



Conference Call Minutes

Aquatic Settlement Work Group

To: Aquatic SWG Parties

Date: May 8, 2024

From: John Ferguson, Chair, Anchor QEA

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

The Aquatic Settlement Work Group (SWG) met by conference call on Wednesday, April 10, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Attendees are listed in Attachment A of these conference call minutes.

Summary of Action Items

1. Anchor QEA will follow-up with Tracy Hillman (Rocky Reach Fish Forum [RRFF] and Priest Rapids Fish Forum [PRFF] Facilitator) about the call-in information to attend Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL's) presentation of their 2023 juvenile Pacific Lamprey passage behavior and survival study during a joint meeting of the RRFF, PRFF, and Aquatic SWG on June 5, 2024 (Item I-C). *(Note: Hillman will provide the start time and call-in information once it is available.)*
2. Douglas PUD will consult the Yakama Nation (YN) about lamprey trap operations for implementation at Wells Dam in 2024, including possibly collecting genetic fin clips and release location for fish collected in the traps, for further discussion with the Aquatic SWG (Item I-C).
3. The Aquatic SWG meeting on May 8, 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* 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.

2. The draft *Annual Report Calendar Year 2023 Activities Under the Aquatic Settlement Agreement* (2023 ASA Annual Report) and appended draft *2023 Annual Report White Sturgeon Management Plan*, draft *2023 Bull Trout Management Plan and Incidental Take Annual Report*, draft *2023 Annual Report Water Quality Management Plan* and appended draft *2023 Water Temperature Annual Report*, draft *Pacific Lamprey Management Plan 2023 Annual Report*, draft *Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan 2023 Annual Report*, and draft *Resident Fish Management Plan 2023 Annual Report* were distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on March 8, and are available for a 45-day review with edits and comments due to Geris and Douglas PUD by April 22. The revised reports for approval were distributed on May 1. Douglas PUD will request approval of the draft reports during the Aquatic SWG conference call on May 8, 2024 (Item III-A).

Documents Finalized

1. There are no documents that have been recently finalized.

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 March 13, 2024, conference call minutes were reviewed. Kristi Geris said edits and comments were received from Douglas PUD and the YN. Minor clarifications were incorporated into the revised minutes. There were also a few more remarkable edits retained in tracked changes, which the Aquatic SWG reviewed and approved. Lastly, Geris closed out a couple of action items as items were provided and distributed. Aquatic SWG representatives present approved the March 13, 2024, conference call minutes, as revised.

C. Review of Action Items (John Ferguson)

Action items from the Aquatic SWG conference call on March 13, 2024, are as follows (*Note: The following italicized item numbers correspond to agenda items from the March 13, 2024, meeting*):

1. *Anchor QEA will contact Tracy Hillman (RRFF and PRFF Facilitator) to request the call-in information to attend PNNL's presentation of their 2023 juvenile Pacific Lamprey passage behavior and survival study during a joint meeting of the RRFF, PRFF, and Aquatic SWG on June 5, 2024, and the YN will provide PNNL's presentation that was shared at the U.S. Army*

Corps of Engineers Anadromous Fish Evaluation Program for distribution to the Aquatic SWG (Item I-C).

Kristi Geris contacted Hillman, who requested a follow-up reminder closer to June 5, when meeting logistics are confirmed. Ralph Lampman provided PNNL's presentations, which were distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on April 8, 2024. The first part of this action item will be carried forward. *(Note: Hillman will provide the start time and call-in information once it is available.)*

2. *Douglas PUD will contact the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife genetics laboratory regarding Bull Trout Movement and Life History Investigation 2022–2023, Appendix C. Genetic Analysis for Bull Trout Prepared by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Dated June 2023, notably for clarification about methods used and populations considered in the genetic analysis (Item I-C).*

Chas Kyger provided this information on March 19, 2024, which was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris that same day.

3. *Douglas PUD will consult the YN about lamprey trap operations for implementation at Wells Dam in 2024, including possibly collecting genetic fin clips and release location for fish collected in the traps, for further discussion with the Aquatic SWG (Item I-C).*

This action item will be carried forward.

4. *The YN will provide Douglas PUD with a lamprey-specific condition factor to eliminate length-based bias, for consideration in the draft report Wells Dam Adult Lamprey Approach and Passage Study, 2022–23 (2022–2023 Adult Pacific Lamprey Approach and Passage Study Report) (Item II-C).*

Ralph Lampman provided this information to Douglas PUD on April 5, and the information was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on April 8, 2024.

II. Summary of Discussions

A. Adult Pacific Lamprey Approach and Passage Study Report (Mariah Mayfield)

The draft 2022–2023 Adult Pacific Lamprey Approach and Passage Study Report was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on March 4 for a 30-day review. Mariah Mayfield said comments were received from the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the YN, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Mayfield said, today, Douglas PUD will review the general comments received but will postpone approval of the report to next month, because Dave Robichaud (LGL Limited) is still working on the final analyses to address comments. A final draft report for approval will be distributed before the Aquatic SWG conference call on May 8, 2024.

Mayfield said comments received were straightforward. Of note, Douglas PUD will change the condition factor to the specific condition factor for lamprey provided by the YN. Robichaud is

looking into comments about differences between the east and west fishways. A section will be added about study fish that passed Wells Dam but were never detected in the tributaries. There were comments about considering uncertainties related to environmental factors during the study period. To address this, the report will include alternative hypotheses the study could not control for. All comments received were also provided to the Aquatic SWG, and Mayfield asked that Aquatic SWG members reach out if there are questions about specific comments.

RD Nelle said this report alludes to being a comparison between the present study and the 2016 study, but it does not show a direct comparison between metrics for the two studies such as fish size, environmental conditions, or release timing. This needs to be addressed in the report. Mayfield said she is working with Robichaud on this. She agreed the report can better explain which metrics are comparable, how the two studies are different, and what conclusions can be made confidently versus what is anecdotal. Nelle asked, for example, whether releasing fish earlier or that are larger in size makes a difference in approach and passage rates. These are the types of comparisons he is interested in.

John Ferguson recalled Nelle's question about whether tagged fish were detected near Chief Joseph Dam. Mayfield said based on her cursory review of the data, the farthest upstream location where fish that passed Wells Dam were detected was Brewster. However, Robichaud is taking a closer look at this, because there is a lot of interest in where these fish are going. Nelle said this is his interest, and Brewster is all he could glean from reviewing the draft report, as well. Mayfield noted that there is good detection coverage near Chief Joseph Dam, too, for White Sturgeon monitoring and evaluation, so she guessed study fish would be detected if there were any in the area.

Ferguson asked about Pacific Lamprey behavior for reservoir spawning. How deep can lamprey spawn, or prefer to spawn, shallower or deeper? Salmon spawn only so far down, which is likely light oriented. Are Pacific Lamprey the same? Mayfield guessed that lamprey spawning might be more of a substrate issue. In deeper waters fish are less likely to find rocks they can move. Ferguson agreed and said these areas may be more sedimented in, too. To Nelle's point, maybe lamprey seek out tailwater areas for spawning, where there is more river flow. Mayfield agreed and said she also wonders if there is spawning habitat near Carpenter Island or other areas in the Wells Reservoir with more riverine characteristics. Although it is not in the Wells Project, Mayfield is also interested in whether there is spawning habitat in the Chelan River. Nelle said, many years ago, USFWS collected eDNA samples in upstream locations of the Chelan River and did not detect juvenile or larval lamprey, although things may have changed since then. Samples were not collected in downstream locations. *(Note: Ralph Lampman was experiencing audio trouble but provided input on this topic via email after the conference call on April 10, 2024.)*

Ferguson summarized that Douglas PUD will request approval of this report next month, then this report and the 2016 report will inform thoughts for a 2025 study plan for discussion this summer or early fall.

B. 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 April 10. Chas Kyger said the blue shaded cells (330 fish total) have been scute marked and passive integrated transponder tagged for the Douglas PUD program. These fish have also been screened for spontaneous autoploidy, and all results came back normal. Fish lengths and weights will be collected again prior to release. There is one tank of smaller fish in Chelan PUD's program that may not reach the size target at release. All other fish will meet the size targets at release.

The memorandum "Results of 2024 White Sturgeon Autopolyploidy Testing" (Attachment C) was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on April 15, 2024.

III. Administration

A. 2023 ASA Annual Report – Reminder (John Ferguson)

John Ferguson reminded the Aquatic SWG to submit edits and comments on the draft 2023 ASA Annual Report and six appended management plan annual reports by Monday, April 22. Final draft reports for approval will be distributed on May 1, and Douglas PUD will request approval of the reports during the Aquatic SWG conference call on May 8, 2024.

B. Upcoming Meetings (John Ferguson)

The Aquatic SWG meeting on May 8, 2024, will be held by Microsoft Teams conference call.

On June 5, 2024, PNNL will present results from their 2023 juvenile Pacific Lamprey passage behavior and survival study during a joint meeting of the RRF, PRFF, and Aquatic SWG.

Other upcoming meetings include June 12 and July 10, 2024 (conference call).

List of Attachments

Attachment A List of Attendees

Attachment B BY 2023 White Sturgeon Rearing Update

Attachment C Results of 2024 White Sturgeon Autopolyploidy Testing

Attachment A – Attendees

Name	Role	Organization
John Ferguson	Aquatic SWG Chairman	Anchor QEA
Kristi Geris	Administration/Technical Support	Anchor QEA
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
Laura Heironimus	Aquatic SWG Technical Alternate	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Ralph Lampman	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	Yakama Nation