FINAL

Conference Call Minutes

Aquatic Settlement Work Group

To: Aquatic SWG Parties Date: February 14, 2024

From: John Ferguson, Chair, Anchor QEA, LLC

Re: Final Minutes of the January 10, 2024, Aquatic SWG Conference Call

The Aquatic Settlement Work Group (SWG) met by conference call on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:40 a.m. Attendees are listed in Attachment A of these conference call minutes.

Summary of Action Items

1. The Yakama Nation (YN) will ask Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) about possibly presenting results from their 2023 juvenile Pacific Lamprey passage behavior and survival study during a joint meeting of the Aquatic SWG, Rocky Reach Fish Forum (RRFF), and Priest Rapids Fish Forum (PRFF) this spring, 2024 (Item II-E).
2. Douglas PUD will consider options for monitoring whether Pacific Lamprey enter the plant drain and return-to-river pipe at Wells Dam and report back to the Aquatic SWG (Item II-G).
3. Douglas PUD will review structural design specifications to verify the two ports at the bottom of the end wall within the collection gallery connect with Weir 1 at Wells Dam (Item II-G). *(Note: Andrew Gingerich confirmed these ports connect with Weir 1, in both the east and west fishways at Wells Dam, in an email provided after the conference call on January 10, 2024, which Kristi Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day.)*
4. The YN will provide the photographs of the Wells Dam east fishway tour that were discussed during today's Aquatic SWG conference call, and Anchor QEA will upload the photographs to the Aquatic SWG extranet site (Item II-G). *(Note: Ralph Lampman provided these photographs after the conference call on January 10, 2024, which Kristi Geris uploaded to the extranet site that same day.)*
5. The Aquatic SWG meeting on February 14, 2024, will be held by conference call (Item III-B).

Summary of Decisions

1. There were no Decision Items approved during today's conference call.

Agreements

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

Review Items

1. The draft *Total Dissolved Gas Water Quality Attainment Plan Year 10 Report* (Water Quality Attainment Plan 10-Year Report) was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on November 14, 2023, and is available for review with edits and comments due to Mariah Mayfield (Item II-A).
2. The draft *Bull Trout Movement and Life History Investigation 2022–2023* (2022–2023 Bull Trout Study Report), including *Appendix A. FERC Order Granting Variance from Radio Telemetry Study Pursuant to Bull Trout Stranding, Entrapment, and Take Study Plan and Article 402 Issued October 12, 2021*, *Appendix B. 2022–2023 Bull Trout Detection History Plots of Individual Study Fish*, and *Appendix C. Genetic Analysis for Bull Trout Prepared by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Dated June 2023*, were distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on December 13, 2023, and are available for a 45-day review with edits and comments due to Chas Kyger by January 26, 2024. Douglas PUD will request approval of the draft report documents during the Aquatic SWG conference call on February 14, 2024 (Item II-C).
3. The draft *2023 Annual Report Total Dissolved Gas Abatement Plan* (2023 TDG Report) and draft *2024 Total Dissolved Gas Abatement Plan and appended Wells Bypass Operating Plan* (2024 GAP/BOP) were distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on January 9, 2024, and are available for a 30-day review with edits and comments due to Mariah Mayfield by February 10, 2024. Douglas PUD will request approval of the draft documents during the Aquatic SWG conference call on February 14, 2024 (Item II-B).
4. The draft 2024 Resident Fish Assemblage Study Plan was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on January 29, 2024, and is available for a 30-day review with edits and comments due to Chas Kyger by February 28, 2024.
5. The draft *2024 Aquatic Settlement Agreement and Workgroup Action Plan* (2024 ASA Action Plan) was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on February 13, 2024, and is available for a 30-day review with edits and comments due to Andrew Gingerich by March 12, 2024. Douglas PUD will request approval of the draft plan during the Aquatic SWG conference call on March 13, 2024.

Documents Finalized

1. The final *2022 Public Utility District No. 1 Of Douglas County, Northern Pikeminnow Removal and Research Program*, which was approved by the Wells Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Coordinating Committee on July 31, 2023, after no disapprovals were received prior to the 60-day review period deadline, was distributed to the Aquatic SWG for reference by Kristi Geris on January 26, 2024.

I. Welcome

A. Review Agenda (John Ferguson)

John Ferguson welcomed the Aquatic SWG members (Attachment A) and reviewed the agenda. Ferguson asked for any additions or changes to the agenda. No additions or changes were requested.

B. Meeting Minutes Approval (John Ferguson)

The revised draft December 13, 2023, conference call minutes were reviewed. Kristi Geris said edits were received from Douglas PUD and Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology). Edits were minor clarifications that were incorporated into the revised minutes. To note, the edit from Ecology was just received today and was a clarification about Chad Brown's title, Ecology Hydropower Unit Supervisor. Geris also added distribution of the draft 2023 TDG/GAP Report and draft 2024 GAP/BOP. Aquatic SWG representatives present approved the December 13, 2023, conference call minutes, as revised. The YN abstained because a representative did not participate in the December 13, 2023, conference call.

C. Review of Action Items (John Ferguson)

Action items from the Aquatic SWG conference call on December 13, 2023, are as follows *(Note: The following italicized item numbers correspond to agenda items from the December 13, 2023, meeting)*:

1. *The draft Water Quality Attainment Plan 10-Year Report will be placed on the agenda for the Aquatic SWG conference call on January 10, 2024, for further discussion and possible decision in January or February 2024 (Item II-A).*
   This was placed on the agenda.
2. *The draft 2023 TDG/GAP Report and draft 2024 GAP/BOP will be distributed for review in early January 2024, and Douglas PUD will request approval of these documents during the Aquatic SWG conference call on February 14, 2024 (Item II-B).*
   The draft 2023 TDG/GAP Report and draft 2024 GAP/BOP were distributed on January 9, 2024.
3. *The draft 2022–2023 Bull Trout Study Report and appendices will be placed on the agenda for the Aquatic SWG conference call on January 10, 2024, for discussion and questions, and Douglas PUD will request approval of the report documents during the Aquatic SWG conference call on February 14, 2024 (Item II-C).*
   This was placed on the agenda.
4. *The Wells Fish Passage System Overview will be redistributed to the Aquatic SWG (Item II-F).*
   Kristi Geris redistributed this document following the conference call on December 13, 2023.

II. Summary of Discussions

A. Water Quality Attainment Plan 10-Year Report (Mariah Mayfield)

Mariah Mayfield said the review process for this document is a little different than usual. The draft Water Quality Attainment Plan 10-Year Report was distributed to the Aquatic SWG for review by Kristi Geris on November 14, 2023. Mayfield said Douglas PUD and Ecology met last Monday, January 8, 2024, and discussed a path forward to review and update the document together over the next few months. In the meantime, she asked that Aquatic SWG members reach out with any edits, comments, or questions on the draft report.

John Ferguson asked about a timeline for finalizing the report. Mayfield said that Douglas PUD met the 10-year compliance schedule by submitting the draft report to Ecology in 2023, and now Douglas PUD and Ecology plan to coordinate as needed to produce a quality finished product. Ferguson summarized that Douglas PUD and Ecology are working jointly on this document, and the Aquatic SWG will have an opportunity to review the revised draft before formal approval. Mayfield said this is correct. Breean Zimmerman also noted that this type of review process for water quality attainment plans is not uncommon. It takes a while to review all of the data to make sure to produce a good, finished product.

Ralph Lampman asked whether, in Section 4.2 Biological Monitoring Program, Table 3, it is possible to separate out Pacific Lamprey. There is a lot of interest in impacts of gas bubble trauma on lamprey, and it would be helpful to identify this separately. Mayfield said Pacific Lamprey are separated out in the annual TDG/GAP reports, but not in this 10-year, which is a high-level, summary report.

B. 2024 GAP/BOP and 2023 TDG/GAP Report (Andrew Gingerich)

Andrew Gingerich said, as promised last month, the draft 2023 TDG/GAP Report and draft 2024 GAP/BOP were distributed for Aquatic SWG review on January 9, 2024, with edits and comments due to Mariah Mayfield by February 10, 2024. Gingerich recalled that the 2024 GAP/BOP must also be reviewed and approved by the Wells HCP Coordinating Committee, because Wells Dam bypass operations have a nexus with the Wells HCP and Section 10 coverage for juvenile salmonids.

Gingerich said this year, the most notable change is that Turbine Unit 6 is undergoing a total overhaul and will be unavailable for the duration of the 2024 bypass season. Due to the hydro combine design of Wells Dam, not having Turbine Unit 6 operating prevents being able to concentrate spill through Spillway 7; therefore, the draft 2024 GAP/BOP proposes to shift concentrated spill to Spillway 9. As river flow increases, bypass barriers will first be pulled from Spillway 8. This will maintain concentrated spill in the center of the spillway and towards the left bank. Studies during relicensing showed that this concentrated spill pattern produces the least

amount of total dissolved gas in the Wells Dam tailrace. Another nuance is the order in which bypass barriers are pulled. Aside from this, the documents are fairly consistent with past year's plans. Mariah Mayfield noted that changes in the draft 2024 GAP/BOP from past years will be shown in the Spill Playbook or the BOP, Appendices 1 and 2, respectively, to the GAP.

Gingerich said Douglas PUD can typically be lenient with review periods; however, with these documents, Douglas PUD's Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license and 401 Certification[1] include a requirement to file the final approved documents with FERC by February 28 each year. Douglas PUD is requesting a 30-day review and hopes to receive comments in advance of the next meeting, in time to share comments with both the Aquatic SWG and Wells HCP Coordinating Committee before requesting approval of the draft documents during the Aquatic SWG conference call on February 14, 2024, and HCP Coordinating Committees meeting in late February (February 27, 2024). Douglas PUD requested the same 30-day review for the Wells HCP Coordinating Committee. John Ferguson noted that the Wells HCP Coordinating Committee also received the draft 2024 GAP/BOP for review yesterday, so the review periods are on the same schedule.

C. 2022-2023 Bull Trout Study Report (Chas Kyger)

The draft 2022–2023 Bull Trout Study Report, including Appendices A, B, and C, was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on December 13, 2023, and is available for a 45-day review with edits and comments due to Chas Kyger by January 26, 2024. Douglas PUD will request approval of the draft report documents during the Aquatic SWG conference call on February 14, 2024.

Chas Kyger said no comments have been received, and he asked whether there are any questions or comments today. RD Nelle said he has no questions but appreciates the 45-day review period around the holidays.

D. Brood Year 2023 Wells White Sturgeon Rearing Update (Chas Kyger)

A brood year (BY) 2023 White Sturgeon Rearing Update (Attachment B) was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris prior to the Aquatic SWG conference call on January 10, 2024.

Chas Kyger said fish are starting to graduate up to the magnum tanks. Fish in a lot of tanks continue to grow, but a couple are still lagging behind. As discussed last month, the Chelan PUD program may be close to the stocking target, and he has not heard any updates about surplus fish being available.

Jason McLellan said that during the last RRFF meeting, Chelan PUD indicated that they planned to talk with Douglas PUD about fish numbers, and then Chelan PUD was going to contact the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CTCR) with a request. Kyger said he appreciates that

[1] Ecology-issued Clean Water Act 401 Water Quality Certification.

these discussions took place. He plans to send Chelan PUD this rearing update (Attachment B) after today's conference call, as he does each month, so Chelan PUD will then have updated numbers.

McLellan said that currently at Sherman Creek Hatchery, there is one tank with 150 fish of medium size distribution marked for transfer, assuming the CTCR receives a request. John Ferguson asked what medium size distribution means. McLellan explained that the largest fish on station are 10 fish per pound or about 45 grams (g) each, and the smallest fish are closer to 10 g each. The 150 fish marked for transfer are somewhere in the middle, probably about 30 g each. He recalled that Sherman Creek Hatchery is on well water and has no heated water, so fish growth is quick in the beginning but then slows down. This time of year, temperatures are cooling. Currently, temperatures are around 12°C.

Kyger asked whether there are any updates on blood sampling. McLellan said no, he let Chelan PUD know the CTCR's preference to start in March 2024 and to conduct all the sampling at once to limit the handling small fish. Chelan PUD seemed agreeable but needed to confirm this internally, and he has not yet heard back. McLellan said the CTCR are tentatively planning to start blood sampling in March 2024. Kyger said he does not foresee issues with this plan.

Andrew Gingerich asked whether the fish marked for transfer at Sherman Creek Hatchery are also from BY 2023. McLellan said yes, these fish are the same BY 2023 collection that went to Wells Hatchery for the Chelan PUD and Douglas PUD programs.

Ferguson said Chelan PUD needs about 2,000 fish and Douglas PUD needs 325 fish. According to Attachment B, this means the programs are roughly 90 fish short as of now, which 150 fish can cover. What about Tank 2 that is averaging 12.7-g fish? Will these fish be usable? Might there be further shortfall that then requires more than 150 fish to meet program goals? Kyger said expects that if there are more mortalities, they will be from this tank. He believes some of these fish will survive but may not reach the target fish size. He noted that just because fish are not growing fast does not mean the fish will inevitably die.

McLellan also noted that the surplus fish from Sherman Creek Hatchery are still growing, but slowly due to the colder water. When moved to Wells Hatchery, with the ability to manipulate water temperatures, there is no reason these fish should not be able to reach the target fish size of 200 g by the end of May or early June 2024, which is the typical stocking time. Regarding the 116 fish at 12.7 g each, some will make it to 200 g and some will not. He does not believe anyone will be opposed to stocking a few undersized fish, notably because some fish will be oversized. If the CTCR transfer 150 fish and some of the 12.7-g fish reach size, the majority of the 2,000-fish program will reach the 200-g minimum fish size target. Overall, this meets program objectives.

E. Juvenile Pacific Lamprey Downstream Passage Study (Ralph Lampman)

Ralph Lampman said he is still collecting a few final datapoints and expects to have a more complete dataset next month. He believes there is a sufficient number of Pacific Lamprey, but not enough at the juvenile life stage in the Upper Columbia River to conduct the reach-wide study the YN has proposed unless there is a willingness to accept wild or propagated fish from other locations. For example, there are thousands of juveniles in the Yakima River each year. He is interested in seeing the latest results from the juvenile Pacific Lamprey passage behavior and survival study in the Snake River. He believes PNNL plans to present these results in a couple of weeks at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Anadromous Fish Evaluation Program (AFEP). PNNL used propagated fish from the Yakima River in this study. Study fish were released in the fall, when there were not many other fish migrating through the area. It will be good to understand how fish source impacts behavior. If using juvenile fish from other sources is not possible, it may take years to build up these numbers in the Upper Columbia River.

Mariah Mayfield recalled that last year, when Ryan Harnish (PNNL) presented the 2022 juvenile Pacific Lamprey passage behavior and survival study results during a joint session with the Aquatic SWG, RRFF, and PRFF (on August 21, 2023), it provided a good opportunity to ask questions that might not be possible in a setting like AFEP. Mayfield asked whether it might be possible to convene another joint session of the fish forums for a presentation of the 2023 study results, maybe this spring, to have that same opportunity to ask questions and have a discussion. Lampman agreed this is a good idea, and said Harnish, Daniel Deng (PNNL), Bob Mueller (PNNL), or Katie Deters (PNNL) are all possible options for presenters. He said he will ask PNNL about possibly presenting results from their 2023 juvenile Pacific Lamprey passage behavior and survival study during a joint meeting of the Aquatic SWG, RRFF, and PRFF this spring 2024. Lampman asked who hosted last year. Kristi Geris said the RRFF hosted, and Grant PUD and Douglas PUD joined.

Andrew Gingerich said it is his understanding that the Eel/Lamprey Acoustic Tag (ELAT) is undergoing a similar process as the Juvenile Salmon Acoustic Telemetry System (JSATS) tag. That is, during the JSATS design and development stage there was a 2- to 3-year period where PNNL holds a pseudo patent before making the tag commercially available to vendors who could then sell the tags to researchers. He asked Lampman if this is true, and whether the ELATs are commercially available? Lampman said this is correct, and ELATs are not yet commercially available. An agreement with vendors is already in place, and the YN is a partner on this cooperative agreement. There are certain components of the ELAT that are built by partners. This process has been ongoing for a couple of years now, and there are plans to pull the patent any time now, but he has not yet heard when.

John Ferguson asked whether the study in the Lower Columbia River will start this year. Lampman said yes, the study will involve passage at McNary and John Day dams, all the way down to the

forebay of The Dalles. At the earliest, the study will begin in late March and go into June/July 2024. Ferguson asked whether PNNL expects to be able to meet the tag production requirements for this study. Lampman said has not heard about any issues with tag production.

F. Pacific Lamprey Conservation Initiative Lamprey Information Exchange Update (Ralph Lampman)

Ralph Lampman shared on Microsoft Teams the Pacific Lamprey Conservation Initiative (PLCI) Policy Committee 2023 Agenda (Attachment C) and PLCI 7th Annual Lamprey Information Exchange 2023 Agenda (Attachment D), which he distributed to the Aquatic SWG prior to the conference call on January 10, 2024.

Lampman said the Policy Committee convened on December 12, 2023, and broke into four groups of 8 to 10 people each. Each group focused on three questions: Key Threats, Communication/Advocacy, and Funding (as further described on page 2 of Attachment C). Each group came up with unique answers, but the direction was similar among all groups. Everyone appreciated this new format, which included more discussion and dialogue opposed to the typical one-way information sharing. Meeting notes will be available soon, and there are plans to convene another Policy Committee meeting this summer 2024.

Lampman said the Information Exchange was held December 13 and December 14, 2023, and covered a variety of topics, including Genetics, Phylogenetics, and Taxonomy; Restoration; Juvenile Entrainment, Dewatering, and Dredging Investigations; and Migration, Tagging, and Passage (as further described in Attachment D). There was also an Open Session and a Lamprey Rockstar Award Ceremony. Lampman reviewed topics relevant to the fish forums, which he highlighted in red in Attachment D. There were technical issues with the remote access, so recordings are not available for all presentations, but he will share the PDFs of the presentations once these become available.

G. Wells Dam Winter Maintenance Update (John Rohrback)

Fishway Maintenance and Fish Salvage Memorandum

John Rohrback recalled sharing last month information about the east fishway winter maintenance outage. Crews dewatered the upper ladder of the Wells Dam west fishway and conducted a fish rescue on December 13. Crews dewatered the lower ladder and collection gallery of the west fishway and conducted a fish rescue on December 18, 2023. A fish salvage memorandum from the west fishway was distributed to the Aquatic SWG on December 21, 2023. Maintenance was performed, and the west fishway was rewatered on January 8, 2024. Work included routine maintenance, refixing

plating[2] that had come loose, and installation of perforated plates at the lamprey trap locations (in Weir 40) in preparation to initiate a lamprey trapping program in summer 2024.

Ralph Lampman said in discussing with the PRFF, one difference at Priest Rapids Dam is the ability to close the orifice so fish must pass over the overflow weir. Can this be tested at Wells Dam, after testing the perforated plates? Rohrback said currently, there is no infrastructure in place to accomplish this, nor does Douglas PUD and the Aquatic SWG have Wells HCP Coordinating Committee approval to do this. He suggested seeing how this year goes with the perforated plates and perhaps revisiting this idea in the future. John Ferguson said, in his opinion, closing orifices will be a hard sell to the Wells HCP Coordinating Committee in terms of its impact on salmonid passage.

Lampman said that, regarding the fish salvage, it sounds like Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission is missing genetic data from recent years. Rohrback said he believes all recent tissue samples have been sent. Mariah Mayfield noted that this is the case except for 2023; Douglas PUD is still waiting for these samples from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Ferguson said he understood there is not a lot of genetic differentiation in the Pacific Lamprey population. Are researchers finding something different? Lampman clarified that this dataset is primarily looking at parentage genetics to inform whether translocated fish are producing juveniles.

East Fishway Tour

Lampman shared on Microsoft Teams photographs from the Wells Dam east fishway tour (Attachment E), which Geris uploaded to the Aquatic SWG extranet site after the conference call on January 10, 2024.

Lampman noted the gap larger than 1 inch on a wall-oriented diffuser grating in the collection gallery (photographs 1 and 2 in Attachment E), which Rohrback indicated was repaired already. Lampman said there were more gaps larger than 1 inch in the floor diffuser gratings (photograph 3). There was an opening in the floor panel that looked like it once had a cover but is now just a hole in the collection gallery floor (photograph 4). He recommended locating and closing these gaps each year. There was another hole at the upper end of the collection gallery that seems to be a place Pacific Lamprey could easily access, and he is curious where this leads to (photographs 5 and 6).

Lampman said that at the collection gallery gate, there are bolts in the base of the gate where it pivots (photograph 7). He suggested covering these to not obstruct Pacific Lamprey passage. Ferguson said that typically these gates will be open. He asked whether Lampman is saying when Pacific Lamprey swim up along this edge, these bolts might affect their ability to attach and burst

[2] Installed in previous years to improve Pacific Lamprey passage through the fishways

through. Lampman said yes and asked whether these gates open to the interior. Rohrback said the doors swing out.

Lampman suggested redoing the zip ties in the lamprey trap to make sure lamprey cannot get out (slides 8, 9, and 10). He noted that the trap itself is set up nicely.

Lampman thought he recalled, during an acoustic telemetry study, detections of Pacific Lamprey in the vicinity of two outfalls at Wells Dam (photograph 11). He wonders whether the outfalls may be an access location for Pacific Lamprey. Rohrback said the shorter outfall is the plant drain, and the longer outfall is the return-to-river pipe where fish are returned to the river from the adult handling facility at Wells Hatchery. Acoustic receivers deployed at Wells Dam were able to detect Pacific Lamprey in the tailrace, but these detections could not say whether Pacific Lamprey were in the immediate vicinity of these outfalls because there were no receivers in this location. He is unaware of any evidence that Pacific Lamprey use these outfalls as an access point. Lampman confirmed that the return-to-river pipe does not run continuously. Rohrback said this is correct, and this is also the case with the plant drain because sometimes this water is diverted elsewhere. He has not heard of Pacific Lamprey swimming into and being detected inside the adult handling facility. Lampman asked whether the outfalls have ever been screened. Rohrback said not that he is aware of, and he does not believe this could be done due to potential build-up of aquatic plant material on the screens that could clog the outfalls. Lampman suggested considering larger mesh sizes, such as 3/4-inch. If there are a lot of detections of adults in this area, he will worry about these outfalls being problematic. Rohrback acknowledged the concern and said that Douglas PUD will monitor the outfalls. If there is evidence Pacific Lamprey in any numbers are swimming up to the outfalls, Douglas PUD will take action. Lampman said if this occurs at night, it will be a hard thing to monitor. Ferguson suggested installing game cameras to snap photographs. Mayfield said she thought of the same thing, but wondered whether high water velocity may trigger the cameras or whether anything can be seen at night. As for the next adult passage study, the Aquatic SWG may want to consider radio telemetry to monitor more fine-scale movements. Rohrback said Douglas PUD will consider options for monitoring whether Pacific Lamprey enter the plant drain and return-to-river pipe at Wells Dam and report back to the Aquatic SWG.

Andrew Gingerich said that, regarding the hole at the upper end of the collection gallery (photographs 5 and 6), this leads into the first weir of the fishway. From the area shown in photograph 5, there are two ways to get into Weir 1. First, by going up and over the end wall. Second, by going through one of two ports at the bottom left and right of the end wall (the left port is hidden in the shadow in photograph 5). He guessed that these bottom ports serve the following two purposes: 1) due to head pressure in Weir 1, the ports serve as an attraction jet to get fish through the collection gallery; and 2) during maintenance, these ports help drain the lower section of

the ladder. If Pacific Lamprey move through these ports, he would argue that this is a good thing because this gets fish into Weir 1. Lampman asked whether fish need to go through floor diffuser grating to get back into Weir 1. Gingerich said no, behind the end wall is Weir 1. Lampman said he thought the top and bottom areas are not connected behind the end wall. Gingerich said this is not his understanding, but he will review structural design specifications to verify the two ports at the bottom of the end wall within the collection gallery connect with Weir 1 at Wells Dam. *(Note: Gingerich confirmed these ports connect with Weir 1, in both the east and west fishways at Wells Dam, in an email provided after the conference call on January 10, 2024, which Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day.)*

The YN will provide the photographs of the Wells Dam east fishway tour that were discussed during today's Aquatic SWG conference call, and Anchor QEA will upload the photographs to the Aquatic SWG extranet site. *(Note: Lampman provided these photographs after the conference call on January 10, 2024, which Geris uploaded to the extranet site that same day.)*

III. Administration

A. Aquatic SWG Leadership (Andrew Gingerich)

Andrew Gingerich said there is a requirement in the Aquatic Settlement Agreement that as often as every 3 years the Aquatic SWG must evaluate and review the Chairperson. In mid-November 2023, he reached out to the Aquatic SWG Technical Representatives asking for a review of the process and position that John Ferguson has been supporting now for over 6 years. Gingerich heard back from every technical representative, and in general, there were all positive reviews of the position. He thanked the Aquatic SWG for the thoughtful review and responses. He thanked Ferguson, Kristi Geris, and the Anchor QEA team for the leadership and organization. Gingerich said this review gives Douglas PUD the opportunity to negotiate a renewed contract. He is currently working on a new 2-year agreement, which may include a transition period, understanding that the Aquatic SWG will need time to consider, review, and select a new Chairperson after this 2-year period.

Ferguson said on behalf of Geris, himself, and the Anchor QEA team, the positive reviews are appreciated, and he looks forward to supporting another contract. Ferguson said his current Chairperson contract ends in May 2024, and his general plans are to work through 2025. As he indicated to Gingerich, he is open to helping with the transition, as needed.

Gingerich noted that 2 years goes by fast, and the Aquatic SWG has some work to do to identify another Chairperson. In previous transitions, Aquatic SWG representatives brought forward names and worked together through an interview process towards selecting someone unanimously. He encouraged representatives to start thinking about who has the skills and capacity to support the Aquatic SWG 2 years from now.

Ralph Lampman asked Geris whether she might be interested in the Chairperson role. Geris said she would definitely be interested in continuing the support role and would need to consider filling the Chairperson role and thanked Lampman for asking. Ferguson noted that he and Douglas PUD had discussed this option where there may be a new Chairperson but Geris remains the support role.

B. Upcoming Meetings (John Ferguson)

The Aquatic SWG meeting on February 14, 2024, will be held by Microsoft Teams conference call.

Other upcoming meetings include March 13 and April 10, 2024 (conference call).

List of Attachments

Attachment A List of Attendees
Attachment B BY 2023 White Sturgeon Rearing Update
Attachment C PLCI Policy Committee 2023 Agenda
Attachment D PLCI 7th Annual Lamprey Information Exchange 2023 Agenda
Attachment E Wells Dam East Ladder Tour Photographs

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
Mariah Mayfield	Aquatic SWG Technical Support	Douglas PUD
RD Nelle	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Stuart Fety	Aquatic SWG Technical Alternate	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Patrick Verhey	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	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