

# Final Conference Call Minutes

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## *Aquatic Settlement Work Group*

**To:** Aquatic SWG Parties **Date:** February 11, 2015  
**From:** Michael Schiewe, Chair (Anchor QEA, LLC)  
**Re:** Final Minutes of the January 14, 2015 Aquatic SWG Conference Call

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The Aquatic Settlement Work Group (SWG) met by conference call on Wednesday, January 14, 2015, from 10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Attendees are listed in Attachment A of these meeting minutes.

## **I. Summary of Action Items**

1. Chad Jackson will ask Jeff Korth (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife [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). *(Note: Jackson provided an email to Geris on January 15, 2014, which Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day, indicating that at this time, Korth preferred not to share the questions WDFW submitted to Schreier and Anders; however, once responses have been received and evaluated, WDFW will distribute the questions and responses to the Aquatic SWG.)*
2. Aquatic SWG members will submit edits and comments on the draft 2014 Gas Abatement Plan (GAP)/Total Dissolved Gas (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).
3. Aquatic SWG members will submit edits and comments on the draft 2015 GAP and Bypass Operating Plan (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 (Item VI-6).

## **II. Summary of Decisions**

1. There were no decisions approved during today's conference call.

### III. Agreements

1. Aquatic SWG members present agreed to reduce the current numbers of direct gamete-origin white sturgeon on station at Wells Hatchery from 6,000 to 2,500, and the number of larval-origin white sturgeon on station from 7,000 to 5,000, with Douglas PUD offering the excess direct gamete-origin fish to the Yakama Nation (YN) and the excess larval-origin fish to the Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT; Item VI-4).

### IV. Review Items

1. 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 Andrew Gingerich by Monday, February 9, 2015 (Item VI-5).
2. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on January 9, 2015, notifying them that the draft 2015 GAP and BOP was available for review, with edits and comments due to Andrew Gingerich by Monday, February 9, 2015 (Item VI-6).

### V. Documents Finalized

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

### 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 December 10, 2014 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 December 10, 2014 conference call minutes, as revised.

2. **Action Items** (Mike Schiewe): Mike Schiewe reviewed action items from the last Aquatic SWG conference call on December 10, 2014, and follow-up discussions were as follows: *(Note: italicized item numbers below correspond to agenda items from the December 10, 2014 meeting.)*

- *Douglas PUD will notify the Aquatic SWG when the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) approves the draft TDG Reduction Alternatives Analysis; once approved, Kristi Geris will document approval of the analysis in the meeting minutes (Item VI-2).*

Andrew Gingerich said that he received an email from Charlie McKinney indicating that Ecology is in the process of reviewing this analysis. Ecology is

currently identifying a replacement for their Aquatic SWG technical representation, as Pat Irle has left the agency.

- *Aquatic SWG members will submit edits and comments on the revised draft Wells White Sturgeon Stocking Program Statement of Agreement (SOA) to Douglas PUD by Monday, January 5, 2015 (Item VI-3).*

This will be discussed during today's conference call.

- *Douglas PUD will discuss any recommended changes to the Wells White Sturgeon Stocking Program SOA with Aquatic SWG members prior to the next Aquatic SWG meeting (Item VI-3).*

This will be discussed during today's conference call.

- *Douglas PUD will provide an update on 2014 white sturgeon releases in the Wells Project to date to Kristi Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG (Item VI-4).*

Andrew Gingerich provided a passive integrated transponder (PIT)-tag detection summary for brood year 2013 fish released in the spring and summer of 2014 to Geris following the conference call on December 10, 2014, which she distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day.

- *Douglas PUD will provide RD Nelle of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) with the radio tag frequency information that they will use in the Well Dam 2015 Lamprey Passage and Enumeration Study (Item VI-5).*

Douglas PUD acknowledged that they will provide the information when available.

3. **DECISION: Wells White Sturgeon Stocking SOA** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said that WDFW has indicated that they are not ready to approve the draft Wells White Sturgeon Stocking Program SOA that was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on November 13, 2014. Chad Jackson added that, as reported during the last Aquatic SWG meeting on December 10, 2014, WDFW contacted geneticists Drs. Paul Anders (Cramer Fish Sciences/University of Idaho) and Andrea Drauch-Schreier (University of California, Davis) for technical advice. Jackson said that WDFW hopes to receive a response from Anders and Drauch-Schreier within a couple of weeks, and that WDFW anticipates having input on the SOA by the Aquatic SWG meeting on February 11, 2015. Gingerich said that because only three of six voting members are in attendance today, and one of those three is not ready to vote, approval of the draft Wells White Sturgeon Stocking Program SOA will be postponed another month. Mike Schiewe asked Jason McLellan if the CCT have any feedback at this time, and if they would be supportive of postponing this decision until the Aquatic SWG meeting on February 11, 2015. McLellan said that the CCT have no new comments at this time, and understands that a decision will have to wait. He added that the CCT would like a copy of the questions WDFW sent to Anders and Drauch-Schreier. Jackson agreed to ask Jeff Korth to send WDFW's questions to Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG. (*Note: Jackson provided an email to Geris on January 15, 2014, which Geris distributed to the*

*Aquatic SWG that same day, indicating that at this time, Korth preferred not to distribute the questions WDFW submitted to Drauch-Schreier and Anders until responses have been received and evaluated, at which time WDFW will distribute the questions and responses to the Aquatic SWG.)*

4. **Wells Hatchery Sturgeon Update** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said that while the Aquatic SWG is continuing to seek agreement on a Wells White Sturgeon Program stocking plan, space is becoming a limiting factor at Wells Hatchery. He said that he has already discussed options with Jason McLellan and Chad Jackson for reducing the number of fish on station. Gingerich said that at this time, mortality has been low with only 27 fish mortalities overall in the past couple of weeks, all of which came from the same tank of small larval-origin fish. He noted that the larval-origin fish have been graded into different-sized groups (tanks), and the losses were mostly smaller pinhead fish. He added that, as reported last month, fish health test results for both direct gamete-origin and larval-origin fish were negative for White Sturgeon Iridovirus. He said that on the flipside of low mortality and excellent fish health, there are now too many fish on station, with just under 13,000 fish total, including about 7,000 larval-origin and 6,000 direct gamete-origin fish. He noted that the program requires releasing only 5,000 fish, and suggested: 1) reducing the 6,000 Marion Drain direct gamete-origin fish to 2,500 because, based on discussions, no one is envisioning using more than 2,500 direct gamete-origin fish; and 2) reducing the 7,000 Lake Roosevelt (FDR) larval-origin fish to 5,000 fish. He further suggested returning the balance of direct gamete-origin and larval-origin fish to those programs that collected them (i.e., the YN and the CCT, respectively). He said that this approach is consistent with what the stakeholders discussed in the event that there were surplus fish on hand and is consistent with the previous year's approach when surplus direct-gamete origin fish were delivered to Chelan Falls and Marion Drain. He also noted that this year, he believes that Sherman Creek Hatchery is short on program. McLellan confirmed that Sherman Creek Hatchery only has about 2,900 of the target 4,000 larval-origin fish on station, so they are about 1,100 short. Gingerich said that this would be a good opportunity to help where it is needed. He said that Douglas PUD has discussed this option with WDFW and it is a viable option so long as the appropriate permitting is in place. Jackson further explained that, in order to authorize a transfer, WDFW would need to receive a formal request for the surplus fish and appropriate paperwork would need to be prepared by WDFW Hatchery Staff for review and approval by WDFW representatives. Gingerich indicated that he believed a formal request could easily be prepared to meet WDFW requirements in order to reduce fish numbers at Wells Hatchery. Jackson asked if this first needs to be discussed within the FDR Technical Forum. McLellan said that this was already discussed at the last Upper Columbia Technical Meeting in November 2014, and Region 1 Staff and the Spokane Tribes are all aware that this is the preferred option if there are surplus fish. He added that a formal request has not yet been submitted only because stakeholders were waiting for resolution on stocking numbers.

Aquatic SWG members present agreed to reduce the current numbers of direct gamete-origin white sturgeon on station at Well Hatchery from 6,000 to 2,500, and the number of larval-origin white sturgeon on station from 7,000 to 5,000, with Douglas PUD offering the excess direct gamete-origin fish to the YN and the excess larval-origin fish to the CCT.

Gingerich recalled that last year, marking started as early as March; he said that in the interest of final grow out, it would be helpful to have resolution on stocking numbers in the near future. Jackson agreed that it would be helpful to reach resolution soon; however, he noted that marking in March was specific to last year when direct gamete-origin fish were released at an earlier date than the larval-origin fish, and therefore, marked earlier. He added that he does not believe tagging in March will be an issue this year.

#### 2014 Wells Releases Movements Update

Gingerich said that on December 29, 2014, at 4:00 a.m., one more larval-origin white sturgeon (Wells April 2014 release) was detected at the PIT-tag array located about 14 river miles upstream in the Okanagan River, bringing the total detections up to 73 unique fish. McLellan noted that he recently spoke with Brian Miller (CCT) who operates the PIT-tag array in the Okanagan River, and he indicated that the antenna does not detect across the entire river; there is only about 30% detection efficiency for steelhead and there is no reason to believe higher detection efficiency for sturgeon at this location. McLellan said that based on this information there may be additional sturgeon in the area that have not been detected. Gingerich agreed and suggested further that another detection efficiency factor may be that detection is not consistent through the year, and especially in spring when flows increase and detection probability decreases further.

5. **Draft 2014 Gas Abatement Plan/Total Dissolved Gas 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 is available for review, with edits and comments due to him by Monday, February 9, 2015. Gingerich said that the report summarizes the 2014 monitoring season at the Wells Project, including water quality performance and passage for downstream migrating juvenile salmonids. He said that Douglas PUD must submit an approved final report to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) by Friday, February 27, 2015. He said that typically, Douglas PUD works closely with Pat Irle on this report; however, Irle's replacement is still pending. Gingerich said that Charlie McKinney assured Douglas PUD that Ecology will still review and provide comments on the draft report. Aquatic SWG members will submit edits and comments on the draft report to Gingerich by February 9, 2015.

Douglas PUD will request approval of the draft report during the Aquatic SWG meeting on February 11, 2015.

6. **Draft 2015 Gas Abatement Plan/Bypass Operating Plan** (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 and BOP is available for review, with edits and comments due to him by Monday, February 9, 2015. Gingerich said that the plan describes project operations, including projected concentration TDG and maintaining high passage efficiency. He said that, similar to the 2014 GAP/TDG Report, Douglas PUD must submit an approved final plan to FERC by Friday, February 27, 2015. He said that Douglas PUD typically works closely with Pat Irle on this plan, as well; but again, Irle's replacement is still pending, and Charlie McKinney assured Douglas PUD that Ecology will still review and provide comments on the draft plan. Mike Schiewe noted that the HCP Coordinating Committees are also reviewing and providing comments on this plan. Aquatic SWG members will submit edits and comments on the draft plan to Gingerich by February 9, 2015. Douglas PUD will request approval of the draft plan during the Aquatic SWG meeting on February 11, 2015.

## VII. Next Meetings

1. **Upcoming meetings** (Mike Schiewe): Mike Schiewe suggested in the near future holding an in-person meeting to formally introduce Dr. John Ferguson to the Aquatic SWG. Andrew Gingerich agreed, noting that Douglas PUD has traditionally invited Aquatic SWG members to meet in person to tour the fish ladders at Wells Dam while they are dewatered for winter maintenance. Schiewe suggested considering when to hold an in-person meeting at the next Aquatic SWG meeting.

Upcoming meetings are as follows: *February 11, 2015 (conference call); March 11, 2015 (TBD); and April 8, 2015 (TBD).*

## List of Attachments

Attachment A – List of Attendees

## 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
Chad Jackson	Technical Support	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife