

Final Conference Call Minutes



Aquatic Settlement Work Group

To: Aquatic SWG Parties **Date:** May 11, 2016
From: John Ferguson, Chair (Anchor QEA, LLC)
Re: Final Minutes of the April 13, 2016 Aquatic SWG Conference Call

The Aquatic Settlement Work Group (SWG) met by conference call on Wednesday, April 13, 2016, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Attendees are listed in Attachment A of these conference call minutes.

I. Summary of Action Items

Reports for approval during the Aquatic SWG meeting on May 11, 2016			
Document Title	Distribution Date	End of Comment Period	FERC Deadline
2015 Water Temperature Report	March 1, 2016	April 6, 2016	April 30, 2016
2015 Aquatic Settlement Agreement Report	March 18, 2016	May 4, 2016	May 31, 2016
2015 Bull Trout Management Plan and Incidental Take Report	March 31, 2016	May 6, 2016	May 31, 2016
2015 Pacific Lamprey Management Plan Report	April 4, 2016	May 4, 2016	May 31, 2016
2015 Resident Fish Management Plan Report	April 4, 2016	May 4, 2016	May 31, 2016
2015 White Sturgeon Management Plan Report	April 6, 2016	May 9, 2016	May 31, 2016
2015 Water Quality Management Plan Report	April 6, 2016	May 9, 2016	May 31, 2016

1. Bob Rose will discuss internally the Colville Confederated Tribes' (CCT's) proposed criteria for culling juvenile white sturgeon and will report back to the Aquatic SWG (Item VI-1).
2. Douglas PUD will consider requesting permission from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to combine all Aquatic Settlement Agreement (ASA) Annual Reports and deadlines into one submittal and will report back to the Aquatic SWG following completion of the 2015 ASA reporting season (May 31; Item VI-1).

3. Bob Rose and John Ferguson (and other Aquatic SWG members, if interested) will compile topics to discuss during a potential Regional Pacific Lamprey Workshop, for discussion during the Aquatic SWG meeting on May 11, 2016 (Item VI-5).
4. **The Aquatic SWG meeting on May 11, 2016, will be held by conference call (Item VII-1).**

II. Summary of Decisions

1. Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2015 Water Temperature Annual Report, with the Yakama Nation (YN) abstaining (Item VI-2).

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 March 18, 2016, notifying members that the Draft 2015 ASA Annual Report is available for a 45-day review period, with edits and comments due to Geris by Wednesday, May 4, 2016 (Item VI-3).
2. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on March 31, 2016, notifying members that the Draft 2015 Bull Trout Management Plan and Incidental Take Annual Report is available for review, with edits and comments due to Andrew Gingerich by close of business (COB) Friday, May 6, 2016 (Item VI-3).
3. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on April 4, 2016, notifying members that the Draft 2015 Pacific Lamprey Management Plan Annual Report is available for a 30-day review period, with edits and comments due to Chas Kyger by Wednesday, May 4, 2016 (Item VI-3).
4. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on April 4, 2016, notifying members that the Draft 2015 Resident Fish Management Plan Annual Report is available for a 30-day review period, with edits and comments due to Chas Kyger by Wednesday, May 4, 2016 (Item VI-3).
5. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on April 6, 2016, notifying members that the Draft 2015 Water Quality Management Plan Annual Report is available for review, with edits and comments due to Andrew Gingerich by Monday, May 9, 2016 (Item VI-3).
6. Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on April 6, 2016, notifying members that the Draft 2015 White Sturgeon Management Plan Annual Report is available for review, with edits and comments due to Andrew Gingerich by Monday, May 9, 2016 (Item VI-3).

V. Documents Finalized

1. The Final 2015 Water Temperature Annual Report was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on April 14, 2016, and the FERC submittal of the report was distributed on May 2, 2016 (Item VI-2).

VI. Summary of Discussion

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

(John Ferguson): John Ferguson welcomed the Aquatic SWG members (attendees are listed in Attachment A) and opened the meeting. Ferguson reviewed the agenda and asked for additions or other changes to the agenda. The following revisions were requested:

- Bob Rose added discussions on: 1) Pacific lamprey, including the Douglas PUD 2016 Lamprey Approach, Passage, and Enumeration Study, a potential Regional Pacific Lamprey Workshop, and translocation in the Wells Reservoir; and 2) recent YN Pacific lamprey translocation efforts.
- Andrew Gingerich added a brief update on the Draft 2015 White Sturgeon Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Report.

Ferguson noted that a change in U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Aquatic SWG Policy representation was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on March 31, 2016. Ferguson explained that Steve Lewis will replace Jessie Gonzales as the USFWS Aquatic SWG Policy Representative. Ferguson said Lewis will also remain the USFWS Aquatic SWG Technical Representative.

Ferguson also noted that the 2015 Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan Annual Report was filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on March 29, 2016, and distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on March 30, 2016.

The revised draft March 9, 2016, conference call minutes were reviewed. Kristi Geris said all comments and revisions received from members of the Aquatic SWG were incorporated into the revised minutes. She said she also added the Draft 2015 ASA Annual Report, Draft 2015 Water Quality Management Plan Annual Report, and Draft 2015 White Sturgeon Management Plan Annual Report under the review items. Aquatic SWG members present approved the March 9, 2016, conference call minutes, as revised.

Ferguson reviewed action items from the last Aquatic SWG meeting on March 9, 2016, and follow-up discussions were as follows (note: the following italicized item numbers correspond to agenda items from the March 9, 2016, meeting):

- *Anchor QEA, LLC, will incorporate edits, as discussed, to the Aquatic SWG Revised Draft February 10, 2016, Meeting Minutes, and will redistribute the minutes for final review, with approval via email due within 1 week of distribution (Item VI-1).*

Kristi Geris revised the minutes, as discussed, and distributed the draft for approval on Friday, March 11, 2016.

- *Bob Rose will discuss internally the CCT's proposed criteria for culling juvenile white sturgeon and will report back to the Aquatic SWG (Item VI-1).*

This action item will be carried forward.

- *Bob Rose will provide a report detailing the 2015 YN Lamprey Translocation Releases in the Methow Basin, including the 2016 release, monitoring and evaluation plans, and the YN Pacific Lamprey Supplementation and Monitoring Frameworks, once available, to Kristi Geris for distribution to the Aquatic SWG (Item VI-1).*

This will be discussed during today's conference call.

- *Aquatic SWG members will submit their approval, disapproval, or abstention on the Draft Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan Annual Report via email to Chas Kyger (with a copy to Kristi Geris) by Wednesday, March 16, 2016. The draft report for review was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on March 9, 2016, prior to the meeting (Item VI-6).*

Votes were submitted, and the report was approved on March 17, 2016.

- *Douglas PUD will consider requesting permission from FERC to combine all ASA Annual Reports and deadlines into one submittal, and will report back to the Aquatic SWG (Item VI-7).*

Andrew Gingerich recalled that a request letter was drafted last year; however, the Aquatic SWG agreed to postpone submitting the request until after 2015 ASA annual reporting is completed on May 31, 2016. This action item will be carried forward.

2. DECISION: Draft 2015 Water Temperature Annual Report (Andrew Gingerich):

Andrew Gingerich said Kristi Geris sent an email to the Aquatic SWG on March 1, 2016, notifying members that the Draft 2015 Douglas PUD Water Temperature Annual Report was available for review, with edits and comments due to Gingerich by COB Wednesday, April 6, 2016. Gingerich said Douglas PUD provided a slightly longer review period to provide Aquatic SWG members adequate time to review the draft report during this busy time of year (typically only 30 days). He said the Washington State Department of Ecology has typically provided the most substantive comments on this report; however, no comments from any members of the Aquatic SWG were received. He said this report is due to FERC at the end of April each year.

Aquatic SWG members present approved the 2015 Water Temperature Annual Report, with the YN abstaining. The Final 2015 Water Temperature Annual Report was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on April 14, 2016, and the FERC submittal of the report was distributed on May 2, 2016.

3. Draft Aquatic SWG Reports for Review (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said a series of annual reports are available for Aquatic SWG review, per Douglas PUD's FERC License requirements. Gingerich recalled that the 2015 Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan Annual Report has already been approved by the Aquatic SWG, finalized, and submitted to FERC. He said a table outlining reports currently available for review was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on April 6, 2016. Gingerich said he appreciates everyone's time and effort to review these documents. John Ferguson noted that Douglas PUD will request approval of the remaining draft reports during the Aquatic SWG meeting on May 11, 2016.

Draft 2015 Bull Trout Management Plan and Incidental Take Annual Report

Gingerich said the Bull Trout Management Plan and Incidental Take Annual Report is filed with USFWS on April 15 each year, per Douglas PUD's incidental take reporting requirements. He said the report is then due to FERC on May 31. He said the Aquatic SWG has the option to submit comments by April 15, 2016, for USFWS review, or the official review period ends May 6, 2016.

Draft 2015 Pacific Lamprey, Resident Fish, Water Quality, and White Sturgeon Management Plan Annual Reports

Gingerich said the remaining draft management plan annual reports are also available for review. He said the reports use the respective management plans as templates, and a summary is provided under each objective outlining what was accomplished toward the objective that year. He recommended focusing review on the summary portions that discuss accomplishments in 2015.

Bob Rose expressed concern about a statement in the Draft 2015 Pacific Lamprey Management Plan Annual Report, which indicates that, 'Douglas PUD will continue to monitor impacts, if any.' He said this statement seems odd because some would say Wells Dam is one of the worst passage locations on the Columbia River for Pacific lamprey. He said it is more than apparent there is a problem. He said, for example, consider the drastic decrease in Pacific lamprey counts at Rocky Reach Dam compared to Wells Dam. He asked why Douglas PUD does not state the obvious—most fish are not detected at Wells Dam that are detected at Rocky Reach Dam. He said based on this fact, known since 2006, it is more than apparent there is a problem and something needs to be done about it. He said the 2015 Pacific Lamprey Management Plan Annual Report should be more direct instead of carrying forward old statements. He said he gets frustrated with the PUDs when they use careful language to hide the problem. He said it is the responsibility of the Douglas PUD and the Aquatic SWG to address these problems at Wells Dam, and he suggested calling it like it is. Ferguson asked if Rose plans to provide these comments to Douglas PUD, and Rose said he is not. Rose added that he believes Douglas PUD will do the right thing. He added that he is also frustrated that the Douglas PUD 2016 Lamprey Approach, Passage, and Enumeration Study Plan is not about addressing passage, but rather about whether to conduct a study, and suggested stopping sidestepping the problem. He said he is not requesting changes to the Draft 2015 Pacific Lamprey Management Plan Annual Report, but hopes to continue these discussions.

Patrick Verhey agreed with Rose, but indicated that the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will submit comments on the draft report. Verhey suggested, for example, balancing out Section 2.4 on page 7 when discussing distance from the ocean and bio-

expenditures. In this section, Douglas PUD explains why passage may be so poor, which may be true, but the statement should also state there may be a passage issue at the dam.

Ferguson noted that historical data during the past three years (2013 to 2015) indicate that approximately 7,000 Pacific lamprey were counted at Rocky Reach Dam, and only 28 were counted at Wells Dam. Rose said that is the situation, and asked why this is not stated up front.

Gingerich said he encourages Aquatic SWG members to provide comments. He said Douglas PUD has no objections to stating facts, as far as counts, and agreed it is good to have balance. He also suggested, however, remaining clear about the ability to enumerate at Wells Dam, which he said is not intended to mask low counts during the last few years, and being clear that the mechanism behind apparent low "conversion rates" is poorly understood. Therefore, low counts at Wells may not be as simple as "Project Effects." He said recent data can be incorporated; however, he also suggested keeping language consistent with the Pacific Lamprey Management Plan.

Verhey said when WDFW submits comments, the intention is not to put a black mark against Douglas PUD by FERC; rather, it is meant to benefit Douglas PUD in that they are receiving and addressing consultation. Gingerich agreed, noting that comments received are included in the consultation record, along with follow-up correspondence describing how those comments were addressed. He said, historically, Douglas PUD has been contacted by FERC when the consultation record is not clear.

Chas Kyger recognized that using the management plans as templates for annual reports where the process is essentially the same every year (e.g., aquatic nuisance species and water quality) may work better than for annual reports where the activities can change drastically (e.g., Pacific lamprey and white sturgeon). He said, if FERC approves combining all the annual reports, this may be a good opportunity to revamp the template and language. He said some of these comments are just symptoms of using the management plans as templates.

Rose said he appreciates the consideration, and added that it seems these revisions would also benefit Douglas PUD. He said if the reports reflect the real issues, it shows Douglas PUD has much more work to do.

Rose said, regarding the Draft 2015 White Sturgeon Management Plan Annual Report, the report seems to be quite text heavy, and he suggested inserting a summary table to supplement the narrative that shows what actions have been taken. Gingerich asked where Rose would like this table inserted, and Rose suggested wherever Douglas PUD feels appropriate. Ferguson asked if a similar table should be inserted in the other management plan annual reports. Gingerich suggested inserting a similar table only in the white sturgeon, bull trout, and Pacific

lamprey reports, because they are heavier on actions and would benefit most with a summary table.

Draft 2015 ASA Annual Report

Gingerich said the 2015 ASA Annual Report is the larger, more comprehensive report that Anchor QEA drafts. He said the report packages meeting minutes and summaries for each resource area. He said this report is due to FERC by May 31, 2016.

4. **Wells White Sturgeon Tagging and Rearing Update** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said surplus fish on station at Wells Hatchery were transported to Canadian fish managers, which greatly improved fish growth for those remaining on station during the last few weeks. He said from March 7 to 28, 2016, average weight gain was 27%, and average fish size on station is currently about 85 to 86 grams per fish. He said this includes two tanks of small fish. He added that the tanks with small fish have had the best growth, increasing in mass by about 50 to 54%. He said those fish are now about 10 to 18 grams per fish. He said reducing density really helped and suggested next year, transporting surplus fish earlier, if needed. He said there are currently about 5,200 fish on station, and Douglas PUD plans to stock 5,000 fish on June 1 and 2, 2016. He said passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagging will occur at the end of May, and weights and lengths will be obtained just prior to release.

Chad Jackson reminded the Aquatic SWG that one more round of disease sampling is required prior to release, which is typically done around the same time as tagging. He said a 2- to 4-week window is typically needed to send and receive results back from the lab. Gingerich said this is a good point, and noted that the tagging dates may need adjusting to accommodate fish health testing. Jackson also noted that the WDFW Eastern Washington Pathologist is leaving the agency, so fish health testing will need to be completed by a WDFW Western Washington Pathologist. He said Wells Hatchery staff will also likely need to conduct the tissue sampling. Gingerich said this should be no problem.

Bob Rose requested clarification about the implementation schedule for white sturgeon in the Wells Reservoir. Gingerich explained that Year 1 was the requirement to develop a plan; Year 2 was the first year of collection; and Year 3 was the first year of plants. He further explained that the last year of the first 4 years of stocking will be next year's plants (2017 or brood year 2016). He said this spring/summer 2016, will be the last year of the 4-year plan to collect fish. He said, in August 2016, the Aquatic SWG will need to update the Broodstock and Breeding Plan and discuss how to move forward in Years 5 to 10, in terms of collection and stocking. Rose noted that there has been updates to the population growth model spreadsheet used to develop the next 5 years of stocking in the Rocky Reach and Priest Rapids project areas, and suggested those models may be useful to include in future discussions regarding the future of the Wells Reservoir. Jackson agreed. John Ferguson noted that Douglas PUD's FERC license requires

releasing 15,000 fish during the next 5 years, and asked if Douglas PUD should start evaluating this (i.e., the growth model) now. Jackson said there is plenty of time still to consider this and suggested waiting until next year's fish are in the hatchery.

Ferguson asked, regarding transportation next year, if the USFWS Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) permit needs to be obtained annually, or does this year's CITES permit cover next year. Gingerich said he thinks he recalls a goal to establish a master file, which would expedite the process in the future. Jackson said he would need to double check, but he recalls that a CITES permit covers only one year. He added that he is not 100% certain that Canada would want additional surplus, if it exists. He said future surplus fish may go to the CCT. He said, regardless, if this situation occurs again next year, the burden would be on WDFW, not Douglas PUD.

Ferguson asked about the target fish size at release. Gingerich said the goal is the same as the first year's wild larval release, which was about 2 fish per pound (about 230 grams per fish). He recalled experiencing trouble last year achieving that target size, and noted that it was not about husbandry; rather, too many fish were kept on station for too long, while the Aquatic SWG discussed details for planting. He said this year, however, he believes fish growth is on pace to meet the target release size.

5. Pacific Lamprey (Bob Rose):

Douglas PUD 2016 Lamprey Approach, Passage, and Enumeration Study

Bob Rose said this study plan does not propose to tag many sample fish, and suggested obtaining more. He said he understands Douglas PUD is concerned about taking too many fish out of the Priest Rapids Reservoir, but Rose suggested taking even more fish. He said, in his opinion, this would be better than taking less than 1,000 fish. He suggested taking as many fish as possible to increase the sample size of the study. He said there are some aspects of the study plan the YN can accept; however, he wants to see more study fish. He also suggested coordinating an approach with Chelan PUD. He said more receivers are needed to increase detection of the sample fish. He said he believes Chelan PUD is already doing this, per their FERC License. He said there is a critical uncertainty about what is occurring in the Priest Rapids and Rocky Reach reservoirs, which also needs to be addressed in the Wells Reservoir. He said preliminary data indicate there may be good movement throughout the Wells Reservoir; however, more study fish are needed to test this. He said he believes this information can be pieced together, and he would like to work toward that in 2016 and future years.

Chas Kyger agreed that sample size is an issue, and said Douglas PUD wants to increase the sample size used in the study as much as possible. However, he said the concern based on what was experienced in the past. He recalled, in 2013, there were issues obtaining study fish because a lot of agencies wanted fish, including fish in the lower river and at Priest Rapids Dam.

He added that Douglas PUD is trying to coordinate with Grant and Chelan PUDs to incorporate their study fish into Douglas PUD's analysis. He said Douglas PUD is not trying to minimize sample size. He said Douglas PUD is considering the feasibility of obtaining fish without experiencing the same issues as in the past. He agreed regional coordination is a good idea.

Rose said he believes this year tribal allocation will increase, and the YN are more than happy to commit to giving Douglas PUD another 100 fish. He said those fish can be PIT-tagged and evaluated alongside Priest Rapids fish to detect behavioral differences between lower and upper river fish and also increase sample size.

Translocation in the Wells Reservoir

Rose said downstream, there are ongoing discussions about a long-term translocation program, and considering the low passage rates at Wells Dam, Rose suggested Douglas PUD participate in this program as well. Patrick Verhey agreed with Rose's suggestion, and Kyger said Douglas PUD is interested in participating in these discussions.

Regional Pacific Lamprey Workshop

Rose said he, John Ferguson, and Tracy Hillman (Rocky Reach Fish Forum and Priest Rapids Fish Forum Facilitator) discussed convening a workshop with Douglas, Grant, and Chelan PUDs to discuss a path forward. Rose suggested the goal of the workshop would be to address what can be interpreted at this time regarding passage, and identify obvious data gaps and plan how to approach the subject in 2016 and beyond. Verhey agreed a workshop is a good idea. Ferguson asked about agenda details, noting that other topics could include discussing biology of the species, technology, population status, demographics, and other supplemental information beyond passage topics. He also asked if discussions should only include adults or if discussions regarding juveniles should be added. Rose suggested discussing only adults, and said he and Ferguson will compile topics to discuss during a potential Regional Pacific Lamprey Workshop, for discussion during the Aquatic SWG meeting on May 11, 2016. Rose also suggested that other Aquatic SWG members participate in this discussion, if interested.

- 6. Recent YN Pacific Lamprey Translocation Efforts (Bob Rose):** Bob Rose said the Draft YN Pacific Lamprey Supplementation and Monitoring Frameworks are almost ready for Aquatic SWG review. He explained that the YN would like to increase the number of juveniles in rivers; however, the Bonneville Power Administration is first requiring the YN to complete the Independent Scientific Review Panel and National Environmental Protection Act processes.

John Ferguson asked if the YN have translocation plans for 2016. Rose said, to date, the YN have translocated 240 fish into the Wenatchee River, upstream and downstream of Tumwater Dam. He said this was all that was planned for the Upper Columbia Basin in 2016. He added that the idea was to have the YN address the Upper Columbia Basin and the PUDs address the

Mid-Columbia Basin. Ferguson asked if the releases near Tumwater Dam were intended to evaluate the passage issues at the dam and if they were associated with a specific study design. Rose said they were not, and added that the releases were just for seeding.

- 7. Draft 2015 White Sturgeon M&E Report** (Andrew Gingerich): Andrew Gingerich said a Draft 2015 White Sturgeon M&E Report summarizing M&E efforts from 2015 is ready for review and has been for a few months. He said, however, he has not yet distributed it because this report has no hard deadlines, and there are several documents out for review which have deadlines. He suggested distributing the draft report for review sometime in May 2016. John Ferguson and the Aquatic SWG agreed postponing review of the draft report made sense.

VII. Next Meetings

- 1. Upcoming meetings** (John Ferguson): The Aquatic SWG meeting on May 11, 2016, will be held by conference call.

Upcoming meetings are as follows: May 11, 2016 (conference call); June 8, 2016 (in-person); and July 13, 2016 (TBD).

List of Attachments

Attachment A – List of Attendees

Attachment A List of Attendees

Name	Role	Organization
John Ferguson	Aquatic SWG Chairman	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
Patrick Verhey	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Chad Jackson	Technical Support	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Bob Rose	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	Yakama Nation