

Final Conference Call Minutes



Aquatic Settlement Work Group

To: Aquatic SWG Parties **Date:** February 12, 2014
From: Michael Schiewe, Chair (Anchor QEA, LLC)
Re: Final Minutes of the January 8, 2014 Aquatic SWG Conference Call

The Aquatic Settlement Work Group (SWG) met by conference call on Wednesday, January 8, 2014, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Attendees are listed in Attachment A of these meeting minutes.

I. Summary of Action Items

1. The Aquatic SWG will submit comments on the draft 2014 Wells Dam Gas Abatement Plan (GAP) and Bypass Operating Plan (BOP) to Andrew Gingerich no later than Friday, January 17, 2014 (Item VI-3).
2. Douglas PUD will coordinate with the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) to develop revisions to the Wells Hydroelectric Project Spill Playbook, which is appended to the draft 2014 Wells Dam GAP and BOP, regarding management strategies during high spill events, and Douglas PUD will provide an explanation of those revisions to Kristi Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG (Item VI-3).
3. The Aquatic SWG will submit comments on the draft 2013 GAP and Total Dissolved Gas (TDG) Report to Andrew Gingerich no later than Friday, February 7, 2014 (Item VI-3).
4. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), in coordination with the Yakama Nation (YN) and the Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT), will develop a draft standardized White Sturgeon Fish Health Protocol (to be implemented starting with 2014 white sturgeon broodstock and larval collections) prior to the Aquatic SWG meeting on March 12, 2014 (Item VI-4).
5. WDFW will provide an update on the development of the draft standardized White Sturgeon Fish Health Protocol at the Aquatic SWG meeting on February 12, 2014 (Item VI-4).
6. The Aquatic SWG will submit comments on the draft 2014 Resident Fish Assemblage Study Plan to Douglas PUD no later than Thursday, January 23, 2014 (Item VI-5).

7. The Aquatic SWG will submit comments on the draft 2014 Aquatic Settlement Agreement (ASA) Workgroup Action Plan to Douglas PUD no later than Monday, February 3, 2014 (Item VI-7).
8. John Kerwin will provide a presentation on WDFW's Fish Health Plan and Co-Manager Policy at the Aquatic SWG meeting on March 12, 2014 (Item VII-1).
9. **The Aquatic SWG meeting on March 12, 2014 will be held in person at Douglas PUD Headquarters in East Wenatchee, Washington (Item VII-1).**

II. Summary of Decisions

1. The Phase One White Sturgeon Management Plan (WSMP) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Study Plan was unanimously approved by the Aquatic SWG; Ecology and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) approved the study plan via email on December 20, 2013, and the CCT, the YN, WDFW, and Douglas PUD approved the study plan during the Aquatic SWG conference call on January 8, 2014 (Item VI-4).

III. Agreements

1. The Aquatic SWG members present agreed, with USFWS abstaining (i.e., not present) and Ecology deferring to WDFW, to passive integrated transponder (PIT)-tag and release into the Wells Pool approximately 15 white sturgeon larvae collected in the Wanapum Pool that are currently on station at the Wells Fish Hatchery in order to free up needed tank space for the Douglas PUD White Sturgeon Program (Item VI-4).
2. The Aquatic SWG members present agreed to hold the Aquatic SWG meeting on March 12, 2014, in-person, at Douglas PUD Headquarters in East Wenatchee, Washington (Item VII-1).

IV. Review Items

1. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on December 17, 2013, notifying them that the draft 2014 Wells Dam GAP and BOP is out for a 30-day review period, with comments due to Andrew Gingerich no later than Friday, January 17, 2014 (Item VI-3).
2. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on December 23, 2013, notifying them that the draft 2014 Resident Fish Assemblage Study Plan is out for review. Douglas PUD is requesting a 30-day review period with comments due to Douglas PUD no later than Thursday, January 23, 2014 (Item VI-5).
3. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on January 2, 2014, notifying them that the draft 2014 ASA and Workgroup Action Plan is out for a 30-day review period, with comments due to Andrew Gingerich no later than Monday, February 3, 2014 (Item VI-7).
4. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on January 9, 2014, notifying them that the draft 2013 GAP and TDG Report is out for a 30-day review period, with comments due to Andrew Gingerich no later than Friday, February 7, 2014 (Item VI-3).

5. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on January 23, 2014, notifying them that the 2013 Methow Basin Bull Trout PIT-Tag Summary is out for review, with comments due to Andrew Gingerich no later than Friday, February 21, 2014.

V. Documents Finalized

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

VI. Summary of Discussions

1. **Welcome, Agenda Review, and Meeting Minutes Review** (Mike Schiewe): Mike Schiewe welcomed the Aquatic SWG members (attendees are listed in Attachment A) and opened the meeting. Schiewe reviewed the agenda and asked for additions or other changes to the agenda. Douglas PUD added a discussion on a White Sturgeon Decision Tree and also requested to revisit the approval of the Phase One WSMP M&E Study Plan.

The revised draft December 11, 2013 conference call minutes were reviewed. Kristi Geris said that all comments and revisions received from members of the Aquatic SWG were incorporated in the revised minutes. She said an edit to the White Sturgeon Stocking discussion regarding the fish health testing for White Sturgeon Iridovirus (WSIV) was flagged because Andrew Gingerich had indicated he would like to clarify that one of the larval-origin fish sampled was moribund prior to collection, which has the potential to bias the infection rate for the larval population. He said he also wanted to note that there is reliable scientific literature stating that juvenile sturgeon are most susceptible to WSIV. Gingerich said he just wanted to clarify those points, and because they have now been discussed, he recommended striking the edit from the revised draft December 11, 2013 conference call minutes.

Bob Rose requested a 1-day extension to confirm review and approval of the revised draft minutes by Donella Miller prior to providing the YN's formal approval. Steve Lewis said he thought that the Aquatic SWG Agreement regarding a path forward for white sturgeon fish health was vague. Gingerich said that the Agreement is consistent with the discussions documented in the meeting minutes and suggested leaving it as is, and picking up discussions during today's meeting. Lewis agreed, and the Aquatic SWG members present conditionally approved the revised draft December 11, 2013 conference call minutes, pending the YN's final review and approval. *(Note: Miller reviewed the minutes and the YN approved the revised draft December 11, 2013 conference call minutes via email following the meeting on January 8, 2014.)*

2. **Action Items** (Mike Schiewe): Mike Schiewe reviewed action items from the last Aquatic SWG conference call on December 11, 2013, and follow-up discussions were as follows:

(Note: italicized item numbers below correspond to agenda items from the December 11, 2013 meeting.)

- *Patrick Verhey will remind WDFW Fish Health Staff that Douglas PUD is facing a capacity issue at Wells Hatchery that requires resolution in early 2014; therefore, the Aquatic SWG needs WDFW's input regarding white sturgeon health guidance before that time. Further, Verhey will inquire whether WDFW's guidance will be a recommendation within the ASA or unilateral decision occurring without unanimous consent of the Aquatic SWG (Item VI-2).*

Verhey reported that he was successful in urging the fish health discussion and obtaining guidance. He said that Chad Jackson has been more intimately involved with those discussions, which he will further discuss under Agenda Item VI-3.

- *Aquatic SWG members will submit comments or email approval of the revised draft Phase One WSMP M&E Study Plan to Douglas PUD (with a copy to Kristi Geris and Mike Schiewe) no later than December 20, 2013 (Item VI-3).*

Schiewe noted that following the 10-day extension of the original 30-day comment period, Ecology and USFWS were the only responses received, which left the balance of the Aquatic SWG abstaining; the plan was approved.

Schiewe noted that, although this constituted formal approval by the Aquatic SWG, it was important to obtain feedback from the full range of the Aquatic SWG members, and so this item will be revisited later in the agenda.

- *Douglas PUD will provide a draft Bull Trout PIT-Tag Summary to Kristi Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG no later than December 25, 2013, for discussion during the Aquatic SWG conference call on January 8, 2014 (Item VI-5).*

Andrew Gingerich said that this item will be covered under Agenda Item VI-5.

- *Douglas PUD will provide a draft Resident Fish Plan to Kristi Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG no later than December 17, 2013, for discussion at the Aquatic SWG conference call on January 8, 2014, and approval at the Aquatic SWG conference call on February 12, 2014 (Item VI-6).*

Andrew Gingerich said that this item will be covered under Agenda Item VI-4.

- *Douglas PUD will provide the draft 2014 GAP and BOP to Kristi Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG no later than December 17, 2013, for discussion at the Aquatic SWG conference call on January 8, 2014, and approval at the Aquatic SWG conference call on February 12, 2014 (Item VI-7).*

Andrew Gingerich said that this item will be covered under Agenda Item VI-2.

3. Water Quality Review Items

Draft 2014 GAP and BOP Review (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said that Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on December 17, 2013, notifying them that the draft 2014 Wells Dam GAP and BOP is out for a 30-day review period, with comments due to him no later than Friday, January 17, 2014. Gingerich said that he would like to receive feedback by the comment deadline so that those comments can be

incorporated into a revised draft that can be distributed prior to requesting approval during the Aquatic SWG conference call on February 12, 2014. He said the plan is basically a document that states how TDG at Wells Dam will be minimized towards meeting Washington State water quality standards. He added that approval of the plan is needed in February because the approved document needs to be filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) at the end of February. Mike Schiewe noted that the plan will also likely be on the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Coordinating Committees' January 28, 2014 agenda for approval. The Aquatic SWG agreed to submit comments on the draft 2014 Wells Dam GAP and BOP to Gingerich no later than Friday, January 17, 2014.

Steve Lewis asked if the draft 2014 plan differs from previous years' plans, and Gingerich replied that the draft 2014 plan is consistent with past years' plans. Gingerich noted, however, that there will be one update to the Wells Hydroelectric Project Spill Playbook that is appended to the draft 2014 Wells Dam GAP and BOP. Gingerich said that the Spill Playbook outlines how to manage the project for the best TDG performance under various flow scenarios. He said that during the past couple of years, concentrated spill was met using spillbays 5 and 6 because unit 7 was being rebuilt. He said that when the 2014 Spill Playbook was initially developed, Douglas PUD was hopeful that concentrated spill could be shifted back to unit 7; however, now it does not look as though unit 7 will be ready. Therefore, a small section in the Spill Playbook will be revised to allow concentrated spill through spillbays 5 and 6, or through unit 7 when it is ready. Gingerich said that Douglas PUD will coordinate with Ecology to develop revisions to the Wells Hydroelectric Project Spill Playbook regarding management strategies during high spill events, and will provide an explanation of those revisions to Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG.

Draft 2013 GAP and TDG Report (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said that in addition to the 2014 Wells Dam GAP and BOP, an approved 2013 GAP and TDG Report also needs to be filed with FERC at the end of February. He explained that the 2013 GAP and TDG Report summarizes the 2013 bypass season, and added that the draft report has not yet been distributed, but it will be distributed on January 9, 2014. Shane Bickford noted that the draft report has not yet been distributed because, as required by the new Wells Dam FERC License, the report now includes data through December 31, 2013, whereas in the past, the report only included data through the end of the monitoring season (August), and was distributed by November or December. He said that following the end of the year, all data need to be compiled, run through a quality check, and then developed into a report. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on January 9, 2014, notifying them that the draft 2013 GAP and TDG Report is available for a 30-day review period, with comments due to Gingerich no later than Friday, February 7, 2014. The Aquatic SWG agreed to submit comments on the draft report prior to this deadline.

4. Sturgeon Path Forward

Fish Size and Condition at Wells Fish Hatchery Update (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said that there are currently approximately 7,200 white sturgeon juveniles on station at Wells Fish Hatchery. He said there are a total of 12 tanks with about 500 to 800 fish per tank, as follows:

Tanks 1-6, 12 (11 Half-Sibling families via Marion Drain Direct Gametes)

- Total number: 4,916
- Fish size:
 - Tanks 1-6: approximately 60 grams per fish (g/fish) or 8.5 inches
 - Tank 12: smaller, up to 6 inches
- Fish health testing (cell culture and histology of adults and polymerase chain reaction [PCR] of progeny): Negative for WSIV
- No mortalities in the last 60+ days

Tanks 7-10 (Lake Roosevelt Larvae)

- Total number: 2,192
- Fish size:
 - Two tanks approximately 70 g/fish, or 8-9 inches
 - Tank 7: smaller, up to 6 inches
 - Fourth tank has intermediate sized fish between the large and small fish
- Fish health testing:
 - September 30, 2013: 59 of 60 (98.3%) tested positive for WSIV infection (24 of 60 had a “high” infection rate); cell culture tested negative for WSIV
 - December 6, 2013: 3 of 12 (25%) tested positive, or 75% tested negative, for WSIV via PCR assay (2 of 12 fish sampled were moribund at the time of sampling, and 1 of 2 of these fish tested positive for WSIV)
- No mortalities in the last 60+ days

Tank 11 (Wanapum Larvae)

- Total number: 15
- Fish size: approximately 6 inches
- Need to plant or move to free up tank
- No fish health sampling or testing performed (too few fish)

Gingerich noted that only a few of the smaller-sized fish have died from both larval and direct gamete programs; therefore, the total mortality for both programs is still considered to be none. He said hatchery staff have indicated that the larval fish are eating and growing quite well, and have not shown any clinical signs of WSIV. Gingerich said that with regards to the Wanapum fish, those fish could be culled, marked and

planted, mixed in with another group of fish, but they need to be moved due to capacity issues as soon as possible. He added that these fish have not been tested for WSIV, and Shane Bickford noted that there are not enough fish to test. Gingerich noted that 15 fish will not significantly impact the program, and added that some interest has been expressed in releasing these fish back into the water. He also added that the Wanapum fish could be mixed in with the Lake Roosevelt fish; however, there is risk associated with that option. Pat Irle suggested that, because there are other discussions on today's agenda that may help inform this decision, this decision could be tabled until after those discussions have taken place. The Aquatic SWG agreed with Irle's suggestion and agreed to revisit this item later in the meeting.

Chad Jackson clarified that the fish health testing performed in December was "confirmation testing" performed on 12 fish from each program (larval and direct gamete), using all PCR testing, to confirm and compare to results of the first histology test. Jason McLellan added that it is his understanding that a negative result does not necessarily mean the fish does not have WSIV; rather, it means WSIV was not detected. He said, therefore, it is not certain that the direct gamete fish are not carriers. Jackson said that McLellan is correct, and all tests for WSIV are not 100% conclusive.

Fish Health (Chad Jackson): Chad Jackson said that WDFW Fish Management, Health, and Hatchery staff are planning to meet on January 9, 2014, to discuss a recommendation for management of asymptomatic Lake Roosevelt-origin larval white sturgeon held at Wells and Sherman Creek Hatcheries. He said that he is hopeful that a final recommendation will be reached during their conference call; and added that John Kerwin has consulted with pathologists who work with white sturgeon and has also been reviewing available literature.

Jackson reminded the Aquatic SWG that he provided a presentation at the Aquatic SWG meeting on May 8, 2013, detailing WDFW's pathogen screening plan for both the direct gamete and larval origin white sturgeon. He recalled that, as presented in May, for the direct gamete origin fish, eggs, ovarian fluid, and milt samples were collected from all broodstock involved in spawning to test for WSIV using cell culture. Pectoral fin tissue samples were also collected from all broodstock involved in spawning to test for WSIV using histology. For larval-origin fish, a sample of 60 whole fish was submitted to test for WSIV using cell culture and histology. All screening was performed by pathologists at the USFWS Idaho Fish Health Lab in Orofino, Idaho. Jackson reminded the Aquatic SWG that this presentation, the corresponding meeting minutes, and other related meeting minutes (August 14, 2013) are available on Douglas PUD's Extranet Site. He said that results from histological examination for larval origin fish came back 98.3% (59/60) positive for WSIV. WDFW staff were surprised by these results; so to confirm them, WDFW Fish Health Staff submitted 12 pectoral fin tissue samples from both the direct gamete- and larval-origin sturgeon held at Wells Hatchery to the USFWS Idaho

Fish Health Lab to test for WSIV using PCR (a third and independent test that is available). PCR results came back positive for WSIV in the larval-origin fish and negative in the direct gamete-origin fish. Jackson said that Grant PUD and Chelan PUD sturgeon programs (direct gamete-origin fish only) will also be tested for WSIV using PCR to address inter-hatchery variability. Jason McLellan said that he recalls it being unclear which tests would be utilized, and that the most recent testing was not consistent between the larval and direct gamete programs. He said, furthermore, that the scientific literature indicates that cell cultures are not reliable for histology, which is part of the CCT's concern. He recognized that this concern should have been addressed at the time of testing, and strongly recommended developing fish health protocols to avoid this issue in the future. Jackson recalled that the tests used during "Round 1" for the larval and direct gamete programs were the same, but because of the inherent differences between each program (i.e., access to broodstock in one and larval fish in the other) the fish health samples submitted were slightly different. He said that "Round 2" of testing was consistent between the two programs—12 pectoral fin tissue samples were taken from both programs and submitted to Dworshak for testing using PCR. He agreed that cell culture is not as reliable as histology, and said that this is one of the reasons for multiple testing. He added that the scientific literature on white sturgeon fish health testing is minimal. He said that, given what he has learned now and for future years, he would recommend that testing be performed on the progeny of both programs once in the hatchery, as well as a pre-release test. McLellan said that the CCT would be supportive of this if testing of larval and direct gamete programs are consistent. Jackson said that WDFW's sturgeon fish health sampling and testing plan this year was a combination of internal fish health protocols and recommendations incorporated from other sturgeon fish health specialists. Further, Jackson stated that he only recently learned of a few instances at other sturgeon hatcheries where the broodstock test negative but it is later found in the progeny. Given this information Jackson thinks that testing the broodstock may not be as valuable anymore.

Mike Schiewe said that it seems a common interest is to develop standardized testing for the future. WDFW agreed that, in coordination with the YN and the CCT, they will develop a draft standardized White Sturgeon Fish Health Protocol (to be implemented starting with 2014 white sturgeon broodstock and larval collections) prior to the Aquatic SWG meeting on March 12, 2014. WDFW will provide an update on the development of the draft standardized White Sturgeon Fish Health Protocol at the Aquatic SWG meeting on February 12, 2014.

White Sturgeon Decision Tree (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said that the White Sturgeon Decision Tree (Attachment B), which was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on January 7, 2014, is an attempt at developing a guiding document to help inform rational decisions on how to test fish, and what the results mean in terms of managing the program. He said the decision tree identifies different situations, and

then recommends a suitable path forward. He added that a document like the one being proposed would provide for a certain level of infection and therefore some infected fish would be acceptable for stocking, which is consistent with other white sturgeon programs. He noted that there has been a lot encouragement to develop a document like this from others with similar white sturgeon programs.

Gingerich reviewed the White Sturgeon Decision Tree, beginning with the top blue box (the fish health test), which he indicated can be modified based on recommendations from WDFW and the YN and the CCT. He explained that testing 70 days prior to stocking was used because the literature indicated that if fish are going to break with WSIV it usually happens within 30 to 40 days at water temperatures similar to those used at the Wells Fish Hatchery. He said that 70 days should allow ample time to evaluate whether fish are symptomatic or showing signs of an epizootic. He reviewed the second and third tier of boxes, which he noted are relatively straightforward; and from there, he said decisions become more complex. He explained that the literature indicates that as fish grow, positive test results often decline; therefore, the recommendation is to mark a subset of fish and monitor them to see if they break. Gingerich then reviewed the suite of recommended paths forward depending on the results of the monitoring (see Attachment B).

Steve Lewis asked, regarding the recommendation for marking a subset of 100 fish and monitoring them for 30 days, in the situation where greater than or equal to 30% of the fish are positive but asymptomatic, whether the choice of 30% is based on existing literature. Gingerich replied that not much exists in the literature with regards to a recommended percentage. He noted that other programs have recommended a percentage, such as the Kootenai program, which recommends a number of less than 10%, according to Chad Jackson. Gingerich asked which program and at which life stage the less than 10% recommendation refers to. McLellan further inquired about the process and method of how that number was derived, and also if there are measures of reliability. He asked how uncertainty plays into percentage thresholds. He said that, overall, he thinks the White Sturgeon Decision Tree is a great idea and a great start; however, he also recommended addressing these types of questions before settling on specific levels.

Mike Schiewe asked if the process of marking a subset of fish was used as an example of a stressor. Gingerich replied that the literature suggests that asymptomatic fish can remain as such for a long time. However, stress events can cause fish to break (i.e., asymptomatic fish begin to show clinical signs). He said the idea is to mark a subset of fish as a test. McLellan asked if the decision tree would be the same for fish of both origins, and Gingerich replied that it would be. He added that this would play into the standardized testing for both larval- and direct gamete-origin fish. Pat Irle asked if the fish health testing would be the same for each tank. Gingerich replied that it would be,

as noted in the blue box at the top of Attachment B. He also noted that the sample size may need to be adjusted based on available literature. He said the appropriate number to produce “X” confidence that will be representative of a “certain” population will need to be determined. Chad Jackson said that WDFW’s sampling regime is based on a similar equation that was derived from health manuals developed by WDFW’s statisticians, and that it includes different levels of sampling and considers several different factors.

Irle asked if, regarding fish testing negative for WSIV (see Attachment B, first orange box from the top), there would be no further testing after the 70-day mark. Gingerich said that is what is contemplated, and he added that there is the possibility that if fish are clearly exhibiting signs of disease after tagging, then those fish could be handled accordingly via culling. Irle asked for clarification on the meaning of “culling.” Jackson clarified that “culling” is euthanizing fish, whereas “grading” typically means separating the fish by size.

Jackson said that WDFW will likely want to make recommendations on trigger numbers in the White Sturgeon Decision Tree, and also obtain comments from John Kerwin. He said he will provide those comments to the Aquatic SWG when available.

Stocking Plan (Bob Rose and Bret Nine): Bob Rose said that no further progress has been made on developing a revised draft White Sturgeon Stocking Proposal. Bret Nine confirmed that there has been no further correspondence between the CCT and the YN on developing the revised proposal; Rose suggested setting up a meeting soon. Andrew Gingerich noted the difficulty in making much progress when the fish health issue and proposed fate of WSIV-positive fish is still unresolved. He added that, currently, it is unknown whether larval fish will even be available. He suggested that the Aquatic SWG first needs to decide on the fate of WSIV-positive Lake Roosevelt larval-origin. Jason McLellan agreed. Mike Schiewe said that it seems there is a finite number of fish, and there can be alternatives for WSIV-positive, asymptomatic fish. McLellan asked if anything further has been discussed regarding backfilling the program with fish from other facilities, as discussed at the Aquatic SWG meeting on December 11, 2013. Rose said that he has not heard anything further, but will ask Donella Miller. Gingerich said that he spoke with Miller after the December meeting, and there is some availability; however, they did not discuss specific numbers. McLellan asked if Douglas PUD has considered proposing to Wells Hatchery staff to lower the water temperature and slow the growth. He added that white sturgeon grow so well at this stage that the temperature can be increased later and target sizes can still be reached by the release date. He said, however, that this could potentially increase the risk of a disease outbreak, but at least for the direct gamete-origin fish, which seem the most crowded, this may be a solution. Gingerich said that temperatures have already been lowered for these fish, and added that they are now on straight well water with no heated water

being used. He said the next step will be to alter the feed. Nine asked how long Douglas PUD plans to hold the fish, and Gingerich said that they are in a hurry to move the Wanapum fish to free up space, but he is uncertain about the others.

Wanapum Larvae (All): Jason McLellan said that with regards to the Wanapum larval fish, his preference, in no particular order, would be to either: 1) release them back into the Wells Pool; or 2) mix them with the Lake Roosevelt fish. Bob Rose agreed with McLellan, but added that he would prioritize releasing the fish back into Wells Pool first before mixing them with another tank. Pat Irle suggested that if the decision comes back that asymptomatic fish can be released into Wells Pool, she would recommend marking and releasing the Wanapum fish. She said that, conversely, if the decision is not to release asymptomatic fish, then do not release them. Mike Schiewe noted that at this point, the fish are asymptomatic; however, they also have not been tested. Irle said that if the fish cannot be tested, then she would err on the safe side and not release them. Bret Nine suggested that, assuming the fish are asymptomatic, they should be mixed with the Lake Roosevelt fish. McLellan noted that if the Wanapum fish are not carriers and they are mixed with the Lake Roosevelt fish, there is a high possibility that some of the Wanapum fish will become carriers. He also noted that there is a non-lethal testing method that uses organ tissue, so the option to test the fish is still available. Chad Jackson agreed and noted that both histology and PCR use pectoral fin clips; however, it is with the cell culture testing that the fish must be euthanized. Schiewe asked how long it would take to receive fish health results from PCR testing, and Jackson said that results come back relatively quickly—maybe within a week. McLellan noted that WSIV is ubiquitous within the Columbia River system, and that there has been precedence for planting larval-origin fish that have tested positive for WSIV, but are asymptomatic. He added that the actual level of risk is still unknown. Jackson asked what the minimum recommended fish size is to PIT-tag juvenile sturgeon. McLellan replied that 30 grams is typical, which, he added, translates into approximately 120-millimeter fork length. Jackson said that if that is the case, only one or two of the Wanapum fish are large enough to PIT-tag; and so if releasing them is the preferred option, some may not be PIT-tagged—only scute-marked. McLellan noted that juvenile sturgeon have been PIT-tagged when they are as small as 20 grams, so PIT-tagging the Wanapum fish should not be an issue.

Gingerich asked the Aquatic SWG if they would be supportive of PIT-tagging and releasing the Wanapum fish in the Wells Pool without fish health testing. He said that Douglas PUD is up against a time constraint and that they need the space for the white sturgeon program. Irle indicated that she was uncertain the decision to release the fish without fish health testing is the best option; however, she also indicated that the issue is not necessarily an Ecology issue. Schiewe noted that other options would include euthanizing them, abstaining, or deferring to WDFW. Irle agreed to defer to WDFW. Jackson said that he spoke with John Kerwin, and Kerwin agreed that because the

Wanapum fish are so few in number, are creating space issues, and are not necessarily a part of the white sturgeon program issues at hand, WDFW is supportive of tagging and releasing them if there was unanimous consensus from the Aquatic SWG to do so. The Aquatic SWG members present agreed, with USFWS abstaining (i.e., not present) and Ecology deferring to WDFW, to PIT-tag and release into the Wells Pool approximately 15 Wanapum larvae that are currently on station at the Wells Fish Hatchery in order to free up needed tank space for the Douglas PUD White Sturgeon Program.

McLellan recommended that the scute mark used on the Wanapum fish remain consistent with the other larval programs in the Mid-Columbia, which is an insertion on the right side of the dorsal fin (direct gamete programs is on the left). Nine asked where the fish will be released, and Shane Bickford said the fish will likely be released at the mouth of the Okanogan because that is where the highest concentration of nutrients and food are during this time of year.

Approval of the Phase One WSMP M&E Study Plan (Andrew Gingerich and Mike Schiewe): Mike Schiewe recalled that the draft Phase One WSMP M&E Study Plan was distributed for a 30-day review period on October 30, 2013, and based on comments received from the CCT and Ecology, a revised draft plan was distributed for a 10-day extension of the original 30-day comment period. Although the plan was already technically approved following the close of the comment period, as reflected in the Aquatic SWG December 11, 2013 conference call minutes, Schiewe noted the importance of obtaining Aquatic SWG support of this document and asked members whose votes were abstentions if they would like to provide a formal approval of the plan. The CCT, the YN, WDFW, and Douglas PUD approved the Phase One WSMP M&E Study Plan. Ecology and USFWS had already approved the study plan via email on December 20, 2013.

5. **Draft 2014 Resident Fish Assemblage Study Plan** (Chas Kyger): Chas Kyger said that Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on December 23, 2013, notifying them that the draft 2014 Resident Fish Assemblage Study Plan was available for review. He said the 30-day review will end with comments due to Douglas PUD no later than January 23, 2014. He said that some comments have already been received that he plans to incorporate into a revised draft plan, which will be distributed prior to the Aquatic SWG conference call on February 12, 2014, when Douglas PUD will be requesting approval of the plan. Pat Irle asked if there will be any substantial changes in the revised draft plan, and Kyger replied that most of the plan will remain the same. He noted, however, that some sampling methods may change. He said that he plans to have the revised draft plan distributed to the Aquatic SWG about 2 to 3 weeks prior to the February meeting. The Aquatic SWG agreed to submit comments on the draft 2014 Resident Fish Assemblage Study Plan to Douglas PUD no later than Thursday, January 23, 2014.

6. **Bull Trout PIT Tag History Document Reminder** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said that this document is in the final stages of development and should be available for review shortly. He said the document is not a FERC requirement, but is included in the ASA Workgroup Action Plan.
7. **Draft 2014 ASA Workgroup Action Plan** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said that Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on January 2, 2014, notifying them that the draft 2014 ASA Workgroup Action Plan is out for a 30-day review period, with comments due to him no later than Monday, February 3, 2014. Gingerich said that the Action Plan is not a FERC requirement, but it is a document that Douglas PUD develops each year. He said the Action Plan is a helpful tool that outlines what the Aquatic SWG plans to accomplish in a given year. Pat Irle asked if the Aquatic SWG monthly meetings should also be included in the Action Plan, and Gingerich replied that the revision can be made if Ecology would like them included. Mike Schiewe suggested that Irle provide those comments to Douglas PUD via email, for the administrative record, if she would like to see that revision. The Aquatic SWG agreed to submit comments on the draft 2014 ASA Workgroup Action Plan to Douglas PUD no later than Monday, February 3, 2014.

VII. Next Meetings

1. **Upcoming meetings** (Chad Jackson and Mike Schiewe): Chad Jackson asked the Aquatic SWG if, considering recent discussions regarding fish health screening, there would be interest in holding an in-person meeting where John Kerwin could present on WDFW's Fish Health Plan and Co-Manager Policy. The Aquatic SWG members present agreed to hold the Aquatic SWG meeting on March 12, 2014, in person, at Douglas PUD Headquarters in East Wenatchee, Washington. Kerwin will provide a presentation on WDFW's Fish Health Plan and Co-Manager Policy at the in-person meeting.

Upcoming meetings are as follows: *February 12, 2014 (conference call); March 12, 2014 (in-person); and April 9, 2014 (conference call).*

List of Attachments

Attachment A – List of Attendees

Attachment B – 2015 White Sturgeon Stocking Matrix and Decision Tree

Attachment A List of Attendees

Name	Role	Organization
Mike Schiewe	SWG Chair	Anchor QEA, LLC
Kristi Geris	Administration/Technical Support	Anchor QEA, LLC
Andrew Gingerich	SWG Technical Representative	Douglas PUD
Chas Kyger	Technical Support	Douglas PUD
Shane Bickford	SWG Policy Representative	Douglas PUD
Steve Lewis*	SWG Technical Representative	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Patrick Verhey	SWG Technical Representative	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Chad Jackson	Technical Support	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Pat Irle	SWG Technical Representative	Washington State Department of Ecology
Jason McLellan	SWG Technical Representative	Colville Confederated Tribes
Bret Nine	Technical Support	Colville Confederated Tribes
Bob Rose	SWG Technical Representative	Yakama Nation

Notes:

- * Left meeting early following the Stocking Plan discussion.