

Final Conference Call Minutes



Aquatic Settlement Work Group

To: Aquatic SWG Parties **Date:** March 14, 2014
From: Michael Schiewe, Chair (Anchor QEA, LLC)
Re: Final Minutes of the February 12, 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 11:00 a.m. Attendees are listed in Attachment A of these meeting minutes.

I. Summary of Action Items

1. Douglas PUD will obtain Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) comments and/or approval of the 2013 Gas Abatement Plan (GAP) and Total Dissolved Gas (TDG) Report, which will be provided to Kristi Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG (Item VI-3).
2. Aquatic SWG members will submit edits and comments on the draft 2013 Methow Basin Bull Trout Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) Tag Summary to Douglas PUD no later than Friday, February 21, 2014 (Item VI-6).
3. Douglas PUD will provide a draft 2014 Sturgeon Stocking Proposal for Aquatic SWG review no later than Friday, February 14, 2014 (Item VI-7).
4. Aquatic SWG members will submit edits and comments on the draft 2013 Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan Annual Report to Douglas PUD no later than Tuesday, March 11, 2014; Douglas PUD will be requesting approval of the draft report at the Aquatic SWG in-person meeting on March 12, 2014 (Item VI-8).
5. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will coordinate with the Yakama Nation (YN) and the Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT) to finalize a draft standardized White Sturgeon Fish Health Protocol to be presented at the Aquatic SWG in-person meeting on March 12, 2014 (Item VI-10).
6. **The Aquatic SWG meeting on March 12, 2014 will be held in person at Wells Dam, starting at approximately 10:45 a.m. (Item VII-1).**

II. Summary of Decisions

1. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2014 GAP and Bypass Operating Plan (BOP), as revised (Item VI-2).
2. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2013 GAP and TDG Report, contingent upon Ecology's approval of the report (Item VI-3).
3. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2014 Resident Fish Assemblage Study Plan, as revised (Item VI-4).
4. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2014 Aquatic SWG Action Plan (Item VI-5).

III. Agreements

1. The Aquatic SWG members present agreed to hold the Aquatic SWG meeting on March 12, 2014, in person at Wells Dam. A carpool to Wells Dam will depart from Douglas PUD Headquarters in East Wenatchee, Washington, at 9:30 a.m. (Item VII-1).

IV. Review Items

1. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on January 23, 2014, notifying them that the draft 2013 Methow Basin Bull Trout PIT Tag Summary is available for review, with comments due to Douglas PUD no later than Friday, February 21, 2014 (Item VI-6).
2. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on February 10, 2014, notifying them that the draft 2013 Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan Annual Report is out for a 30-day review period, with comments due to Douglas PUD no later than Tuesday, March 11, 2014 (Item VI-8).

V. Documents Finalized

1. The final 2014 Resident Fish Assemblage Study Plan was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on February 13, 2014 (Item VI-4).
2. The final 2014 GAP and BOP was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on February 18, 2014 (Item VI-2).
3. The final 2013 GAP and TDG Report was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on February 18, 2014 (Item VI-3).
4. The final 2014 Aquatic SWG Action Plan was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on February 18, 2014 (Item VI-5).

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:

- Douglas PUD added a brief update on the upcoming draft 2013 Wells Dam Water Temperature Report.
- WDFW added: 1) an update on the draft Standardized White Sturgeon Fish Health Protocol; and 2) a brief update on the Marion Drain sturgeon at Wells Hatchery.

The revised draft January 8, 2014 conference call minutes were reviewed. Kristi Geris said that all comments and revisions received from members of the Aquatic SWG were incorporated into the revised minutes. She said edits to the Sturgeon Path Forward discussion regarding the fish health testing for White Sturgeon Iridovirus (WSIV) were flagged because Andrew Gingerich had indicated he would like to clarify revisions made to the testing results. Gingerich said that, during the last conference call, he had mistakenly reported incorrect test results for the fish health testing of September 30, 2013, and that the correct results are now reflected in the revised minutes. He reviewed the revised results and noted that further clarification was also added to the test results of December 6, 2013. Aquatic SWG members present approved the January 8, 2014 conference call minutes, as revised.

5. **DECISION: 2014 GAP and BOP** (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 was out for a 30-day review period, with comments due to him no later than Friday, January 17, 2014. Gingerich said that comments were received from Ecology on January 13, 2014, which were incorporated into a revised draft that was redistributed on January 24, 2014. The revised draft was also reviewed and approved by the HCP Coordinating Committees. Gingerich said that Douglas PUD would like to obtain approval of the plan during today's meeting because the approved plan is due to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) by February 28, 2014. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2014 GAP and BOP, as revised, and the final plan (Attachment B) was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on February 18, 2014.
6. **DECISION: 2013 GAP and TDG Report** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich recalled that the 2013 GAP and TDG Report summarizes the 2013 bypass season, and he said that Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on January 9, 2014, notifying them that the draft 2013 GAP and TDG Report was available for a 30-day review period, with comments due to him no later than Friday, February 7, 2014. Gingerich said that no comments were received on the draft report, and added that Douglas PUD would like to obtain approval of the report during today's meeting because the approved report is also due to FERC by February 28, 2014. He noted that he also plans to contact Pat Irle to obtain comments and/or approval from Ecology on the report, which he will provide to Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2013 GAP and TDG Report, contingent upon Ecology's approval of the report. The

final 2013 GAP and TDG Report (Attachment C) was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on February 18, 2014.

7. **DECISION: 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 a 30-day review period, with comments due to Douglas PUD no later than January 23, 2014. He said that comments that were received during the review period were incorporated into a revised draft plan that was redistributed on January 31, 2014. He said this plan does not have a deadline to FERC, but approval of the plan is needed for implementation to occur. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2014 Resident Fish Assemblage Study Plan, as revised, and the final plan (Attachment D) was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on February 13, 2014.

8. **DECISION: 2014 Aquatic SWG Action Plan** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich recalled that the Aquatic SWG Action Plan is a not a FERC requirement, but it is a document that Douglas PUD develops each year that outlines what the Aquatic SWG plans to accomplish in a given year. He said that Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on January 2, 2014, notifying them that the draft 2014 Aquatic SWG Action Plan was out for a 30-day review period, with comments due to him no later than February 3, 2014. He said that no comments were received on the draft plan. Mike Schiewe added that the Action Plan is a living document, subject to change, as needed. He also added that the document does not preclude other activities not included in the plan from being carried out. The Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2014 Aquatic SWG Action Plan, and the final plan (Attachment E) was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on February 18, 2014.

9. **REMINDER: Bull Trout PIT Tag History Document** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said that Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on January 23, 2014, notifying them that the draft 2013 Methow Basin Bull Trout PIT Tag Summary is available for review, with comments due to Douglas PUD no later than February 21, 2014. Gingerich explained that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was interested in the report, which provides a summary of bull trout behavior around the Wells Reservoir, based on PIT tag detections. He said that only fish tagged by Douglas PUD monitoring and evaluation (M&E) crews/contractors in the Methow Basin or those that were observed at Wells Dam were included in the analysis. Aquatic SWG members agreed to submit edits and comments on the draft 2013 Methow Basin Bull Trout PIT Tag Summary to Douglas PUD no later than Friday, February 21, 2014.

10. **White Sturgeon Stocking Schedule** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich provided a summary of the latest fish sizes at Wells Hatchery, as examined on February 10, 2014:
 - Marion Drain-origin fish: 103 to 124 grams (about 255 to 270 millimeters [mm])

- Lake Roosevelt-origin fish: 44 to 109 grams (about 196 to 260 mm)

He noted the broader range in fish size among the Lake Roosevelt-origin fish; however, he also noted that the largest fish in both groups are about the same size.

Gingerich recalled that WDFW Fish Management, Health, and Hatchery staff met to discuss how to address WSIV positive, but asymptomatic Lake Roosevelt-origin larval white sturgeon held at Wells and Sherman Creek Hatcheries. He said that the consensus was to tag and hold asymptomatic fish to make sure they remain asymptomatic, and it was agreed to release those fish that do remain asymptomatic. Chad Jackson confirmed that this was the consensus, and added that WDFW would like to conduct additional histological testing at the time of tagging to determine if positive test results decline as fish grow, as the literature suggests.

Gingerich said that, assuming those fish are suitable for stocking, the next step is to develop a stocking plan. He said that Douglas PUD has had good discussions with the CCT and the YN, involving releasing 5,000 fish and releasing the larval-origin fish at a slightly larger fish size. He said that this plan meets the stocking target of 5,000 fish and also that releasing larval fish (with presumably greater genetic diversity) at a larger size may increase the likelihood of survival. Gingerich said that he would like to develop a draft Statement of Agreement (SOA) for stocking in 2014, which would include stocking a total of 5,000 fish and would also include details on target mean sizes at release. He noted that mean sizes that have been discussed to date are already close to the current size of the Marion Drain fish on-station at Wells Hatchery. He said that if the Aquatic SWG agrees in principle to this plan, Wells Hatchery Staff need to focus on diets and water temperatures that maintain the fish, and in some cases slow or increase growth rates. He said that Marion Drain fish can be stocked in April 2014, and then larval-origin fish can be held and stocked a little later in order to grow the fish to a slightly larger fish size. Gingerich noted that only size classes that have been stocked in other Mid-Columbia sturgeon programs will be used; therefore, both groups will have stocking sizes that are reasonable (i.e., not stocking fish of drastically different sizes). He said that he hopes to develop a draft SOA for stocking in 2014 for Douglas PUD Managers' approval, and then distribute the draft SOA to the Aquatic SWG for review. He recognized that this is not the perfect scenario, noting that the CCT's ultimate preference is to stock only larval-origin fish and not stock the full 5,000, and the YN's ultimate preference is to stock all fish at the same size. He said that, despite these differences, he thinks a stocking plan can be developed to which everyone can agree.

Jackson said that WDFW is interested in seeing the details, and then they can assess whether an SOA is needed. McLellan said that the CCT is also interested in seeing the details. He said, however, that they had envisioned an agreement less oriented to this year only, and more focused on the future prioritization of wild larvae and stocking numbers. Gingerich said that Douglas PUD is also interested in planning for future

stocking, but at this point in time, planning for 2014 is more urgent. He added that planning for additional years will take more time. He asked Jackson if WDFW prefers another route over developing an SOA. Jackson said that an SOA may not always be necessary. He added that he is not implying that one is not necessary in this case, but he agreed with McLellan that he wants to be sure meaningful agreements can still be reached for the remainder of this program. Gingerich said that at this point in time, he thinks an agreement can be reached for 2014, and he does not want planning for future years to prevent that.

Gingerich said that he will provide a draft 2014 Sturgeon Stocking Proposal for Aquatic SWG review by Friday, February 14, 2014. He said that once SWG members have the chance to review the details, they can determine if a discussion or call is needed.

11. **Draft 2013 Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan Annual Report** (Chas Kyger): Chas Kyger said that Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on February 10, 2014, notifying them that the draft 2013 Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan Annual Report is out for a 30-day review period, with comments due to Douglas PUD no later than Tuesday, March 11, 2014. He said that this report is one of six technical reports required by FERC for each of the Aquatic Settlement Agreement Management Plans. He said that the deadline for this report changed from May 31 to April 1, which is why review and approval of this report is needed before the other five reports. He said that the format of the report is similar to last year, where each objective is listed and actions towards reaching that objective follow. Andrew Gingerich further clarified that, as described in the original email, the annual reports use each of the respective management plans as a template, and the italic font following each objective is the reporting information that needs to be reviewed and approved. Aquatic SWG members agreed to submit edits and comments on the draft 2013 Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan Annual Report to Douglas PUD no later than Tuesday, March 11, 2014. Douglas PUD will be requesting approval of the draft report at the Aquatic SWG in-person meeting on March 12, 2014.
12. **Draft 2013 Wells Dam Water Temperature Report** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said that as required by the new FERC license, the first annual Wells Dam Water Temperature Report is due to FERC by April 30, 2014. He said Douglas PUD plans to distribute a draft by March 7, 2014, for a 30-day review period, and will request approval of the report at the Aquatic SWG meeting on April 9, 2014.
13. **Draft Standardized White Sturgeon Fish Health Protocol Update** (Chad Jackson): Chad Jackson said that a draft Standardized White Sturgeon Fish Health Protocol has been developed, which is now with John Kerwin for review. He said that following Kerwin's review, he plans to coordinate with the YN and the CCT to finalize the draft protocol to be presented at the Aquatic SWG in-person meeting on March 12, 2014. He said that the draft will be distributed to the Aquatic SWG prior to the March meeting. Jason

McLellan recommended also providing the draft to the Spokane Tribe for review because this protocol is intended to be standardized state-wide for all programs. Jackson agreed with this recommendation, and added that he also plans to provide the draft to the other Mid-Columbia PUDs for review and approval.

14. **Marion Drain Sturgeon at Wells Hatchery Update** (Chad Jackson): Chad Jackson said that culling of Marion Drain fish on-station at Wells Hatchery will start soon.

VII. Next Meetings

1. **Upcoming meetings** (Mike Schiewe): Mike Schiewe suggested holding the Aquatic SWG meeting on March 12, 2014, at Wells Dam to provide the opportunity for SWG members to visit the Sturgeon Rearing Facility. The Aquatic SWG members present agreed to hold the Aquatic SWG meeting on March 12, 2014, in person at Wells Dam. A carpool to Wells Dam will depart from Douglas PUD Headquarters in East Wenatchee, Washington, at 9:30 a.m.

Upcoming meetings are as follows: *March 12, 2014 (in-person); April 9, 2014 (conference call); May 14, 2014 (conference call).*

List of Attachments

Attachment A – List of Attendees

Attachment B – Final 2014 GAP and BOP

Attachment C – Final 2013 GAP and TDG Report

Attachment D – Final 2014 Resident Fish Assemblage Study Plan

Attachment E – Final 2014 Aquatic SWG Action Plan

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
Chad Jackson	Technical Support	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jason McLellan	SWG Technical Representative	Colville Confederated Tribes