on May 10, 2023. Gingerich said this presentation was developed by John Rohrback, and Gingerich added a few updates as conditions have recently changed.

Slide 2

Gingerich said the orange line on this graph shows average daily discharge at the Wells Project through March 24, 2023. The blue line is the 10-year average.

Slide 3

There continued to be below-average discharge throughout the month of April, until April 30, 2023, when there was a remarkable shift in discharge at Wells. A really cold spring held back snowpack until about 1 week ago when it warmed up. Additionally, Grand Coulee Dam was conducting drum gate maintenance, which was completed at the end of April. This resulted in a collision of inflow from Canadian snowpack, Grand Coulee Dam, and side flows from the Methow and Okanogan river basins. He cannot recall ever seeing such a shift in discharge.

Slide 4

Douglas PUD tracks a water supply volume monthly forecast compiled by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. In April 2023, total discharge at Grand Coulee Dam was well below the 30-year average. This plot was created on May 1, 2023, at which time it was forecasted that the runoff volume for the month of May would be about average. The Northwest River Forecast Center predicted that water supply at Grand Coulee would be 84% of average.

Slide 5

Now looking at a plot created on May 10, 2023, 10 days later, the water supply forecast at Grand Coulee is now 139% of average.

Slide 6

The circled data on the left side show forecasts for the water supply forecast at Grand Coulee for the April to September period, which is now 92% and 94% of average. This was 84% one week ago. The right side also shows an increase in the seasonal runoff forecast. This is a remarkable change. He also noted that the error bars come closer together moving throughout the year.

Slide 7

The Northwest River Forecast Center was remarking about the above-average precipitation during the month of May 2023. This slide shows the percent of average at SNOTEL sites. In the upper basin, some sites are not reporting 10 days later, but some show disappearance of yellow and orange and more-prevalent green, which is closer to average. This helps explain what is occurring in the upper basin. The Snake River Basin had a better late winter and early spring, partly due to the extended colder weather holding back snowpack runoff. He believes the Snake River Basin at Lower Granite Dam was 104% of average, and the Columbia River at The Dalles was slightly below average but not by much.

Slide 8

This shows El Niño and La Niña forecasting. For June, July, and August of 2023, there is a shift from a La Niña event toward an El Niño event. In the Pacific Northwest, the outlook is for above-average temperatures and below-average precipitation.

Slide 9

The data shared in this presentation can be accessed at the link in this slide.

(Note: Breean Zimmerman left the conference call.)

Discussion

Ralph Lampman asked, knowing that below-average precipitation is expected for June, July, and August of 2023, is there capacity to hold back water during May 2023 to try and balance this out? Gingerich said he can only speak about the Wells Project and not about the Federal Columbia River Power System upstream of Wells Dam. Wells Dam is a run-of-the-river project with no ability for excess storage. The project has 10 feet of operating range, and the project typically operates in the upper foot. He does not know about storage above Wells Dam. Grand Coulee will capture some water because that reservoir is typically operated to be at full pool by the July 4th holiday; therefore, there will be some muting of the total hydrograph over the next couple of months.

Jason McLellan said the flood control elevation for Lake Roosevelt in March was approximately 1,270 feet mean sea level (MSL). Full pool is 1,290 feet MSL, so this was a relatively minor drawdown. Grand Coulee had two drum gates fail, so the pool was drawn down to 1,250 feet MSL for drum gate repairs. Additionally, with the colder temperatures, less runoff, and the need to provide flows for Chum Salmon spawning below Bonneville Dam, this resulted in additional water being released and the reservoir being drawn down to 1,240 feet MSL. Therefore, Grand Coulee will have to retain a lot of the forecasted runoff to bring the reservoir back to full pool. John Ferguson asked about the water level currently. McLellan said the pool is already up around the mid-1,250s. Runoff has increased a lot in the last week, like Gingerich's graphs showed.

Ferguson asked about the White Sturgeon wild larvae collection effort, with the cooler spring and now warmer temperatures. McLellan said the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CTCR) are watching this closely, notably with the quickly increasing temperatures. He is not sure what to expect regarding river flow and timing. There is a lot of variability right now.

C. Adult Pacific Lamprey Translocation SOA (Andrew Gingerich)

Andrew Gingerich said the draft 2023–2024 Adult Pacific Lamprey Translocation SOA was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris prior to the conference call on May 10, 2023. Gingerich believes this SOA is consistent with what was discussed last month, which is collecting, PIT-tagging, and

translocating up to 800 Pacific Lamprey in both 2023 and in 2024. The fish would be captured at Priest Rapids Dam (PRD) and released above Wells Dam. The target of 800 fish is based on collecting 200 fish during each 4-week trapping period. Logistically, 200 fish is about the limit that can be handled each week in terms of travel time, tagging, and releasing the fish. Additionally, a target of 800 fish is dependent on run strength at PRD. He did not include details about which 4 weeks will be targeted. He expects this will be the same as in the past. That is, Douglas PUD will coordinate with the Aquatic SWG and Ralph Lampman to make a prediction of when the run will arrive and schedule this in concert with Grant PUD and the Aquatic SWG to target the peak of the run. Gingerich recalled that Laura Heironimus and others found value in including in the Statement a commitment to conduct an active tag study. While the nature of the objectives is not yet clear, he included this language at the end of the Statement. Lastly, the Background of the draft SOA is straightforward.

Gingerich said Douglas PUD is not expecting that the SOA be approved this month, but approval next month will be needed to provide time to coordinate with Grant PUD. John Ferguson noted that only 12 fish have been counted at Bonneville Dam, so the run is just starting.

Lampman said 200 fish per week is a change from the last SOA,¹ which was 1,000 fish over 15 days. He also recalled from the past an agreement² for Douglas PUD to translocate Grant PUD's fish farther upstream during the second 4-week period, thereby creating 8 weeks of translocation above Wells Dam. He suggested either renewing this agreement or increasing the target number to 250 fish per 4-week period to try and get as many fish above Wells Dam as possible.

Ferguson noted that 250 fish per week inflates the weekly number beyond what Douglas PUD thinks they can handle, and extending translocation above Wells Dam from 4 to 8 weeks requires a mid-season meeting and decision to proceed or not proceed.

Lampman asked how large the tank space is. Gingerich said the tank can fit more than 200 fish, which is not the limiting factor. Logistically, this becomes a challenge when handling so many animals. Regarding the other suggestion, if after 4 weeks of translocation the Aquatic SWG wants Douglas PUD to continue translocation above Wells Dam by meeting Grant PUD at Kirby Billingsley Hydro Park as was done in the past, he thinks Douglas PUD would be supportive of this. While he is receptive to editing the SOA to reflect this, he is not sure how to capture this because the additional effort is tied to Grant PUD's obligation, and if this changes it could put Douglas PUD in a weird spot. In terms of the overall number, this is a guessing game. He does not know of any technical data for the right number or for identifying a threshold.

¹ The last translocation SOA, *To translocate adult Pacific Lamprey from Priest Rapids Dam to areas within or upstream of the Wells Project and postpone passage evaluations*, was approved by the Aquatic SWG on June 13, 2018, and was distributed by Kristi Geris on June 14, 2018.

² Aquatic SWG conference call on August 12, 2020

Ferguson, Lampman, and Gingerich discussed various edits to the draft SOA, including copying in language from the last SOA while Geris made these edits real time on the WebEx. Lampman wanted to include more specifics on target numbers, and Gingerich did not want to commit Douglas PUD to something unachievable due to a low run size. RD Nelle suggested setting a goal based on a proportion of the run. Ferguson recalled this was the approach a few years ago. Gingerich said that if Douglas PUD traps 3 of 7 days per week, this is roughly 42% of the fish available at PRD. If trapping only occurs at night, then the total proportion of fish trapped would be less than 42%. This still seems like a lot of the run being translocated above Wells. Lampman noted that considering the total run, this is only about 17% at maximum (in 2020) based on number trapped versus overall number trapped or passed within the year (note: 42% represents the percent of days being trapped but it does not equate to the actual number being trapped). He said there are roughly 500 river kilometers (rkms) of habitat above Wells Dam. Assuming roughly 1 fish per rkm and targeting 1,000 fish equals 2 fish per rkm. There is more available habitat above Wells Dam compared to between PRD and Wells. He is supportive of translocating more fish above Wells Dam for this reason. Nelle said this is somewhat speculative and that quality of habitat could also be a factor. He prefers to be conservative when considering the needs of the Wenatchee and Entiat river basins.

Nelle said he cannot see the live edits to the SOA because he is taking the call from his car, and he would like an opportunity to review the edits before voting. Ferguson said Douglas PUD may want to further edit the language to reflect a level of effort versus tying the SOA to a numerical goal. Gingerich said he would also like to discuss these edits with John Rohrback, who could not attend today's call, and perhaps have Rohrback further discuss the SOA with Lampman and Nelle.

Geris said she will distribute the edits to the draft 2023–2024 Adult Pacific Lamprey Translocation SOA that were crafted during the Aquatic SWG conference call on May 10, 2023. *(Note: Geris distributed these edits following the conference call on May 10, 2023.)*

Douglas PUD will coordinate with the YN and USFWS on further edits to the draft 2023–2024 Adult Pacific Lamprey Translocation SOA for discussion and decision during the Aquatic SWG conference call on June 14, 2023. *(Note: this draft SOA was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on June 5, 2023.)*

D. BY 2022 White Sturgeon Rearing and SAP Screening Update (Chas Kyger)

A brood year (BY) 2022 White Sturgeon Rearing Update (Attachment C) was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris prior to the conference call on May 10, 2023. Chas Kyger said 328 fish are on station at Wells Fish Hatchery for the Douglas PUD program, averaging 667 grams in weight. Blood sampling for spontaneous autopolyploidy (SAP) for Douglas PUD fish was completed on Monday, May 8, 2023. Samples were shipped to the lab, and results are expected by the end of next week. Following the blood sampling there were no mortalities or injuries. Once results are back, fish

will be weighed and measured prior to release. Any fish testing positive for SAP will be culled. Release of BY 2022 White Sturgeon is planned for the week of June 1, 2023.

John Ferguson asked whether the release will be done in coordination with Bridgeport High School, as done in the past. Kyger said he plans to reach out to the school with an invitation to participate.

Andrew Gingerich asked whether the CTCR will sample Chelan PUD fish next week. McLellan said the CTCR plan to draw blood on over the next 2 months on the 15th and 22nd of each month.

III. Administration

A. Upcoming Meetings (John Ferguson)

The Aquatic SWG meeting on June 14, 2023, will be held by conference call.

Other upcoming meetings include July 12 and August 9, 2023 (conference call).

List of Attachments

Attachment A List of Attendees

Attachment B *Wells Project Water Year Forecast*

Attachment C 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
RD Nelle	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Jerrmaine Treadwell	Aquatic SWG Technical Support	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
Jason McLellan	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
Ralph Lampman	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	Yakama Nation

Notes:

- * Left the conference call after Slide 9 of Item II-B.