

# Final Conference Call Minutes

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## *Aquatic Settlement Work Group*

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

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The Aquatic Settlement Work Group (SWG) met by conference call on Wednesday, February 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. Douglas PUD will provide comments received from the Washington State Department of Ecology (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). *(Note: 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.)*
2. 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). *(Note: 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.)*
3. 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). *(Note: 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 Colville Confederated Tribes [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 February 23, 2015, and the Yakama Nation [YN] abstained on February 25, 2015.)*

4. 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).
5. 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).
6. Douglas PUD will provide the draft 2015 Aquatic Settlement Agreement (ASA) Action Plan to Kristi Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG for review (Item VI-8). *(Note: Andrew Gingerich provided the draft plan to Geris following the meeting on February 11, 2015, which Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day.)*
7. Aquatic SWG members will submit edits and comments on the draft 2014 Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan (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).
8. 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).

## **II. Summary of Decisions**

1. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2014 Wells GAP/TDG Report (Item VI-3).
2. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2015 Wells GAP/BOP (Item VI-4).
3. The Wells White Sturgeon Stocking SOA was approved by the Aquatic SWG, with the YN abstaining, as follows: Douglas PUD and the CCT approved on February 17, 2015, Ecology approved on February 18, 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and WDFW approved February 23, 2015, and the YN abstained on February 25, 2015 (Item VI-5).

## **III. Agreements**

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

## **IV. Review Items**

1. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on February 12, 2015, notifying them that a revised draft Wells White Sturgeon Stocking SOA is available for review. Email votes on the revised draft SOA are due to Douglas PUD (with a copy to Geris) by Friday, February 20, 2015 (Item VI-5).
2. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on February 11, 2015, notifying them that the draft 2014 ANSMP Annual Report is available for review. Edits and comments on the draft report are due to Chas Kyger by Wednesday, February 25, 2015 (Item VI-9).

3. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on February 11, 2015, notifying them that the draft 2014 Resident Fish Study Report is available for review period. Edits and comments on the draft report are due to Chas Kyger prior to the next Aquatic SWG meeting on March 11, 2015 (Item VI-10).

## V. Documents Finalized

1. The final 2014 Wells GAP/TDG Report was posted to the Aquatic SWG Extranet Site on February 17, 2015, and Kristi Geris notified the Aquatic SWG that same day (Item VI-3).
2. The final 2014 Wells GAP/TDG Report was filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on February 24, 2015, as distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris that same day (Item VI-3).
3. The final 2015 Wells GAP/BOP was posted to the Aquatic SWG Extranet Site on February 17, 2015, and Kristi Geris notified the Aquatic SWG that same day (Item VI-4).
4. The final 2015 Wells GAP/BOP was filed with FERC on February 26, 2015, as distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris that same day (Item VI-4).

## 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. No additions or changes were requested.

The revised draft January 14, 2015 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, and that there were no outstanding edits or questions to discuss. Aquatic SWG members present approved the January 14, 2015 conference call minutes, as revised.

2. **Action Items** (Mike Schiewe): Mike Schiewe reviewed action items from the last Aquatic SWG conference call on January 14, 2015, and follow-up discussions were as follows: (*Note: italicized item numbers below correspond to agenda items from the January 14, 2015 meeting.*)
  - *Chad Jackson will ask Jeff Korth (WDFW) to send WDFW's questions on Wells white sturgeon stocking, which were sent to Drs. Paul Anders (Cramer Fish Sciences/University of Idaho) and Andrea Drauch-Schreier (University of California, Davis), to Kristi Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG (Item VI-3). This will be discussed during today's conference call.*
  - *Aquatic SWG members will submit edits and comments on the draft 2014 GAP/TDG Report to Andrew Gingerich by Monday, February 9, 2015; Douglas PUD*

*will request approval of the draft report during the Aquatic SWG meeting on February 11, 2015 (Item VI-5).*

This will be discussed during today's conference call.

- *Aquatic SWG members will submit edits and comments on the draft 2015 GAP/BOP to Andrew Gingerich by Monday, February 9, 2015; Douglas PUD will request approval of the draft plan during the Aquatic SWG meeting on February 11, 2015.*

This will be discussed during today's conference call.

3. **DECISION: Draft 2014 Wells GAP/TDG Report** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said that Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on January 9, 2015, notifying them that the draft 2014 GAP/TDG Report was available for review, with edits and comments due to him by Monday, February 9, 2015. Gingerich said that no comments were received on the draft report, and that Charlie McKinney indicated that Ecology will submit comments by the end of today. Gingerich said that Douglas PUD would like to request approval of the draft report pending Ecology's approval, as the final report is due to FERC by Friday, February 27, 2015. He added that he will provide Ecology's comments on the draft report to the Aquatic SWG once they are received. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2014 Wells GAP/TDG Report. *(Note: 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; the final report was filed with FERC on February 24, 2015, as distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris that same day.)*
4. **DECISION: Draft 2015 Wells GAP/BOP** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said that Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on January 9, 2015, notifying them that the draft 2015 GAP/BOP was available for review, with edits and comments due to Andrew Gingerich by Monday, February 9, 2015. Gingerich said that no comments were received on the draft report, and that Charlie McKinney indicated that Ecology will submit comments by the end of today. Gingerich said that Douglas PUD would still like to request approval of the draft report pending Ecology's approval, as the final report is due to FERC by Friday, February 27, 2015. He added that he will provide Ecology's comments on the draft report to the Aquatic SWG once they are received. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2015 Wells GAP/BOP. *(Note: 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; and the final plan was filed with FERC on February 26, 2015, as distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris that same day.)*
5. **Sturgeon Stocking SOA and Path Forward** (Chad Jackson): Chad Jackson said that the WDFW recommendation for white sturgeon stocking in the Wells Pool (Wells White Sturgeon Stocking SOA) was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on January 9,

2015. Jackson suggested voting on the SOA via email by the end of the month, or voting during the next Aquatic SWG meeting on March 11, 2015. He recalled that WDFW initially had concerns with excluding direct gamete-origin fish, anticipating that those fish could contribute beneficial genes to the Wells Pool population. He said, however, that after consultation with Drs. Paul Anders (Cramer Fish Sciences/University of Idaho) and Andrea Drauch-Schreier (University of California, Davis), WDFW realized that while direct gamete-origin fish may introduce some unrepresented alleles to the populations above Priest Rapids Dam, the magnitude and influence of the introduction is unclear, and potentially could be minimal. Jackson said that based on this new understanding, WDFW recommended supporting the Wells White Sturgeon Stocking SOA that was originally distributed on July 10, 2014, which prioritized larval-origin fish over direct gamete-origin fish, with one addition: if available, wild larvae-origin fish collected between Bonneville and McNary dams will be prioritized over wild larvae-origin fish collected upstream of McNary Dam. Jason McLellan asked if WDFW is proposing to prioritize larval-origin fish from the Lower Columbia River (Zone 6) even if Lake Roosevelt (FDR) or any other larval-origin fish upstream of McNary Dam are available. Jackson said that at this time, that is correct.

Andrew Gingerich said that this current Wells White Sturgeon Stocking SOA for approval (WDFW recommendation) is essentially what was proposed back in May 2014; however, he noted that Douglas PUD will need to internally review the minor revisions made by WDFW prior to approving the SOA. Gingerich said that, generally speaking, there may be a few questions; however, he is not expecting any major issues. He added that he believes that the SOA is consistent with the technical discussions that have occurred within and outside of the Aquatic SWG. Jackson also added that WDFW has discussed this SOA with the YN and the CCT, and no major concerns were initially raised.

Aquatic SWG members agreed to submit their approval, disapproval, or abstention on the draft Wells White Sturgeon Stocking SOA via email to Douglas PUD (with a copy to Geris) by Friday, February 20, 2015. *(Note: WDFW provided a revised SOA for approval [Attachment B], which included flexibility for using at least some wild larvae from other Columbia River population segments above McNary Dam, per the CCT's request, to Geris on February 12, 2015, which Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day.)*

The Wells White Sturgeon Stocking SOA was approved by the Aquatic SWG, with the YN abstaining, as follows: Douglas PUD and the CCT approved on February 17, 2015, Ecology approved on February 18, 2015, USFWS and WDFW approved February 23, 2015, and the YN abstained on February 25, 2015.

6. **Wells Hatchery Sturgeon Update** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said that in the interest in further reducing numbers at Wells Hatchery, on February 9, 2015, hatchery staff inventoried, moved, and culled fish, resulting in approximately 3,000 direct

gamete-origin fish and slightly more than 5,000 larval-origin fish remaining at Wells Hatchery (i.e., approximately 8,000 fish total for a 5,000-fish program). Gingerich said that with regard to average fish size, fish are about 1 month behind (i.e., slightly smaller) compared to last year. He said that the smaller fish sizes are a product of the higher densities of fish and fish husbandry technique designed to minimize growth while the program stocking was sorted out (i.e., too much biomass in the tanks). He said that hatchery staff are now starting to increase the water temperature to enhance growth, with the goal of stocking at similar size fish as last year. He added that Douglas PUD is optimistic that the target fish size will be reached prior to release. He noted that mortality has been negligible, and that all fish on station are doing quite well.

Gingerich said that more than 1,600 fish were transferred to the CCT Resident Fish Hatchery. Jason McLellan asked how the fish were selected for transferring to the CCT, and Gingerich replied that the tank with the smallest fish were selected for transfer. McLellan suggested further discussing this selection process for fish being introduced into an aquaculture program, noting that selecting only the smallest fish may not be the most beneficial for the program. Gingerich agreed. McLellan said that the CCT understands why this selection was made; however, he suggested that the Aquatic SWG may want to provide more direction regarding this matter. Chad Jackson asked if any protocols exist for the Sherman Creek Program that could be used to start this discussion. McLellan said that he is unaware of any specific protocols; however, he noted that this has been discussed in other forums. He added that there has been direction from technical teams working with aquaculture programs to not select fish based solely on fish size; rather, to make the selection as random as possible. Gingerich said that he believes that this could be easily accommodated, especially with an SOA in place and understanding how many fish need to be raised. Jackson suggested continuing this discussion in July or August 2015; he added that he would be interested in reviewing the meeting notes from the other forums that have discussed this same topic. Mike Schiewe asked if this is the only guidance issue that needs to be discussed, or if a more robust rearing plan may be needed that addresses a number of different issues. McLellan said that there may be additional issues; however, from a priority perspective, this is probably the primary issue.

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. Jackson also suggested coordinating with Scott Moore (WDFW, Wells Hatchery Manager) and Jayson Wahls (WDFW, Wells Hatchery Complex Manager).

7. **Lamprey Modification Update** (Chas Kyger): Chas Kyger said that last December 2014, the east fishway at Wells Dam was dewatered for the annual winter maintenance, which included reopening the low level side entrance to improve lamprey passage at Wells

Dam. He said that when the low level side entrance was opened, an accumulation of sediment was discovered behind the entrance that prevented dam staff from installing the proposed lamprey box modifications. He said that Douglas PUD continued with installing the radio telemetry equipment, and he added that most equipment from the 2013 study was still intact. He said that there were no issues with installing the new equipment throughout the auxiliary water supply system, which is a focus of the 2015 study. He said that dam staff recommended re-watering the east ladder and moving to the west ladder. He said that the same situation with sediment build-up is expected at the west ladder; therefore, the plan is to: 1) re-water the east fishway so that divers can suction out the silt, and then return the fishway back into service; 2) dewater the west fishway after suctioning any sediment first, install the lamprey box, and then return the fishway back into service; and 3) dewater the east fishway again and install the lamprey box. He said that he does not believe that the west ladder is dewatered yet, but it will be shortly. He said that Douglas PUD will continue preparing for the 2015 study, including acquiring tags and acquiring fish from Priest Rapids Dam. He said that the study is planned to kick off in mid-July 2015.

Steve Lewis asked if the same head differentials that were employed for the 2013 study will be employed in 2015. Kyger replied that the alternating 1.0-foot and 1.5-foot head differential treatments that were implemented in the 2013 study will not be employed in 2015; however, the standard nighttime reduced 1.0-foot head differential (“lamprey operations”) will be implemented, as per usual. Lewis asked about the functionality of the newly installed lamprey boxes under these lamprey operations. Kyger explained that the lamprey boxes provide a lower velocity alternate entrance route regardless of the head differential.

Lewis asked if there were any updates on 2013 study fish detected throughout the project, and Kyger replied that to his knowledge, no further detections have been observed since about July 2014. Andrew Gingerich added that he has not recently queried PTAGIS; however, he said that he also would not expect to see lamprey migrating this time of year. Lewis asked if there was still a large number of undetected study fish at this point, and Kyger said that there was. Gingerich said that Douglas PUD will provide an updated spreadsheet with the latest PTAGIS detections of lamprey released by Douglas PUD in the Wells Reservoir to Kristi Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG.

8. **Draft 2015 ASA Action Plan** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich recalled that the ASA Action Plan is a document that Douglas PUD drafts each year for Aquatic SWG review and approval. He said that the document contains a bullet list of activities under each ASA Management Plan that are scheduled to take place for that year. He said that the document is also an opportunity for the Aquatic SWG to consider how the proposed activities fit under the ASA and associated management plans, and to review if anything

is missing. Gingerich said that Douglas PUD will provide the draft 2015 ASA Action Plan to Kristi Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG for review. *(Note: Gingerich provided the draft plan to Geris following the meeting on February 11, 2015, which Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day.)*

9. **Draft 2014 ANSMP Annual Report** (Chas Kyger): Chas Kyger said that Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on February 11, 2015, notifying them that the draft 2014 ANSMP Annual Report is available for review. Kyger recalled that this report is one of six ASA Management Plan Annual Reports that need to be filed with FERC. He added that this report has an earlier deadline of April 1 (opposed to the May 31 deadline for the other annual reports). He said that the draft 2014 annual report is similar to last year's report as far as content, with updated 2014 data. Aquatic SWG members will submit edits and comments on the draft 2014 ANSMP Annual Report to 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.
  
10. **Draft Resident Fish Study Report** (Chas Kyger): Chas Kyger said that Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on February 11, 2015, notifying them that the draft 2014 Resident Fish Study Report is available for review. Kyger said that the report includes results from the Resident Fish Study in 2014. He added that Douglas PUD would like to submit this report to FERC along with the 2014 Resident Fish Annual Report in May 2015. Aquatic SWG members will submit edits and comments on the draft 2014 Resident Fish Study Report to Kyger prior to the next Aquatic SWG meeting on March 11, 2015, when Douglas PUD will be requesting approval of the draft report.

## VII. Next Meetings

1. **Upcoming meetings** (Mike Schiewe): Upcoming meetings are as follows: *March 11, 2015 (conference call); April 8, 2015 (TBD); and May 13, 2015 (TBD).*

## List of Attachments

Attachment A – List of Attendees

Attachment B – Revised Draft Wells White Sturgeon Stocking SOA



## Attachment A List of Attendees

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<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Organization</b>
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
Steve Lewis	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
RD Nelle	Technical Support	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Chad Jackson	Technical Support	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife