



Conference Call Minutes

Aquatic Settlement Work Group

To: Aquatic SWG Parties

Date: March 12, 2020

From: John Ferguson, Chair (Anchor QEA, LLC)

Re: Final Minutes of the February 12, 2020 Aquatic SWG Conference Call

The Aquatic Settlement Work Group (SWG) met by conference call on Wednesday, February 12, 2020, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Attendees are listed in Attachment A of these conference call minutes.

I. Summary of Action Items

1. Douglas PUD will update the *2020 Aquatic Settlement Agreement and Workgroup Action Plan* to include continued discussion of adult Pacific Lamprey upstream passage study designs and juvenile Pacific Lamprey downstream passage study designs throughout 2020 (Item VI-4).
2. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will submit a vote via email on the *2020 Aquatic Settlement Agreement and Workgroup Action Plan* to Douglas PUD by Friday, February 21, 2020 (Item VI-4). *(Note: Steve Lewis approved the action plan via email on February 21, 2020, contingent that the edits discussed during the conference call on February 12, 2020 were incorporated into the final plan.)*
3. Douglas PUD will verify the fish rescue numbers reported in the Wells Dam west fish ladder fish salvage memorandum and redistribute a revised memorandum (Item VI-5). *(Note: a corrected memorandum was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on February 25, 2020.)*
4. Douglas PUD will inquire internally about a possible tour of the Wells Dam west fish ladder during the 2019/2020 winter maintenance outage (Item VI-5). *(Note: Andrew Gingerich contacted Steve Lewis on February 18, 2020, with possible dates to tour the west fish ladder and Lewis responded on February 21, 2020, thanking Gingerich for the effort; however, ultimately declining a tour due to scheduling conflicts.)*
5. Douglas PUD and Anchor QEA, LLC (Anchor QEA) will distribute logistics information for the Aquatic SWG in-person meeting on March 11, 2020 (Item VI-7). *(Note: this information was included in the Aquatic SWG March 11, 2020 meeting agenda, which was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on March 2, 2020.)*

6. The Aquatic SWG meeting on March 11, 2020, will be held in-person at Wells Fish Hatchery in Azwell, Washington (Item VII-1).

II. Summary of Decisions

1. Aquatic SWG members present approved the *Wells Hydroelectric Project Total Dissolved Gas Abatement Plan 2019 Annual Report* (Item VI-2). (Note: the Yakama Nation [YN] approved the report via email on January 9, 2020.)
2. Aquatic SWG members present approved the *2020 Total Dissolved Gas Abatement Plan* (and appended *Wells Bypass Operating Plan*) (Item VI-3). (Note: the YN approved the report via email on January 21, 2020.)
3. Aquatic SWG members present approved the *2020 Aquatic Settlement Agreement and Workgroup Action Plan*, as revised (Item VI-4). (Note: USFWS abstained during the conference call on February 12, 2020, and then approved the plan via email on February 21, 2020, contingent that the edits discussed during the conference call on February 12, 2020 were incorporated into the final plan.)

III. Agreements

1. Aquatic SWG members present agreed to release Wells Fish Hatchery brood year (BY) 2019 White Sturgeon in May/June 2020 that weigh less than 200 grams as part of the stocking program, so long as: 1) the majority of BY2019 White Sturgeon released weigh more than 200 grams; and 2) any BY2019 White Sturgeon weighing less than 200 grams are large enough to receive a passive integrated transponder (PIT) tag (Item VI-6).

IV. Review Items

1. The draft *White Sturgeon Supplementation and Management Plan Implementation in the Wells Reservoir, 2019* (2019 White Sturgeon Monitoring and Evaluation [M&E] Report) was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on February 26, 2020, and is available for review with edits and comments due to Andrew Gingerich by Tuesday, March 31, 2020; Douglas PUD will request approval of the report during the Aquatic SWG conference call on April 8, 2020 (Item VI-7).

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 (John Ferguson):

John Ferguson welcomed the Aquatic SWG members (attendees are listed in Attachment A). Ferguson asked for any additions or changes to the agenda. Andrew Gingerich said a presentation on White Sturgeon M&E is not quite ready, but he will provide a brief overview of a draft report that will soon be available for review. *(Note: a draft 2019 White Sturgeon M&E Report for review was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on February 26, 2020 [see Section IV].)*

The revised draft January 8, 2020 conference call minutes were reviewed. Geris said all edits and comments received from members of the Aquatic SWG were incorporated into the revised minutes. Aquatic SWG members present approved the January 8, 2020 conference call minutes, as revised.

Action items from the Aquatic SWG conference call on January 8, 2020, are as follows (note: the following italicized item numbers correspond to agenda items from the January 8, 2020 conference call):

- *Steve Lewis will discuss internally with USFWS the appropriate fish size threshold for identifying Bull Trout passing Wells Dam fish ladder count windows as subadults (Item VI-1).*
Lewis said USFWS considers the size range for subadults to be from 150 to 300 millimeters. Andrew Gingerich recalled that the *Bull Trout Management Plan* stipulates a fish size threshold for identifying adults or subadults in the Wells Project. He said this is an imperfect science, but Douglas PUD would like to defer to the management plan. John Ferguson asked if USFWS is requesting an action, such as asking Douglas PUD to check the measurement markings on the Wells Dam count windows. Lewis said no action is needed so long as the fishway markings match the *Bull Trout Management Plan*.
- *Douglas PUD will coordinate with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) regarding a tour of the Wells Dam Fish Hatchery this spring 2020 (Item VI-1).*
This will be discussed during today's conference call.
- *Douglas PUD will distribute the Wells Dam fish salvage memorandum to the Aquatic SWG that Tom Kahler (Douglas PUD Wells Habitat Conservation Plan [HCP] Coordinating Committee Representative) provides annually to the Wells HCP Coordinating Committee (Item VII-2).*

- Andrew Gingerich provided fish salvage numbers to Kristi Geris on January 14, 2020, which Geris distributed to the Aquatic SWG that same day, and the fish salvage memorandum was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on January 17, 2020.
- *Douglas PUD will attempt to collect genetic samples from any juvenile and adult Pacific Lamprey encountered during the fish rescue conducted at Wells Dam associated with the 2019/2020 fishway maintenance outage (Item VII-2).*
Genetic samples were collected per the YN's request, as distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on January 14, 2020.
 - *Douglas PUD will delete language from Section 4 of the juvenile Pacific Lamprey literature review that was copied from the Pacific Lamprey Management Plan about the current state of tag technology because this language is dated and not relevant to the document library (Item VII-9).*
Chas Kyger deleted this language following the conference call on January 8, 2020, and the updated literature review is available for download from the Aquatic SWG Extranet Site.

2. DECISION: Wells Hydroelectric Project Total Dissolved Gas Abatement Plan 2019 Annual Report (Andrew Gingerich):

Andrew Gingerich said the final approved *Wells Hydroelectric Project Total Dissolved Gas Abatement Plan 2019 Annual Report* is due to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) by February 28, 2020. He said the draft report was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on January 8, 2020. Gingerich recalled that 2019 was a quiet year in terms of total dissolved gas (TDG) compliance, and he said the 2019 report is a straightforward document. He said the YN already approved the report via email on January 9, 2020.

Aquatic SWG members present approved the *Wells Hydroelectric Project Total Dissolved Gas Abatement Plan 2019 Annual Report*. (Note: the YN approved the report via email on January 9, 2020.)

3. DECISION: 2020 Gas Abatement Plan and Bypass Operating Plan (Andrew Gingerich):

Andrew Gingerich said the draft *2020 Total Dissolved Gas Abatement Plan* (and appended *Wells Bypass Operating Plan*) was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on January 20, 2020. Gingerich said Douglas PUD updates this plan each year and most years there are only minor revisions. He said the Gas Abatement Plan describes how the Wells Project will be operated to meet TDG criteria in the State of Washington and provide safe, effective passage of anadromous fish. He said the Bypass Operating Plan is not required under the *Aquatic Settlement Agreement*; rather, Douglas PUD's Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification requires that the Bypass Operating Plan be vetted with the Wells

HCP Coordinating Committee together with the Gas Abatement Plan. He said since Douglas PUD's FERC license order was issued in 2012, Douglas PUD and the Aquatic SWG have drafted and reviewed these documents in collaboration with the Wells HCP Coordinating Committee. He said this year, the plan includes more substantial changes related to the TDG rule change that has been discussed within the Aquatic SWG over the past several months. He said the plan was drafted with the expectation that the TDG rule within the Washington Administrative Code will change starting April 1, 2020, and will be in place through the balance of the 2020 bypass season ending in August 2020. He said this document has been available for review and Douglas PUD has already received approval via email from the YN on January 21, 2020. He said this document is also due to FERC by February 28, 2020, and is also currently under review with the Wells HCP Coordinating Committee. He said no comments were received on the plan from the Aquatic SWG nor the Wells HCP Coordinating Committee. Breean Zimmerman said Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) reviewed the plan, and the plan is consistent with implementation of the new TDG rule change.

Aquatic SWG members present approved the *2020 Total Dissolved Gas Abatement Plan* (and appended *Wells Bypass Operating Plan*). (Note: the YN approved the report via email on January 21, 2020.)

John Ferguson said to keep in mind that Ecology submitted the proposed TDG rule change to the Environmental Protection Agency (on December 30, 2019), and the agency has 60 days to approve and 90 days to deny the package; however, for FERC filing purposes and to meet the filing deadline, the Douglas PUD Gas Abatement Plan and Bypass Operating Plan are moving forward.

4. DECISION: 2020 Action Plan (Andrew Gingerich):

Andrew Gingerich said the draft *2020 Aquatic Settlement Agreement and Workgroup Action Plan* was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on January 16, 2020. Gingerich said this document is not required by FERC; rather, it is a resource Douglas PUD develops and uses to help with planning, contracting, preparing materials, and scheduling to meet various actions as summarized under each Aquatic Settlement Agreement management plan. He said no comments have been received on the plan and Douglas PUD is requesting approval of the plan, acknowledging that it is a living document that can be updated, as needed.

Steve Lewis asked if there are any changes to the plan from 2019, and also requested additional time for review before submitting a vote. Gingerich said there is no firm deadline to approve this document, so additional time for review is not a problem. He said in terms of changes, under the *White Sturgeon Management Plan*, the current Statement of Agreement

(SOA) stipulates a 325-fish program target; however, in 2020, more fish will be planted to make up for the shortfall in program in 2019. He said the action plan includes details like this as a reminder about small changes to expect under each management plan. He said under the *Pacific Lamprey Management Plan*, actions are similar to last year, including making more progress on closing gaps in the fishway diffuser gratings, per an Aquatic SWG request, and proceeding with the recent SOA involving translocation. He said Bull Trout activities are minimal in 2020 and include gearing up for an acoustic telemetry study in 2021 and Douglas PUD's continued commitment to participate in regional coordination as it takes place.

Ralph Lampman suggested adding an item under the *Pacific Lamprey Management Plan* to start planning for an adult passage study. John Ferguson asked if adding a discussion of potential study designs throughout 2020 will work and Lampman said yes. Chas Kyger said this can be added. Lewis asked about planning for a juvenile downstream study and Gingerich said this is something the Aquatic SWG has been discussing over the past several months. Lampman suggested adding this to the action plan, as well. Gingerich said he thought this item was already included in the Action Plan but upon review noted the oversight and suggested that it could be added. Douglas PUD will update the *2020 Aquatic Settlement Agreement and Workgroup Action Plan* to include continued discussion of adult Pacific Lamprey upstream passage study designs and juvenile Pacific Lamprey downstream passage study designs throughout 2020.

Aquatic SWG members present approved the *2020 Aquatic Settlement Agreement and Workgroup Action Plan*, as revised. (Note: USFWS abstained during the conference call on February 12, 2020, and then approved the plan via email on February 21, 2020, contingent that the edits discussed during the conference call on February 12, 2020 were incorporated into the final plan.)

Lewis said he will submit a vote via email on the *2020 Aquatic Settlement Agreement and Workgroup Action Plan* to Douglas PUD by Friday, February 21, 2020. (Note: Lewis approved the action plan via email on February 21, 2020, contingent that the edits discussed during the conference call on February 12, 2020 were incorporated into the final plan.)

5. Wells Dam Fish Ladder Maintenance Update (Andrew Gingerich):

Andrew Gingerich said due to the winter maintenance schedule for Wells Dam, there was a quick turnaround for the east fish ladder outage and Aquatic SWG members were unable to tour the dewatered ladder. Gingerich said fish rescue numbers and a fish salvage memorandum for the east fishway were distributed on January 14 and January 17, 2020, respectively. He said photographs of east fishway maintenance (Attachment B) were also

distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris on January 31, 2020. Gingerich reviewed Attachment B, as follows:

Slides 2 and 3 of Attachment B

Gingerich said several years ago, to address gaps at the count windows mechanics added brushes in the count window crowder where it meets the bottom plate. He said this year, these brushes were replaced with a hard-plastic material and metal plating. He said the arrows on slides 2 and 3 show where the hard-plastic pieces were added to fill gaps through the transition zone. He recalled that when count window video was reviewed, Pacific Lamprey were observed traveling through this space in different ways, including free swimming, burst and attaching, and some used the crowder face and some did not. He said hopefully this modification will help improve passage conditions and passage at the count window.

Slides 4 and 5 of Attachment B

Gingerich said the photograph in slide 4 shows the new hard-plastic material compared to the former brush material. He said the top brush is new, the middle brush is used (about 2 to 3 years in the water), and the bottom is the hard plastic. Ralph Lampman asked if the brush material is still installed anywhere. Gingerich said the count window area is the only location where the new hard-plastic material was installed. He said this was completed in the east fishway and will also be installed in the west fishway.

Slide 6 of Attachment B

Gingerich said this is the area where the auxiliary water system adds water through the fish ladder to maintain flow, and that the flow enters at a low velocity to prevent salmonids from being attracted to the discharge. He said metal plating was installed where the floor diffuser meets the concrete to close gaps Pacific Lamprey might be able to fit through. He said while they have completed many modifications, there is more plating to install in the east fishway, which will continue during the next maintenance outage.

Slides 7 and 8 of Attachment B

Gingerich said these photographs were shared last year. He said where the diffuser grating comes together, plating was installed to close larger gaps. He recalled the last time Aquatic SWG members were in the collection gallery, these locations were identified. He said since then, mechanics have addressed most, if not all, of these gaps here. He said these photographs show two types of plating: 1) a small rectangular plate covering the bolt gaps; and 2) a larger strip of plating where the diffuser gratings come together.

Slides 9 and 10 of Attachment B

Gingerich said aluminum strips were also added where floor gratings meet the wall to minimize the gaps.

Slide 11 of Attachment B

Gingerich said this maintenance in the east fish ladder will continue next year. He said the west fish ladder was just dewatered last week and maintenance is planned for the floor gratings this season and will continue next year, as needed.

Discussion

Steve Lewis asked why the old brushes were replaced with new brushes verses the solid plastic. Gingerich clarified that slide 4 of Attachment B shows a comparison of a new brush versus an old brush and all brushes in that area were replaced with hard plastic.

Lampman said the maintenance looks great. He suggested continuing searching for more opportunities to close gaps. He said he hopes to tour the east fish ladder during the next outage. He said he believes most gaps are 1-inch spacing and fish can still fit through this; however, addressing the larger gaps is a good first step.

John Ferguson said Lampman just distributed an email indicating that the fish rescue numbers reported in the Wells Dam west fish ladder fish salvage memorandum do not add up. Gingerich said he will verify these numbers and redistribute a revised memorandum. *(Note: a corrected memorandum was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on February 25, 2020.)*

Lewis asked if it might be possible to tour the west fish ladder during this outage to see the maintenance completed for Pacific Lamprey in the fishway. Gingerich said he will need to ask the mechanics. He added that he believes the west fish ladder is down for the balance of this month; however, there is a lot going on in preparation for the HCP survival study in 2020. He said, however, he will inquire internally about a possible tour of the Wells Dam west fish ladder during the 2019/2020 winter maintenance outage. *(Note: Gingerich contacted Lewis on February 18, 2020, with possible dates to tour the west fish ladder and Lewis responded on February 21, 2020, thanking Gingerich for the effort; however, ultimately declining a tour due to scheduling conflicts.)*

6. Wells Fish Hatchery Brood Year 2019 White Sturgeon Rearing Update (Andrew Gingerich):

Andrew Gingerich said a Wells Fish Hatchery BY2019 White Sturgeon rearing update (Attachment C) was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Kristi Geris prior to the Aquatic SWG conference call on February 12, 2020. Gingerich said similar to past updates, Attachment C

provides information of fish being reared in round tanks 2 through 10. He said currently, there are 565 fish on station. He said loss is very low and has been for the past several months. He recalled the program target this year is 551 fish for release in late May or early June. He said tagging and scute marking is scheduled earlier this year, on March 6, 2020, in advance of the next Aquatic SWG meeting. He said because of this he will be able to provide detailed size data during the next meeting. He noted in Attachment C that two tanks have fish with an average fish size exceeding the 200-gram threshold and five tanks have fish on the cusp of being 200 grams on average. He noted the column with percent increases since January 8, 2020, and said these are good numbers in terms of fish putting on size. He said there will likely be no issues with meeting the size criteria at release. He said feed rates and water temperatures are being adjusted to get fish to size. He noted the difference between the smaller fish on 8% feed, in terms of body weight, compared to the larger fish on 2.5% feed. He said water temperatures are warmer for the smaller fish at 59°F versus the larger fish at almost ambient temperatures.

Laura Heironimus asked what the plan is for the smaller fish that might not reach the 200-gram size threshold. She asked if these fish will still be stocked. Gingerich said the Aquatic SWG can decide but Douglas PUD would likely propose to plant the fish, which is consistent with what has been done in the past. He recalled 2 years ago, releasing 337 fish for a 325-fish program where 15 fish were under the 200-gram threshold. He said if the Aquatic SWG felt strongly about something different, Douglas PUD is open to discussing other options. He said, however, he is optimistic there will be 551 fish above the 200-gram threshold for release in 2020. Jason McLellan asked what the disadvantage would be by releasing fish under the size target. Heironimus clarified she is not arguing there is a disadvantage; rather, she was just asking if there was a plan. John Ferguson asked if Aquatic SWG members have reservations about releasing fish weighing less than the 200-gram size target. Heironimus said WDFW supports releasing these fish so long as the majority of fish are at 200 grams and all fish are large enough to tag. Steve Lewis asked what size is taggable? McLellan said in his experience, the standard is about 30 grams. Gingerich recalled that the current SOA¹ allows for 5% over or under the stocking target to be stocked. He said there are 565 fish on station for a 551-fish target, which is basically a total release of 2 to 3% over the target. He said Douglas PUD advocates releasing all of the fish, consistent with SOA.¹ Ferguson asked Gingerich to provide a refresher on how the 551-fish target was reached. Gingerich explained that BY2019 for release in 2020 is the third year of the current SOA¹ to stock 325 ($\pm 5\%$) White Sturgeon at 200 grams each or larger, each year. He said BY2017 was released in 2018, but BY2018 released in 2019 only totaled 99 fish. He said the

¹ Wells Reservoir White Sturgeon Supplementation 2018-2022, approved by the Aquatic SWG on January 11, 2017

Aquatic SWG agreed (on January 9, 2019) that any shortfalls to stocking targets will be addressed in subsequent years. He said the BY2019 target of 325 fish plus the BY2018 shortfall of 226 fish equals 551 fish to release in 2020.

Aquatic SWG members present agreed to release Wells Fish Hatchery BY2019 White Sturgeon in May/June 2020 that weigh less than 200 grams as part of the stocking program, so long as: 1) the majority of BY2019 White Sturgeon released weigh more than 200 grams; and 2) any BY2019 White Sturgeon weighing less than 200 grams are large enough to receive a PIT tag.

7. White Sturgeon Monitoring and Evaluation and Adult Reproductive Assessment Discussion (Andrew Gingerich):

Andrew Gingerich said he included a presentation on White Sturgeon M&E on today's agenda; however, it is not quite ready. Gingerich said that he and Dave Robichaud (LGL Limited) produced a draft report that he hopes to distribute to the Aquatic SWG for review before the Aquatic SWG meeting on March 11, 2020. Gingerich said a lot of time and effort were put into this report. He said there are conflicting model versus acoustic telemetry survival data that he and Robichaud are looking into and want to sort out before distributing the report for review. Gingerich said he believes the conflict may have something to do with low release numbers for some BYs compared to others. He said there are a lot of valuable data in this report, such as repeatable behavior during spawning. He said he is hoping that discussion of these data will feed into the development of the reproductive assessment study plan.

Gingerich suggested that issuing the draft report is a good opportunity to convene an in-person meeting, perhaps at Wells Fish Hatchery, to review and discuss these data and then tour the hatchery. He said an in-person meeting can also be convened at Douglas PUD headquarters in East Wenatchee, Washington. Jason McLellan said he supports an in-person meeting and asked if the Aquatic SWG will receive the draft M&E report to review before the presentation. Gingerich said this is his intent because he feels this will foster a more constructive discussion in March. Laura Heironimus said she is also available to attend an in-person meeting and has no preference on location. Gingerich said he suggested convening at the hatchery because he understands WDFW might be interested in seeing the White Sturgeon facility. John Ferguson asked if a conference line will be available if members cannot join in-person and Gingerich said yes. Gingerich suggested caravanning from East Wenatchee by 8:30 or 8:45 a.m., starting the meeting by 10:00 a.m., having a brownbag lunch, conducting a quick hatchery tour, and then heading back to East Wenatchee by about 2:00 p.m. so folks can head home not too late. He suggested providing the White Sturgeon

presentation just before noon so Aquatic SWG members can discuss the data over lunch. He said no decisions are needed; rather, Douglas PUD is hoping to obtain technical input from members. Kristi Geris said she will coordinate with Gingerich to distribute logistics information for the Aquatic SWG in-person meeting on March 11, 2020. *(Note: this information was included in the Aquatic SWG March 11, 2020 meeting agenda, which was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on March 2, 2020.)*

The draft 2019 White Sturgeon M&E Report was distributed to the Aquatic SWG by Geris on February 26, 2020, and is available for review with edits and comments due to Gingerich by Tuesday, March 31, 2020.

VII. Administration

1. Upcoming Meetings (John Ferguson):

The Aquatic SWG meeting on March 11, 2020, will be held in-person at Wells Fish Hatchery in Azwell, Washington.

Other upcoming meetings include April 8 and May 13, 2020 (conference call).

List of Attachments

Attachment A List of Attendees

Attachment B Photographs of East Fishway Maintenance

Attachment C Wells Fish Hatchery BY2019 White Sturgeon Rearing Update

Attachment A – 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
Steve Lewis	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Breean Zimmerman	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	Washington State Department of Ecology
Laura Heironimus	Aquatic SWG Alternate Representative	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jason McLellan	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	Colville Confederated Tribes
Ralph Lampman	Aquatic SWG Technical Representative	Yakama Nation