

Final Conference Call Minutes



Aquatic Settlement Work Group

To: Aquatic SWG Parties **Date:** April 8, 2015
From: Michael Schiewe, Chair (Anchor QEA, LLC)
Re: Final Minutes of the March 11, 2015 Aquatic SWG Conference Call

The Aquatic Settlement Work Group (SWG) met by conference call on Wednesday, March 11, 2015, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Attendees are listed in Attachment A of these meeting minutes.

I. Summary of Action Items

1. The Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT), Douglas PUD, and John Ferguson (new Aquatic SWG Chair; effective May 2015) will discuss developing guidelines for hatchery rearing juvenile white sturgeon. The path forward will be considered during an Aquatic SWG meeting in summer 2015 (Item VI-2).
2. Douglas PUD will provide an update on the current size range of white sturgeon at Wells Hatchery to Kristi Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG (Item VI-6).
(Note: Andrew Gingerich provided an update to Geris on March 12, 2015, which Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day.)
3. Douglas PUD will discuss with Wells Hatchery staff the ability to increase the water temperature in the larval-origin white sturgeon holding tanks from 14 to 16 degrees Celsius (°C) to increase fish growth to meet the target fish size at release (Item VI-6).
(Note: Andrew Gingerich indicated via email on March 12, 2015, that the water temperature can and will be increased, as requested, which Kristi Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day.)
4. Douglas PUD will discuss internally the feasibility of tagging white sturgeon on the water in a boat equipped with a sling, as opposed to on the shore, during white sturgeon monitoring and evaluation (M&E) efforts in 2015 (Item VI-6).
5. Douglas PUD will provide a draft 2014 Bull Trout Incidental Take and Management Plan Annual Report to Kristi Geris by Friday, March 20, 2015, for distribution to the Aquatic SWG (Item VI-7). *(Note: Andrew Gingerich provided the draft report to Geris on March 16, 2015, which Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day.)*

6. Douglas PUD will provide a draft 2014 Water Temperature Annual Report to Kristi Geris by end of day today, Wednesday, March 11, 2015, for distribution to the Aquatic SWG (Item VI-8). *(Note: Andrew Gingerich provided the draft report to Geris on March 11, 2015, which Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day.)*
7. Kristi Geris will copy Chris Coffin (Washington State Department of Ecology [Ecology]) on all email correspondence that was formerly sent to Pat Irle (Item VI-9).

II. Summary of Decisions

1. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the Resident Fish Study Report (Item VI-3).
2. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2014 Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan (ANSMP) Annual Report (Item VI-4).
3. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2015 Aquatic Settlement Agreement (ASA) Action Plan (Item VI-5).

III. Agreements

1. The Aquatic SWG members present agreed to increase the water temperature in the larval-origin white sturgeon holding tanks at Wells Hatchery from 14 to 16°C to increase fish growth to meet the target fish size at release (Item VI-6).

IV. Review Items

1. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on March 11, 2015, notifying them the draft 2014 Water Temperature Annual Report is available for review, with comments due to Douglas PUD by Friday, April 3, 2015 (Item VI-8).
2. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on March 16, 2015, notifying them the draft 2014 Bull Trout Management Plan and Incidental Take Annual Report is available for review, with comments due to Douglas PUD prior to the next Aquatic SWG meeting on April 8, 2015 (Item VI-7).

V. Documents Finalized

1. The final Resident Fish Study Report was posted to the Aquatic SWG Extranet Site on March 11, 2015, and Kristi Geris notified the Aquatic SWG that same day (Item VI-3).
2. The final 2014 ANSMP Annual Report was posted to the Aquatic SWG Extranet Site on March 11, 2015, and Kristi Geris notified the Aquatic SWG that same day (Item VI-4).
3. The final 2015 ASA Action Plan was posted to the Aquatic SWG Extranet Site on March 11, 2015, and Kristi Geris notified the Aquatic SWG that same day (Item VI-5).

VI. Summary of Discussions

1. Welcome, Review Agenda, Meeting Minutes Approval, and Review of Action Items

(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. The following revisions were requested:

- Patrick Verhey added the following items: 1) Aquatic SWG distribution list and Extranet Site access request for Chris Coffin; and 2) 2015 Wells Project water forecast update.
- Andrew Gingerich added to Douglas PUD's white sturgeon items a 2014 Wells releases tag detection update.

The revised draft February 11, 2015, conference call minutes were reviewed.

Kristi Geris said all comments and revisions received from members of the Aquatic SWG were incorporated in the revised minutes, and there were no outstanding edits or questions to discuss. Aquatic SWG members present approved the February 11, 2015, conference call minutes, as revised.

2. Action Items (Mike Schiewe): Mike Schiewe reviewed action items from the last Aquatic SWG conference call on February 11, 2015, and follow-up discussions were as follows: (*Note: italicized item numbers below correspond to agenda items from the February 11, 2015, meeting.*)

- *Douglas PUD will provide comments received from Ecology on the draft 2014 Wells Gas Abatement Plan (GAP)/Total Dissolved Gas (TDG) Report to Kristi Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG (Item VI-3).*

Andrew Gingerich provided Ecology's approval of the draft plan to Geris following the meeting on February 11, 2015, which Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day.

- *Douglas PUD will provide comments received from Ecology on the draft 2015 Wells GAP/Bypass Operating Plan (BOP) to Kristi Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG (Item VI-4).*

Gingerich provided Ecology's approval of the draft plan to Geris following the meeting on February 11, 2015, which Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day.

- *Aquatic SWG members will submit their approval, disapproval, or abstention on the draft Wells White Sturgeon Stocking Statement of Agreement (SOA) via email to Douglas PUD (with a copy to Kristi Geris) by Friday, February 20, 2015; the draft SOA for review was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on January 9, 2014 (Item VI-5).*

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) provided a revised SOA for approval to Geris on February 12, 2015, which Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day; Douglas PUD and the CCT approved the SOA on February 17, 2015, Ecology approved on February 18, 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and WDFW approved on February 23, 2015, and the Yakama Nation (YN) abstained on February 25, 2015.

- *The CCT, Douglas PUD, and John Ferguson (new Aquatic SWG Chair, effective May 2015) will discuss developing guidelines for hatchery rearing juvenile sturgeon; the path forward will be considered during an Aquatic SWG meeting in summer 2015 (Item VI-6).*

This action item will be carried forward.

- *Douglas PUD will provide an updated spreadsheet with the latest Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) Tag Information System (PTAGIS) detections of lamprey released by Douglas PUD in the Wells Reservoir to Kristi Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG (Item VI-7).*

Chas Kyger provided an update via email following the meeting on March 11, 2015, which indicated the most recent lamprey detection was on July 21, 2014, at the Rocky Reach Dam juvenile bypass. He noted the detected fish was released below Wells Dam on July 30, 2013, and was never detected during the 2013 Lamprey Study.

- *Douglas PUD will provide the draft 2015 ASA Action Plan to Kristi Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG for review (Item VI-8).*

Gingerich provided the draft plan to Geris following the meeting on February 11, 2015, which Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day.

- *Aquatic SWG members will submit edits and comments on the draft 2014 ANSMP Annual Report to Chas Kyger by Wednesday, February 25, 2015; Douglas PUD will be requesting approval of the draft report during the next Aquatic SWG meeting on March 11, 2015 (Item VI-9).*

This will be discussed during today's conference call.

- *Aquatic SWG members will submit edits and comments on the draft 2014 Resident Fish Study Report to Chas Kyger prior to the next Aquatic SWG meeting on March 11, 2015, when Douglas PUD will be requesting approval of the draft report (Item VI-10).*

This will be discussed during today's conference call.

3. DECISION: Draft Resident Fish Study Report (Chas Kyger): Chas Kyger said Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on February 11, 2015, notifying them the draft 2014 Resident Fish Study Report was available for review, with edits and comments due to him prior to today's Aquatic SWG meeting. A revised draft report was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on March 9, 2015. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the Resident Fish Study Report. *(Note: the final report was posted to the Aquatic SWG Extranet Site on March 11, 2015, and Geris notified the Aquatic SWG that same day.)*

4. DECISION: Draft 2014 ANSMP Annual Report (Chas Kyger): Chas Kyger said Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on February 11, 2015, notifying them the draft 2014 ANSMP Annual Report was available for review, with edits and comments due to him by Wednesday, February 25, 2015. Kyger said comments were received from WDFW, which were addressed by adding a few tables and a map, as requested. A revised draft report was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on March 10, 2015. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2014 ANSMP Annual Report. *(Note: the final*

report was posted to the Aquatic SWG Extranet Site on March 11, 2015, and Geris notified the Aquatic SWG that same day.)

- 5. DECISION: Draft 2015 ASA Action Plan** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on February 11, 2015, notifying them that the draft 2015 ASA Action Plan was available for review, with edits and comments due to him prior to today's Aquatic SWG meeting. Gingerich said no comments were received on the draft plan. He also recalled that this plan is not filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC); rather, it is an internal summary of actions planned for the calendar year. Mike Schiewe added that the Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP) Committees develop a similar plan; and like the HCP Action Plans, the ASA Action Plan does not preclude or require actions (i.e., it is a living document). The Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2015 ASA Action Plan. *(Note: the final plan was posted to the Aquatic SWG Extranet Site on March 11, 2015, and Geris notified the Aquatic SWG that same day.)*

- 6. White Sturgeon** (Andrew Gingerich):

Wells Hatchery Condition

Andrew Gingerich reported there are about 3,000 Marion Drain direct gamete-origin fish at Wells Hatchery; tomorrow, about 2,000 of those will be returned to Marion Drain. He said Scott Moore (WDFW Wells Hatchery Staff) indicated that all necessary paperwork is in order for the transfer. Gingerich said following the transfer, there will be about 1,000 Marion Drain direct gamete-origin fish remaining on station, which will be culled down to about 300 fish and held for backfill, as necessary.

Gingerich said there are slightly more than 5,000 larval-origin fish on station. He said during the last month, Wells Hatchery staff have slowly increased feed and water temperature to increase growth. He added that the water temperature in the holding tanks has been increased from about 50 degrees Fahrenheit (50°F or 10°C), which is the ambient Wells Hatchery water temperature, to currently about 58°F (or 14°C). He said mortality has been negligible (8 mortalities in February), and that Douglas PUD is moving forward as planned with releases in late May to early June 2015.

Jason McLellan asked about the average sizes of fish currently on station. Gingerich said he did not have those data on hand, but that he will provide an update to Kristi Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG. *(Note: Gingerich provided an update to Geris on March 12, 2015, which Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day.)*

McLellan asked about the target release sizes for 2015 releases. Gingerich recalled that last year, fish were released in two batches, both of which were in the 11-inch range. He said he hoped to release fish at about the same size as last year. He explained that because there are so many stocking variables, he would like to keep stocking size as a

constant. He added that fish growth is currently about 1 month behind last year's. McLellan recommended increasing the water temperature to 16°C. The Aquatic SWG members present agreed to increase the water temperature if feasible. Gingerich said he will check with Wells Hatchery staff about the feasibility and have it increased to 16°C if possible. *(Note: Gingerich indicated via email on March 12, 2015, that the water temperature can and will be increased, as requested, which Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day.)*

2015 Collection Planning

Gingerich said that on March 16, 2015, the YN, Grant PUD, Chelan PUD, and Douglas PUD plan to meet by conference call to begin discussing broodstock collection for the 2015 collection season. He added that Bob Rose planned to distribute a meeting request, which has not yet gone out. Mike Schiewe asked McLellan if the CCT planned to participate in this call, and McLellan said if he receives an invitation, he will participate.

2015 M&E Planning

Gingerich said this year, Douglas PUD implements the first year of white sturgeon M&E in the Wells Reservoir. He said tags and receivers have been ordered, and that in early April 2015, Douglas PUD, in coordination with LGL Limited and Columbia Research Specialists, plan to conduct testing of the equipment. He said that in late April 2015, staff will passive integrated transponder (PIT)-tag up to 50 brood year (BY) 2014 fish, as well as up to 15 BY 2013 fish recaptured in field monitoring. He said acoustic-tagging will also take place on the last day of tagging. He said, in addition, that if wild-origin fish (or non-hatchery releases) are captured, some of those fish will also be tagged. He said the first mark and recapture effort is expected to begin in July 2015, when the Wells Reservoir water temperature is ideal. He added that historically, capture has been highly successful around that time of year. He said a second effort will begin in late fall (September 2015).

McLellan asked if Douglas PUD has any concerns about stressing fish when tagging during periods when water temperatures will be high. Gingerich said that in the Wells Reservoir, peak water temperatures are not experienced until later in the summer (i.e., August to early September); so, July is not of particular concern. He added that during the first week of July, the water temperature is expected to be about 15°C, and then it will warm up quickly from there. He also added that tagging efforts can be rescheduled if there is a concern.

McLellan also commented about tagging fish on the shore. He said the CCT would prefer that fish are not dragged long distances or noosed around the tail. Gingerich said the plan was to conduct tagging on the shore; however, he said they could also arrange to conduct tagging on a boat equipped with a davit arm to hoist fish on board. McLellan

said the CCT would prefer that option, if available. He added that the CCT have tagged fish on a boat equipped with a hydraulic davit arm and a sling. He said fish were swung into the boat and laid gently constrained upside-down. The fish were covered with blankets and the gills were irrigated. He said this method also prevented water from splashing into tagging wounds. Gingerich said he will discuss internally the feasibility of tagging white sturgeon on a work boat equipped with a sling opposed to on the shore. He added that his only concern would be regarding poor weather conditions (i.e., high winds and rough water), but he said if that was the case, the effort could be rescheduled.

2015 Outreach Update

Gingerich said that on February 19, 2015, similar to last year, Douglas PUD hosted a tour of the Wells Hatchery Sturgeon Facility for students from Bridgeport High School. He said the students will return in late May 2015 to participate in the release of white sturgeon into the Wells Reservoir. He said a video highlighting the tour is available on the Douglas PUD website.

Gingerich said, additionally, like last year, Douglas PUD hopes to coordinate with the Fort Okanogan Museum, located near the confluence of the Okanogan River and the Wells Reservoir, to deliver white sturgeon for a museum display. He added that Douglas PUD will coordinate with WDFW to complete necessary transfer permits.

2014 Wells Releases Movements Update

Gingerich said there have been no detections of white sturgeon in the Okanogan River in 2015. He summarized that there were six detections in October 2014, zero in November 2014, and two in December 2014. He confirmed the array is working properly based on detections of steelhead, mountain white fish, and bull trout in 2015. He suggested this indicates white sturgeon are not moving during this time of year. McLellan agreed, and said the CCT have observed that once the water temperature drops below 15°C, white sturgeon tend to aggregate in overwinter areas and stay put. Gingerich noted that the current water temperature in the Wells Reservoir is about 45°F (or 7°C), which is well below 15°C.

7. Draft 2014 Bull Trout Incidental Take and Management Plan Annual Report

(Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said Douglas PUD is required by their USFWS Bull Trout Biological Opinion to provide USFWS with an Incidental Take Report by April 15 of each year. Gingerich said Douglas PUD will provide a draft 2014 Bull Trout Incidental Take and Management Plan Annual Report to Kristi Geris by Friday, March 20, 2015, for distribution to the Aquatic SWG. Gingerich said the report is due to FERC by May 31, 2015. *(Note: Gingerich provided the draft report to Geris on March 16, 2015, which Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day.)*

- 8. Draft 2014 Water Temperature Annual Report (Andrew Gingerich):** Andrew Gingerich said Douglas PUD is required by their Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification and FERC License Order 2149-52 to provide Ecology and FERC with a Water Temperature Report by April 30 of each year. Gingerich said Douglas PUD will provide a draft 2014 Water Temperature Annual Report to Kristi Geris by end of day today, Wednesday, March 11, 2015, for distribution to the Aquatic SWG. Gingerich said Douglas PUD is requesting a 30-day review period, and will request approval of the report during the next Aquatic SWG meeting on April 8, 2015. *(Note: Gingerich provided the draft report to Geris on March 11, 2015, which Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day.)*

Chris Coffin asked what specifically the report will cover and if it will include raw data. Gingerich explained that the Wells Project 401 Certification requires that Douglas PUD monitor water temperature at key input locations around the Wells Project (i.e., Chief Joseph Dam tailrace, Okanogan River boundary, Methow River boundary, and Wells Dam forebay and tailrace). He said the report will include figures and graphs that summarize compliance with the state water quality standards for water temperature; however, the report will not contain those raw data. He added that raw water temperature data are available in real time on Douglas PUD's website. Coffin asked if Douglas PUD has submitted any operations documents (e.g., Standard Operating Procedures, Quality Assurance Project Plans [QAPP], etc.). Gingerich said Douglas PUD submitted a QAPP, which is also available on Douglas PUD's website.

Gingerich said Douglas PUD will include their complete consultation record along with the report to FERC, which will include Ecology's approval of the report, by the April 30 deadline.

- 9. Aquatic SWG Distribution List and Extranet Site Access Request – Chris Coffin (Patrick Verhey):** Patrick Verhey said Chris Coffin would like to make sure he is included on the Aquatic SWG email distribution list and would also like to obtain access to the Aquatic SWG Extranet Site. Mike Schiewe said the HCP Committees agreed to a system where these types of requests are reviewed and approved by the HCP Coordinating Committees, and he asked if a similar process should be implemented in the Aquatic SWG. Andrew Gingerich recalled that at one point, all non-Aquatic SWG members who are included on the Aquatic SWG email distribution list were granted read-only access to the Extranet Site. Kristi Geris verified that Coffin is on the email distribution list and has access to the Extranet Site (Julene McGregor [Douglas PUD Information Systems Staff] reset his password yesterday). Geris noted that Coffin has not received emails that have been sent to Aquatic SWG members only; however, she indicated that she will now copy Coffin on all email correspondence that was formerly sent to Pat Irle (former Ecology Aquatic SWG Technical Representative).

- 10. 2015 Wells Project Water Forecast Update** (Patrick Verhey and Andrew Gingerich): Patrick Verhey asked, considering the lack of precipitation this winter, if Douglas PUD has any concerns with the water forecast for the Wells Project in 2015. Andrew Gingerich said he was told that in February 2015, Grand Coulee Dam drafted a lot of water, and flows passing Wells Dam were above average. He also noted that most of the water that Wells Dam receives is from Canada and Montana; so, although precipitation was light in the Cascade Mountains, to date, the water situation for the Wells Project is close to average.

VII. Next Meetings

1. **Upcoming meetings** (Mike Schiewe): Upcoming meetings are as follows: *April 8, 2015 (conference call); May 13, 2015 (TBD); and June 10, 2015 (TBD).*

List of Attachments

Attachment A – List of Attendees

Attachment A List of Attendees

Name	Role	Organization
Mike Schiewe	Aquatic SWG Chair	Anchor QEA, LLC
John Ferguson	Aquatic SWG Chair (May 2015)	Anchor QEA, LLC
Kristi Geris	Administration/Technical Support	Anchor QEA, LLC
Andrew Gingerich	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	Douglas PUD
Chas Kyger	Technical Support	Douglas PUD
Jason McLellan	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	Colville Confederated Tribes
Chris Coffin	Observer	Washington State Department of Ecology
Patrick Verhey	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Chad Jackson	Technical Support	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife