

Final Conference Call Minutes



Aquatic Settlement Work Group

To: Aquatic SWG Parties **Date:** June 13, 2013
From: Michael Schiewe, Chair (Anchor QEA, LLC)
Re: Final Minutes of the May 8, 2013 Aquatic SWG Conference Call

The Aquatic Settlement Work Group (SWG) met by conference call on Wednesday, May 8, 2013, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Attendees are listed in Attachment A of these meeting minutes.

I. Summary of Action Items

1. Pat Irle (Washington State Department of Ecology [Ecology]) will provide additional comments or approval of the Aquatic Settlement Work Group 2012 Annual Report to Mike Schiewe via email (*Approval was confirmed via email dated May 9, 2013*) (Item VI-2).
2. Irle will provide additional comments or approval of the Water Quality Management Plan 2013 Annual Report to Schiewe via email (*Approval was confirmed via email dated May 9, 2013*) (Item VI-3).
3. Andrew Gingerich will talk with Scott Kreiter (Douglas PUD Lands Department) about the method of application of aquatic herbicide in public swimming areas, and report back to Aquatic SWG representatives at the June 12, 2013 meeting (Item VI-8).
4. Steve Lewis will send the Twisp Weir Bull Trout Study deferral request letter to Emily Pizzichemi for distribution to the Aquatic SWG. Aquatic SWG representatives will submit comments and/or their formal approval to Gingerich no later than June 5, 2013 (*Lewis emailed the draft letter to the Aquatic SWG distribution on May 10, 2013*) (Item VI-9).
5. Chas Kyger will provide additional details on the Lamprey Passage and Enumeration Study, including release locations, during the June 5, 2013 meeting (Item VI-10).

II. Summary of Decisions

1. There were no Statements of Agreement (SOAs) approved at today's meeting.

III. Agreements

1. Aquatic SWG representatives present approved Douglas PUD's Aquatic Settlement Work Group 2012 Annual Report (*Bob Rose and Pat Irle provided email confirmation of approval on May 9, 2013*) (Item VI-2).
2. Aquatic SWG representatives present approved Douglas PUD's Aquatic Settlement Agreement Management Plan Annual Reports (six total) (*Bob Rose and Pat Irle provided email confirmation of approval on May 9, 2013*) (Item VI-3). Approval required the inclusion of a reference to the Wells Aquatic Settlement Agreement White Sturgeon Collection Plan SOA (approved March 20, 2013) in the prioritization list on page 11, Section 4.4.1, of the White Sturgeon Management Plan Report.
3. Aquatic SWG representatives present approved the 2013 Draft Quality Assurance Project Plan for Water Temperature and Total Dissolved Gas Monitoring (*Bob Rose provided email confirmation of approval on May 9, 2013*) (Item VI-4).

V. Reports Finalized

1. The Douglas PUD Aquatic Settlement Work Group 2012 Annual Report was approved by Aquatic SWG members present. Bob Rose and Pat Irle provided email approval on May 9, 2013.
2. The Douglas PUD Aquatic Settlement Agreement Management Plan Annual Reports were approved by Aquatic SWG representatives present, contingent on the addition of a reference to the previously approved SOA and Management Plan in the prioritization list for the White Sturgeon Management Plan. Bob Rose and Pat Irle provided email approval on May 9, 2013.
3. The Douglas PUD Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for Water Temperature and Total Dissolved Gas Monitoring was approved by Aquatic SWG members present.

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. The following revisions were requested:
 - Andrew Gingerich suggested that Agenda item 6 (Douglas PUD Advocating 110 Percent Standard in the Wells Pool) be removed from the agenda. He further explained that Douglas PUD's intention to meet the 110 percent standard for water quality is consistent with existing standards throughout water bodies within Washington State, with few exceptions (which include 7Q10 flow events and fish passage waivers). Douglas PUD's commitment to meeting the current standard is not a relevant discussion topic.

- Patrick Verhey (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife [WDFW]) requested an update on the upcoming ceremony highlighting the relicensing of Wells Dam by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Emily Pizzichemi reported that all comments and revisions received on the draft April 10, 2013 meeting minutes had been incorporated. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the April 10, 2013 meeting minutes, as revised.

2. DECISION: Aquatic Settlement Work Group 2012 Annual Report (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich asked the Aquatic SWG if there were any additional questions or suggested edits to the Douglas PUD Aquatic Settlement Work Group 2012 Annual Report. The final report was originally distributed by Kristi Geris to the Aquatic SWG on March 13, 2013, for a 30-day comment period. Gingerich said that having formal approval in the meeting minutes is beneficial for the consultation record. Pat Irle commented that she experienced difficulties downloading the document from the ftp site. Irle requested an extension for her approval and said that she would inform Mike Schiewe of her decision via email by May 9, 2013 (*approved via email dated May 9, 2013; Bob Rose also provided email confirmation of approval on May 9, 2013*). The Aquatic SWG representatives present approved Douglas PUD's Aquatic Settlement Work Group 2012 Annual Report.

3. DECISION: Aquatic Settlement Agreement Management Plan Annual Reports (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich asked the Aquatic SWG if there were any questions or suggested edits to the Douglas PUD Aquatic Settlement Management Plan Annual Reports. The draft Management Plan Reports were distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on April 12, 2013. Although the reports now exist as six separate regulatory documents, Gingerich said he hopes to file these "mini" Management Plan Reports combined with the comprehensive report for 2012. The reports are due to be filed by the end of May 2013, which will give Douglas PUD enough time to compile the drafts into PDFs, document the consultation record, and file the reports with FERC by the fall.

Patrick Verhey cited the comments that WDFW sent to Gingerich on May 6, 2013, via email, regarding the White Sturgeon Management Plan, Page 11 section 4.4.1: "WDFW recommends not prioritizing the list of juvenile fish source options that shall be incorporated into a Broodstock Collection Breeding Plan. The Aquatic SWG discussed this issue prior to Douglas PUD submitting the September 2011 White Sturgeon Broodstock Collection and Breeding Plan. As a result of discussions, a prioritized list was not included in that plan. WDFW recommends using similar language used in section 3.0 of the September 2011 Plan in regards to juvenile fish sources in the 2012 WSMP [White Sturgeon Management Plan] Annual Report or simply not prioritizing the list of juvenile fish source options" (from an email correspondence dated May 6, 2013).

Gingerich pointed out that the prioritized list and language contained therein are taken straight out of the White Sturgeon Management Plan (B-3 of the Aquatic Settlement

Agreement). In an email response to Verhey's comments, Gingerich stated that when Douglas PUD drafted the reports, they attempted to keep all of the language identical to the Management Plans, so if the prioritized list is removed, he thinks that a footnote addressing the revision or referring readers to the recently filed Broodstock and Breeding Plan would be necessary. The note would state that the original White Sturgeon Management Plan prioritized fish, but the workgroup now relies on the Broodstock and Breeding Plan so the original list is moot. Pat Irle asked if the Annual Reports change each year and Gingerich answered that only the information in the Objectives section changes, while the Management Plan language remains the same. Irle, Steve Lewis, and Bob Rose (*via email to Mike Schiewe dated May 9, 2013*) agreed that a footnote is suitable.

Regarding other management plans, Verhey commented that in the future, the Pacific Lamprey Management Plan should include a reference to the Section 18 prescriptions for up-stream passage performance. He said that, for the current year, the report is satisfactory. Lewis asked Gingerich if the bull trout letter to defer the Twisp Weir Study would be filed at the same time as the Management Plan Reports and Gingerich indicated that that the letter would be filed separately.

Irle stated that she experienced technical difficulties accessing the reports and wanted to look over the Water Quality Management Plan report again. She requested a deferral of her approval until May 9, 2013. She then emailed Schiewe on May 9, 2013, with her formal approval.

The Aquatic SWG representatives present approved Douglas PUD's Aquatic Settlement Agreement Management Plan Annual Reports with the addition of a reference to the previously approved SOA and Management Plan in the prioritization list for the White Sturgeon Management Plan.

- 4. DECISION: Quality Assurance Project Plan for Water Temperature and Total Dissolved Gas Monitoring** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich asked the Aquatic SWG if there were any questions or comments about the QAPP for Water Temperature and Total Dissolved Gas before Douglas PUD submits the document to FERC. The draft QAPP was distributed to the Aquatic SWG for comments and/or approval on April 16, 2013, by Kristi Geris. Gingerich said Douglas PUD and Ecology collaborated on the document. According to their 401 certification, they are required to provide Ecology and the Aquatic SWG with a document explaining their data collection protocol within the first year of the new license. Gingerich noted that even though the document is not due to be filed with FERC until October, he and Pat Irle are seeking approval sooner than that because they are implementing the plan and starting to collect data; therefore, it makes sense to have the document approved by all Aquatic SWG stakeholders and FERC prior to the October Deadline.

The Aquatic SWG representatives present approved Douglas PUD's QAPP for Water Temperature and Total Dissolved Gas Monitoring.

5. **Wells Hatchery Sturgeon Program Update and Fish Health Presentation** (Andrew Gingerich and Chad Jackson): Andrew Gingerich presented the Wells Hatchery Sturgeon Facility Update in PowerPoint format (Attachment B). The presentation was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Emily Pizzichemi on May 8, 2013, before the conference call start time. The facility was built in the 1960s and is currently undergoing modernization. Before demolition, the building contained troughs and three salmon stacks for incubating eggs that were not being used. This obsolete infrastructure has been replaced with twelve 5-foot by 3-foot tanks—six tanks for the larvae program and six tanks for the brood stock program. The tank lids are designed to provide a dark, quiet, and low-stress environment for the fish. The tanks are filled with untreated well water. External standpipes, which are easily accessible for frequent cleaning and draining, are an additional design feature that should make cleaning the tanks easier on hatchery staff. This water source is roughly 52 degrees Fahrenheit (° F) throughout the year; however, heaters can be used to raise the temperature to 58 to 60° F in the incubation tanks if required to increase growth rate to reach the release target of 250 millimeters (mm) in fork length (FL). Gingerich noted that they still expect wide variation in fork length, as per normal in sturgeon rearing. Gingerich stated that Douglas PUD plans to release up to 5,000 fish in 2014 following a year of rearing. As a buffer, the facility is equipped with enough water and space to rear 6,500 fish to 250 mm FL.

The brood stock and larval programs are contained within the same room and require methods of biosecurity, including bio-curtains and treatment protocols that separate the larvae from the fertilized gametes. Gingerich said that subsamples of larval fish will be collected and screened for pathogens before release. Chad Jackson, Jayson Wahls, and Bob Rogers of WDFW are coordinating the fish health plans and Jackson will present more on this topic in the subsequent meeting. Gingerich further explained that Douglas PUD has been working on this project since August 2012. The plans for the updated facility were developed by HDR. Following the initial design and a bid process, Williams Charles West of Kennewick, Washington, was awarded the contract. Construction began on April 1, 2013, and was completed on May 3, 2013, with the exception of the water heater installation. Douglas PUD expects the water heater to be installed and the facility to be ready to receive fish by June 1, 2013. As of now, Gingerich noted, hatchery staff has about 3 weeks to operate, clean, and prepare for the fish arrival.

Steve Lewis asked Gingerich if Douglas PUD has considered using technology such as “bioballs” to increase growth and development hatchery-reared sturgeon. According to one study, the material helped sturgeon conserve energy, thereby increasing growth and development and improving survival. Gingerich noted that because the “bioballs” have only been proven effective in the first few days following hatching, the technology

might be helpful for the brood stock program, but not for the larvae program. He suggested that numbers of fertilized eggs will not likely be a limiting factor, and therefore, the utility of the bioballs would only be for reducing hatchery related selection mortality.

Jackson then presented a PowerPoint entitled “2013 Douglas PUD White Sturgeon Broodstock and Larvae Pathogen Screening” (Attachment C), which was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Pizzichemi on May 8, 2013, before the conference call. As part of their brood stock health assessment, WDFW collects eggs, ovarian fluid, and milt from all brood stock spawned. These samples are sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Idaho Fish Health Center in Orofino, Idaho, for virological and bacteriological exams to test for infectious hematopoietic necrosis (IHN), infectious pancreatic necrosis (IPN), and viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS). Histological exams are also performed on tissue samples from pectoral fin clips taken from all brood stock (involved in spawning) to test for white sturgeon iridovirus (WSIV) and white sturgeon herpesvirus (WSHV). The anticipated number of tissue samples taken from brood stock is between 6 and 12 individuals.

Jackson went on to explain that the whole fish samples of larvae will undergo the same tests as the broodstock at the Idaho Fish Health Center. WDFW is still working out the final details for the larval sampling rate. Jackson explained that their main dilemma is whether to sample each pool separately or to sample each unique collection site/event separately. As of now, it is very likely that WDFW will just sample each pool. Larval sampling rate will range from 120 to 360 fish, with roughly 60 fish per pool or collection site, but Jackson noted that these numbers will be adjusted based on the catch rate and total number of larvae transported to the Wells Hatchery Facility. Sampling will begin one to two months after hatchery arrival to allow time for adequate pectoral fin growth and to allow time for the fish to exhibit any signs of disease. Jackson said that fish health screening is WDFW protocol for all hatchery programs. Fish diseases can be transmitted vertically from parent to egg/larvae. If not tested, juveniles could become stressed, exhibit clinical signs of disease, and can potentially be spread horizontally throughout the entire hatchery through slashing or accidental poor culture techniques (e.g., using same scrub brush in all tanks). Gingerich said that he hopes Douglas PUD and WDFW can work together to make modifications as needed.

- 6. Douglas PUD Advocating 110 Percent Standard in the Wells Pool** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich commented on this item earlier in the meeting when he removed it from the agenda.

- 7. Wells Dam Water Quality/Spill Season Update** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said that operations at Wells Dam have been uneventful. To date, Wells Dam experienced one 125 percent hourly exceedance in the Wells tailrace about 4 weeks

ago, but that was attributable to an operator scheduling issue, not an actual flow problem. Gingerich said that because of the exceedance, they conducted bio-monitoring at Rocky Reach. Gingerich said that as the weather warms the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers expects flows to increase. Specifically, Gingerich mentioned that the Okanogan and Methow rivers are expected to reach 30 to 35 kcfs by May 14, 2013. Gingerich said that Douglas PUD has been well within compliance standards for water quality over the past 4 weeks at Wells Dam. Gingerich has been providing weekly updates to Pat Irle. Gingerich agreed to update the whole Aquatic SWG when there are exceedences and biomonitoring.

- 8. Application of Aquatic Herbicide to Swimming Areas in Summer of 2012** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich explained that Douglas PUD applied to Ecology last year for a license to apply aquatic herbicides in selected public swimming areas. This license is valid for 3 years, after which time, Douglas PUD must reapply. According to their Recreation Plan, Douglas PUD is required to keep public swimming areas clean of macrophytes. Gingerich thinks that they could improve the outcome of the herbicide application from last year if they applied the herbicide earlier in the season. Due to the presence of salmonids in the area, July 15 has been deemed an acceptable start date for herbicide application, and Douglas PUD hopes to begin application at that time.

Gingerich said that Douglas PUD developed the plan to use herbicide on the aquatic vegetation after a meeting with Jenifer Parsons from Ecology early last year. Other vegetation removal options include manual pulling or cutting of the plants or installing substrate mats. Gingerich said he consulted with Patrick Verhey about using herbicides again this year, but he wanted to bring the decision to the attention of the Aquatic SWG. Gingerich further explained the application process: Douglas PUD hires a company to apply the herbicide from a boat, with a diver in the water applying the chemical directly onto the vegetation. He was not sure if the chemical came in a liquid or granular form. There were several questions and requests for more details and Gingerich agreed to speak with Scott Kreiter (Douglas PUD Lands Department) about the application procedure and to report back to the Aquatic SWG at the June 12, 2013 meeting. Steve Lewis asked about the possibility of using a pipe system coupled with booms to disperse herbicides, but he was uncertain about the pros and cons of this method. Lewis also wondered why July 15 was the earliest start date and Gingerich explained that Douglas PUD concluded that if the vegetation is younger, the herbicide will be more effective, but if USFWS has issues with bull trout or other species in the area, then those issues may trump the earlier timeline. Verhey thanked Gingerich and said that he appreciates Douglas PUD's willingness to balance the herbicide application timeline with the species and environmental impact considerations.

- 9. Bull Trout Letter Deferring Twisp Weir Study** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich and Steve Lewis are preparing a letter requesting a deferral of the Twisp Weir Bull Trout

Study. Gingerich said that Douglas PUD is waiting for a response to their request for rehearing from FERC. In the meantime, Gingerich said that Douglas PUD and USFWS must move on with implementation of the management plans. Lewis noted that he initially considered whether the letter should focus solely on the Twisp Weir or if it should include all of the off-site project facility weirs. Lewis and Gingerich agreed that the only potentially relevant operating facility offsite is the Twisp Weir, so the letter focuses only on that facility. The bull trout study at the facility is intended to meet the requirements set forth in the Bull Trout Management Plan. Gingerich affirmed that a comprehensive study will be performed at a later time. Lewis and Gingerich discussed whether the letter was ready to be distributed to the Aquatic SWG for their review. As an action item, Lewis agreed to send the Twisp Weir Bull Trout Study deferral letter to Emily Pizzichemi for distribution to the Aquatic SWG, and indicated that he and Gingerich would like comments and/or formal approval no later than the June 5, 2013 meeting, at which time it will be on the agenda as a decision item.

10. Lamprey Source for 2013 Passage and Enumeration Study (Chas Kyger): Chas Kyger offered a quick update on the Lamprey and Passage Enumeration Study. Kyger explained that they anticipate receiving 100 individuals from Bonneville Dam and an additional 25 individuals from Priest Rapids Dam. Right now they are focused on getting fish collected at Bonneville Dam and transported to Wells hatchery for tagging, and they are currently on track. Kyger said that they are consistently referring to the Study Plan to ensure that they meet the goals and objectives of the study. Kyger stated that they plan to spread the release of lamprey over four or five sessions, depending on the overall numbers, rather than releasing all the fish at once. Steve Lewis asked if there was agreement on release locations, somewhere neither too close to nor too far from the dam. He recalled that Bob Rose had suggested that lamprey be released closer to the mouth of the Entiat River to assess potential to enter that sub basin. Kyger responded that Douglas PUD intends to conduct releases as described in the study plan, which prescribes that fish be released 1.5 miles below the dam. Rose had previously noted that releasing the fish that close to the dam would not give the fish enough time to acclimate and behave normally and that releasing them closer to the mouth may minimize that possibility. Kyger said that they are still discussing the release location details and, as an action item, he will provide additional information during the June 5, 2013 meeting.

Notwithstanding Rose's concern, Gingerich expressed concern that if the fish were released too far down from Wells Dam that they may migrate into the Entiat and not interact with the dam at all. He clarified that the point of the study is to monitor how lamprey interact with the dam structure and to find out how modifications to the facility have improved enumeration and passage, and that releasing them further away from the dam may not meet these objectives. All Aquatic SWG representatives present

agreed to continue the discussion of the release location at the next Aquatic SWG meeting.

- 11. Wells Dam FERC License Celebration** (Andrew Gingerich and Patrick Verhey): Patrick Verhey indicated that Douglas PUD employees and stakeholders had received invitations to a ceremony at Wells Dam on Tuesday, May 14 at 1:30 PM to celebrate the Wells Dam FERC License renewal. There will be activities, presentations, and tours. Greg Mackey will give a presentation and tour of the hatchery modernization efforts. Verhey said that WDFW Director Phil Anderson cannot attend the event, but that Verhey will be attending in his stead. Andrew Gingerich said that invitations were distributed as postcards and he hopes people can fit the event into their schedules.

VI. Next Meetings

1. Upcoming meetings: *June 12, 2013 (conference call); July 10, 2013 (conference call); August 14, 2013 (conference call).*

List of Attachments

Attachment A – List of Attendees

Attachment B – Wells Hatchery Sturgeon Facility Update

Attachment C – 2013 Douglas PUD White Sturgeon Broodstock and Larvae Pathogen Screening

Attachment A List of Attendees

Name	Role	Organization
Mike Schiewe	SWG Chair	Anchor QEA, LLC
Emily Pizzichemi	Administration/Technical Support	Anchor QEA, LLC
Andrew Gingerich	SWG Technical Representative	Douglas PUD
Chas Kyger	Technical Support	Douglas PUD
Pat Irle	SWG Technical Representative	Washington State Department of Ecology
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