

Memorandum

To: Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island HCP
Policy Committees

Date: August 31, 2022

From: John Ferguson, HCP Policy Committees Chairman

cc: Kristi Geris, HCP Policy Committees Support

Re: **Final Minutes of the June 7, 2022, HCP Policy Committees Meeting**

The Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island Hydroelectric Projects Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Policy Committees met in-person at Douglas PUD Headquarters in East Wenatchee, Washington, on Tuesday, June 7, 2022, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. Attendees are listed in Attachment A to these meeting minutes.

Action Item Summary

- Chelan PUD will redistribute the 2021 Rock Island Dam Subyearling Behavioral Investigation presentation that Dr. Erika Rubenson (Four Peaks Environmental Science and Data Solutions [Four Peaks]) presented to the HCP Coordinating Committees last March 2022 (Item III-B). *(Note: Kristi Geris redistributed this presentation to the HCP Policy Committees following the HCP Policy Committees meeting on June 7, 2022.)*
- Chelan PUD will inquire internally about collecting fin clips during this year's 2022 Rock Island Dam Subyearling Behavioral Investigation (Item III-B).

Decision Summary

- There were no HCP Decision Items approved during today's meeting.

Agreements

- There were no HCP Agreements discussed during today's meeting.

Review Items

- There are no items that are currently available for review.

Finalized Documents

- There are no documents that have been recently finalized.

I. Welcome

A. Introductions, Meeting Purpose and Objectives, Review Agenda (John Ferguson)

John Ferguson welcomed the HCP Policy Committees and introduced members present in the room and on the phone. Ferguson said there are no HCP Decision Items to approve today; rather, HCP Policy Committees representatives requested to meet in-person to touch base on a few topics that may require further discussion in the future. Ferguson reviewed the agenda and asked for any additions or changes to the agenda. Ritchie Graves added a brief discussion on fish survival rates in the Lower Columbia River.

II. HCP Implementation – Emerging Issues

A. HCP Policy Committees – Voting Criteria (John Ferguson and Tracy Hillman)

John Ferguson asked Tracy Hillman to provide an overview of the recent voting criteria issues raised in the HCP Tributary Committees.

Hillman said the Yakama Nation (YN) indicated they will vote “no” on all Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CTCR) proposals, unless the proposed projects are on CTCR reservation lands and then the YN will abstain. This was guidance provided from YN policy-level staff to YN technical staff. In response, the CTCR indicated they will take the same position by voting “no” on all YN proposals. Again, this was guidance provided from CTCR policy-level staff to CTCR technical staff.

This issue started back in December 2018, when the HCP Tributary Committees received a General Salmon Habitat Program Proposal from the YN titled, *Scaffold Camp Acquisition #2 Project*. This was a small acquisition request to receive HCP Tributary Committees funding and the CTCR voted “no,” per policy-level guidance, because the project was on CTCR territorial land. This issue has snow-balled from there. The HCP Tributary Committees reviewed their Policies and Procedures document, which identifies decision criteria for evaluating the biological and technical merits, feasibility, durability, and cost-effectiveness of proposed projects, but it does not preclude the use of other criteria in making funding decisions. The HCP Tributary Committees agreed that the policy-level issues between the YN and the CTCR cannot be resolved within the HCP Tributary Committees, and the issue is still unresolved. After the Scaffold Acquisition, there were at least three restoration projects submitted by YN that were supported by the CTCR. At that time, the CTCR was voting “no” only on YN acquisition projects within the Methow River subbasin. Then the CTCR submitted a Small Projects application titled, *Salmon Creek Channel Realignment Project*. This is when the YN indicated they would vote “no” on all CTCR projects regardless of the project type, unless the actions were on the CTCR reservation, and the CTCR reciprocated by voting “no” on all YN projects, regardless of project type. Since then, the YN has submitted two projects, one in the Methow River subbasin (Scaffold Restoration Project) and one in the Wenatchee River basin (Upper Wenatchee Acquisition)

that have not moved forward because of this issue. Unfortunately, these are good projects that would benefit the resources, but because of policy-level decisions, the HCP Tributary Committees cannot move these projects forward.

Ferguson recalled in July 2019, the HCP Policy Committees convened to develop guidance for the HCP Tributary and Hatchery (technical) Committees. The HCP Policy Committees developed four recommendations, including guidance for the HCP Tributary and Hatchery Committees to base funding decisions on technical merit, and to notify respective HCP Coordinating and Policy Committees representatives of any potential policy issues needing to be addressed in those forums.

B. Habitat Restoration Projects (David Blodgett, III, and Ritchie Graves)

David Blodgett, III, said it is an unfortunate situation to be in. As a technical staff representing policy-level staff, it is difficult to diminish guidance from the Tribal Council. As Tracy Hillman said, these are good projects. However, Blodgett agrees with the Tribal Council that it is inappropriate for the CTCR to have projects off CTCR land and within YN territories—just like Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) having projects on YN land. He will maintain that. He is also willing to get back to a place where voting is based on the technical merit of projects. He requested this agenda topic today to start this conversation and get people thinking about how to resolve this problem for further discussion at a future meeting.

John Ferguson recalled during the HCP Policy Committees meeting in July 2019, there was an action item for Steve Parker (YN HCP Policy Committees Representative at that time, now retired) and Cody Desautel (CTCR Natural Resources Director) to talk to their respective policy staffs about convening the YN and CTCR Tribal Councils to discuss potential paths forward. Ferguson asked if this ever happened? Blodgett said there have been conversations about reinvigorating discussions between the Tribal Councils, but he is unsure if any meetings have been convened.

Ritchie Graves said he appreciates Blodgett's comments and the Tribal partners being clear that this is a policy issue. This clarification is helpful, it daylights the issue, and hopefully helps figure out a path forward. Graves wanted this topic on today's agenda because this is something happening in the background, and he does not want it corroding relationships. He wants to know what is happening, where the topic stands, and what National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) can do to help the situation. He is sensitive to the fact that he does not know enough to be helpful. He also does not presume to have an answer. Back when the HCPs were close to their final form, there was a lot of discussion around voting criteria, including unanimous versus unanimous-minus-one. There was some concern this type of dynamic would happen. At the time the Parties were not thinking this would be a Tribal issue; rather, the Parties did not want the PUDs to be in a position to veto anyone. There were concerns about how the voting process might work. He recalls, at the time, the Parties agreed to the unanimous requirement to approve an action and to abstain from voting if needed. Collectively, the Parties did this with eyes wide open, and here we are.

Shane Bickford said the reason the Parties agreed to unanimous consent was to remove the threats of tyranny by a minority. It comes down to the preservation of an entity's rights. He respects Blodgett's comments because everybody has different hats to wear. He also understands the CTCR's position. However, the process is working. If there is a reason to not move a project forward, so be it. Fortunately, there are a lot of good projects that make it possible for Plans Species dollars to still be used to benefit resources. It is unfortunate these issues are happening, but sometimes families argue. He is curious how this goes in terms of the HCP Policy Committees and Tribal conversations.

Blodgett said he appreciates these comments. Having not been an HCP Policy Committees representative for a long period of time, he asked if other projects have been taken to the HCP Policy Committees for these same reasons. Ferguson said he is only aware of the Scaffold Acquisition. Alene Underwood clarified that the Scaffold Acquisition was not a formal dispute; rather, this project was the impetus for these discussions, there was hope the Tribal Councils would get together, but they never did. Graves agreed. Blodgett said this is good to know. It confirms this is something the Tribal Councils need to address, but this process puts a burden on the technical committees and resources. He has not yet discussed this in great detail with Tribal leadership, but there has been enough discussion to know leadership is supportive of figuring out a way to move projects forward.

Graves said he appreciates Blodgett's sentiments, and he thinks they are on the same page. There needs to be respect for the sovereignty of the Tribal Partners but impacts to the resources also need to be addressed. He agrees there needs to be a deeper dive, but currently, he is unsure how to be helpful or foster discussions. Today, he is full of questions and no answers.

Ferguson said these discussions help clarify the issues. More to come later.

C. HCP Hatchery Committees Recalculation Questions (Tracy Hillman)

Tracy Hillman said recalculation and implementation plans for the HCP Hatchery Committees are really close to being completed. Douglas PUD is close but needs to do more outreach. Chelan PUD may have an implementation plan and Statement of Agreement ready for discussion at next week's HCP Hatchery Committees meeting, although the CTCR may not have a representative present at that meeting. So overall, this is good news. The HCP Hatchery Committees started this process over a year ago thinking that it would take 6 months. During this process, a number of questions came up that the technical representatives thought might be best addressed by policy representatives. Some of these questions have since been resolved, such as, what is the definition of No Net Impact (NNI)? More specifically, what stocks and programs fall under NNI? There has been discussion on this, and it now seems mostly resolved.

An outstanding question is, what method should be used to calculate NNI for natural-origin fish? Currently, the Committees use a method defined in the Biological Assessment and Management Plan

(BAMP)¹, which uses coded wire tags (CWTs) in returning hatchery adults to estimate smolt-to-adult survival rates (SARs). These SARs are then applied to appropriate natural-origin returns to estimate the number of natural-origin smolts entering the project areas. Another approach, which was proposed by the PUDs, is to use passive integrated transponder (PIT)-tags to estimate SARs for the different hatchery stocks. These PIT-tag-based SARs are then used to estimate natural-origin smolts entering the project areas. There has been some disagreement within the HCP Hatchery Committees on which method to use. The agreement at this time is to use a combination of the two methods. That is, randomly select which tag will be used to begin the time series and alternate tags each year over the time series (e.g., start with CWTs, then use PIT tags, then CWT, and so on). This was the compromise, but the HCP Hatchery Committees may ask the HCP Policy Committees to provide input on what they think is the more appropriate method. Use of CWTs incorporates mortality that occurs outside of the project area into estimated SARs, which should not be included in the calculation of natural-origin smolts because this is not associated with project effects. Use of PIT tags measures effects on returning adults back to the dam (concrete) but does not necessarily incorporate effects of having to pass through the reservoir behind the dam into the estimate. The debate is whether to use PIT tags to measure returns to the concrete, or CWTs to measure returns to the tributaries but that include agents of mortality unrelated to project effects. Bill Gale said Hillman summarized this well and he has nothing to add. Tom Kahler said Douglas PUD prefers using a legitimate juvenile estimate, so there is no need to rely on SARs. Hillman explained that Douglas PUD prefers to have a direct estimate of natural-origin smolts that enter their project area, then there would be no need to use SARs to back calculate smolt numbers, and there may be options to do this. The HCP Hatchery Committees will continue to discuss this, but may elevate this to the HCP Coordinating Committees, and then to the HCP Policy Committees.

David Blodgett, III, asked how the discussions are going about addressing mitigation to address effects on inundation fish under recalculation, and is this topic being elevated to the policy level, as well? How liable are the PUDs? Hillman said, within the HCPs, only Chelan PUD has the potential to mitigate for Douglas PUD's inundation mitigation. Chelan PUD agrees mitigation for inundation is part of NNI for the summer Chinook Salmon and steelhead programs and will mitigate for that inundation. Grant PUD does not believe upstream inundation mitigation should be part of NNI and that may be addressed at the policy level, but not in the HCP forum. That would be addressed under the Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee. Gale clarified that Grant PUD does not necessarily disagree; rather, the technical staff could not speak to this and needs to go to policy for guidance.

Ritchie Graves asked about the differences in back-calculations of SARs using the different methodologies, and are there differences between stocks? There is no perfect methodology, but if there is a big disparity between the methods, this might suggest major pre-spawning mortality

¹ Biological Assessment and Management Plan: Mid-Columbia River Hatchery Program, April 1998.

events and this is something he is interested in identifying so it can be addressed. Ideally, there is only a small difference between the methods. Shane Bickford said the HCP Hatchery Committees have discussed this and have agreed on how to make the calculations work. The two methods do produce different numbers in SARs, but as they should because they have different end points. There is no disagreement related to the number of fish. Hillman agreed and clarified that the discussion is not about changing what is currently being done or what the numbers are for the next 10 years; rather, the HCP Hatchery Committees are trying to lay a foundation so that 10 years from now, the Committees will know exactly how to move forward. There will be a lot more data in 10 years, because the tributaries are wired up, and the Hatchery Committees want to discuss this and the methodologies to layout an ideal situation. Bickford said the ultimate goal is to identify a methodology to deploy in rivers to get solid estimates of natural origin smolts. This information can be used for so many aspects of monitoring and evaluation. Graves said he is sensitive to climate change issues and noted that he is hearing from WDFW staff that they are seeing impacts of climate change, so he was interested if the HCP Hatchery Committees are seeing similar things. He agrees having an estimate of smolts would be valuable. He is not disputing this. Gale said many HCP Hatchery Committees representatives went through the last recalculation, this was their second, and there will be significant turnover before the next recalculation. The HCP Hatchery Committees want to develop a “cookbook” to make this process easier in 10 years. Not that there is a dispute; rather, the desire is to address lingering questions and resolve them well in advance of the next recalculation. This recalculation should have been easier because most of the representatives have done it before. Graves agreed it is wise to settle the issues now while the expertise is present and the information is fresh.

III. Chelan PUD

A. Chelan PUD Relicensing (Alene Underwood)

Alene Underwood said Chelan PUD is currently in voluntary, early relicensing for Rock Island and will be submitting the Pre-Application Document (or PAD) around October/November 2023, which will kick off the formal relicensing process. Chelan PUD has established a number of technical working groups (TWGs), including Fish and Aquatic, Wildlife and Botanical, Recreation, and Social Sciences. These groups are trying to maximize the study season and are currently conducting additional studies. The Fish and Aquatic TWG is meeting once per month. To note, topics related to salmon and steelhead that arise during this early engagement process are being directed to the HCP Coordinating Committees for discussion under the existing implementation of the HCP. Chelan PUD provided a list of these topics to the Committees, which representatives can request to discuss during any monthly HCP Coordinating Committees meeting.

Bill Gale said during the TWG meetings, participants are doing a fairly deep dive into these topics. He asked if the HCP Coordinating Committees have enough time to have this level of discussion for Plan

Species topics, or are other times and avenues within the HCP needed? Underwood said this would be up to the HCP Coordinating Committees to decide. Chelan PUD provided the list of topics, and it is up to representatives to decide when and what they want to talk about, which no different than any other HCP agenda topic. Gale said one reason for the deeper dive during the TWG meetings is there is more uncertainty to talk about. Another reason is to build a base of information to help with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) process. If the HCP Coordinating Committees are unable to do this deep dive, then this base of information will not be developed. Underwood said she would be surprised if there are huge data gaps about salmon and steelhead that stakeholders do not already know about. This basin has one of the most robust datasets on this topic. John Ferguson agreed and said the HCP Coordinating Committees spent as much time as was needed to resolve all questions Committees representatives had on confirmation survival study designs, but that most other topics are a quick discussion.

Ritchie Graves asked that he be notified if NMFS can help further on this. He is interested in making sure this is a smooth process. Lastly, full disclosure, he is starting to get questions from higher up about how the Endangered Species Act consultation will work, regarding relicensing, emerging issues, and disparities in the HCP and FERC license timelines.

B. 2021 Rock Island Dam Confirmation Survival Study and Subyearling Behavioral Investigations (Alene Underwood)

Alene Underwood shared a presentation titled, *Chelan PUD HCP PC Meeting June 7, 2022* (Attachment B), which was distributed to the HCP Policy Committees by Kristi Geris following the HCP Policy Committees meeting on June 7, 2022.

Slides 3 to 4 briefly review the 2021 Rock Island Dam Confirmation Survival Study, which was discussed at length during the HCP Policy Committees meeting on June 8, 2021. The first release was April 23, 2021, the last release was May 22, 2021, and the last detection of fish was June 3, 2021. In 2021, Chelan PUD decided to switch tag technology to an ATS Model SS400 acoustic tag, which is a lightweight receiver with better detection. While this was a confirmation survival study that replicates the previous study, there is also benefit in taking advantage of upgraded technology. Travel times ranged from 7.5 to 629.6 hours. Project conditions held through May 28, 2021, at the 10% spill requirement, and fell within the approved flow duration curves. There were several objectives for this study. The study requirements and precision requirements, as stipulated in the HCP, were outlined in a study plan that was approved by all Rock Island HCP Coordinating Committee members following a robust discussion. Estimated survival for yearling Chinook Salmon through the Rock Island Project exceeded the HCP standard of 93% and the standard error was below the HCP standard of 2.5%. The 2021 estimate was not significantly different than the prior 3-year average. The new 4-year average is 93.93%. Adult survival through the Rock Island Project was 100%. Dr. John Skalski (University of Washington, Columbia Basin Research) said he has never seen a “cleaner” study, and partially

credited this to the updated, concise methodology. On December 16, 2021, the Rock Island HCP Coordinating Committee approved the results of this study in an SOA. The next 10-year check-in will be in 2031.

Slides 5 to 8 review the ongoing Subyearling Behavioral Investigation. Estimating survival of subyearling Chinook Salmon has not been conducted under the HCPs because statistical models for estimating survival of this life history have not been developed because the fish display a protracted rearing migration. Each quarter, the HCP Coordinating Committees discuss any updates on studying subyearlings, but there have not been any riveting advancements. That said, Chelan PUD still wanted to hold true to the HCP commitment to try to determine what these fish are doing in the river. Therefore, in 2021, it was a last-minute decision to take advantage of the equipment deployed for the 2021 Rock Island Dam Confirmation Survival Study. From June 28 to August 6, 2021, a total of 606 subyearlings Chinook Salmon collected at the Rocky Reach Juvenile Fish Bypass were tagged and released into the river. The fish recovered well post-tagging despite experiencing extreme weather conditions, including record temperatures of 116°F and a wildfire that forced an evacuation of the tagging facility. Ultimately, all tagged subyearlings migrated through the reservoir. This may be unique to the Rock Island Reservoir, because it is the shortest reservoir on the Columbia River from Grand Coulee Dam to the mouth. Also, the riverine characteristics of the reservoir do not provide many places for fish to hold. Route specific passage proportions for subyearlings were similar to yearlings, and where most passage was via Powerhouse 2 and Spillway 2 on river right. Interestingly, summer spill is 20% (during the subyearling migration) and spring spill is 10% (during the yearling migration), but preferred passage routes were still the same for the two runs. It is unclear if behavior and route specific passage was driven by operations or river conditions. Additionally, the study design could not eliminate the inclusion of mortality or biases outside of the project area, such as predation in the Rock Island Dam tailrace and Wanapum Reservoir. In 2022, Chelan PUD decided to continue this investigation by essentially repeating last year's design, only with more study fish and an additional release in the Rock Island Dam tailrace to further investigate the predation question.

Bill Gale asked about the size cutoff for tagging subyearlings and what proportion of the population was tagged for the 2021 investigation? Underwood said fish selection criteria was greater than 95-millimeter fork length, or a tag burden of no more than 5% relative to total weight. This more detailed information was included in a presentation that Dr. Erika Rubenson presented to the HCP Coordinating Committees last March 2022, which she can redistribute. *(Note: Kristi Geris redistributed this presentation to the HCP Policy Committees following the HCP Policy Committees meeting on June 7, 2022.)*

Gale asked if fin clips were collected in 2021, and if not, can tissue be collected in 2022? Underwood said fin clips were not collected in 2021, and this has not been discussed for 2022. Ideally,

Chelan PUD would want to keep methodologies consistent between the two years, but she can inquire internally about collecting fin clips during this year's 2022 Rock Island Dam Subyearling Behavioral Investigation. Ritchie Graves agreed there is utility in analyzing tissue samples. Notably if there are disparities in behaviors, it would be useful to know which study fish are true subyearlings. He also understands not wanting to introduce new variables, but depending on the results, tissue samples could be informative.

Underwood said, lastly, Slide 9 reviews upcoming work. This includes the 2023 Rocky Reach Dam Confirmation Survival Study. Chelan PUD is working on a draft study plan now, which will likely be available for Rocky Reach HCP Coordinating Committee review by Q4 2022. Graves asked about the species selection. Underwood said yearling Chinook Salmon were selected when the species was selected for the 2021 Rock Island Dam Confirmation Survival Study. Secondly, the 10-year Comprehensive NNI Report is upcoming in 2023, and Chelan PUD will also be discussing this with the HCP Coordinating Committees.

Graves said he is pleased that Chelan PUD is investing in the subyearling work. In the early 2000s, studying subyearlings was only a pipe dream. Tags were too big and there did not seem to be a path forward. It is gratifying to see, 20 years later, there is headway on this. NMFS supports these types of investigations.

IV. Douglas PUD

A. Wells HCP Framework and Collaborative Implementation (Andrew Gingerich)

Andrew Gingerich shared a presentation titled, *Wells Project HCP Framework and Collaborative Success* (Attachment C), which was distributed to the HCP Policy Committees by Kristi Geris following the HCP Policy Committees meeting on June 7, 2022.

Gingerich said this is the same presentation that was shared during the HCP Policy Committees meeting on June 8, 2021; therefore, he will not review the entire presentation, but will touch on a few slides.

Slide 2 depicts the three-pronged approach to achieving NNI, which covers all sources of mortality in the reservoir and at the concrete. This serves as a good reminder that NNI is a complete assessment and comprehensive approach for estimating survival and developing a mitigation strategy. With this approach, reaching NNI includes 7% hatchery mitigation, 91% combined adult and juvenile survival, and 2% tributary enhancements. It is important to note that a lot of time goes into designing survival studies. These studies are executed in a thoughtful way to come up with survival estimates. The PUDs conduct these survival studies every 10 years with as much rigor as possible. The importance of habitat restoration projects was already discussed today. To note, the PUDs have contributed

\$83 million in project implementation, including more than \$15 million in direct project funding to date.

Slide 7 shows the unique design of the Wells Project hydrocombine. The spillways are approximately 71 feet below the water surface and sit on top of the turbine units, which is optimal for passing downstream migrating smolts rather than the smolts going through a turbine unit. During the bypass period, which is April 9 to August 9, bypass barriers are installed creating attraction flow through open spillways for the safe passage of these fish that are surface oriented.

Slide 13 is a good example of how the HCPs were intended to work. Douglas PUD worked with partners through the HCP process to address Sockeye Salmon populations in the Okanagan River Basin. Through annual implementation of the Okanagan Fish and Water Management Tool, the net result has been a 700% increase in annual adult Sockeye Salmon returns. He noted the variability in returns since 2008 and recalled Ritchie Graves mentioning last year that this may be due to other species in the ocean.

Gingerich said this is all he planned to cover today. Last week, Douglas PUD had a good discussion with Brock Hoenes, the only HCP Policy Committees representative who was not present for this same presentation during last year's meeting.

Graves agreed that efforts undertaken since 2004 have had a clear and dramatic impact to improve Okanagan River Basin Sockeye Salmon, and that this every other year pattern of higher adult returns continues to manifest. He is still trying to sound the alarms about this issue with Pink Salmon, most of which are from Russia, Canada, and to a lesser extent, Alaska. This is an international issue, which makes it more difficult to gain traction. Canada is starting to publish papers about effects on B.C. Sockeye Salmon. He will continue discussing this internally and he encouraged the HCP Policy Committees to discuss this with their respective leadership staff.

V. National Marine Fisheries Service

A. Columbia River System Operations Question and Answer (Ritchie Graves)

Ritchie Graves said a lot is going on in the Columbia River Basin. Some things he cannot discuss, but the discussions are interrelated with these projects due to fish sharing a common corridor to the ocean and back. He wanted to provide this opportunity to have a conversation if anyone had questions.

In 2020, Federal Action Agencies (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and Bonneville Power Administration) signed a Biological Opinion on a new proposed action, which immediately went into litigation with environmental groups. The Biden Administration, who seems to have taken an interest in Tribal and Columbia River fish issues, provided instruction to the Federal

Action Agencies to convene a discussion with the Plaintiffs to see if there is a path forward for negotiation or settlement. In this spirit, last fall, the Federal Action Agencies scrambled to engage with the Plaintiffs, including the operations the Plaintiffs are seeking for the federal system, particularly spring operations above the flexible spill program. Long story short, the Plaintiffs wanted additional increases in spill. NMFS was concerned about egress conditions, effects on juvenile survival rates, and in some instances, issues for adults seeking fishway entrances in tailraces. These concerns were discussed, and last October 2021, an agreement was reached on the operations.

This year, everyone is living up to good faith on this agreement. There is a stay (of proceedings) on litigation through July 31, 2022. From his vantage point, he had hoped for more collective progress on the broader discussion. Last winter, the Council on Environmental Quality canvassed interested parties to get perspectives, including Tribes, state agencies, and others. It is his understanding that the Biden Administration intends to have discussions with the sovereign parties, federal mediation, and reconciliation services to find a path forward. It is still unclear to him how this will work, how these conversations will happen, how to juggle litigation status for the different parties, and what issues to discuss. There is the mainstem passage issue and also the issue of providing fish passage above Chief Joseph Dam and Grand Coulee Dam. Discussions need to happen in the next 6 to 7 weeks, or the stay on litigation needs to be extended to provide time to dedicate to the broader issues. He is encouraged because he has yet to see an Administration take such an active interest in Tribal and Columbia River fish issues. This could be a good or bad thing. So far, it has been positive. The Administration is interested in trying to resolve issues.

Shane Bickford asked which parties are involved in this process? Graves said at this time, outreach has been to what is referred to as the sovereign parties, which include Tribes, state partners, and federal agencies. These are the primary parties. The Federal Action Agencies are still trying to figure out the most effective way to organize these discussions, given the bandwidth of different parties and interests in the basin. Bickford said he is trying to think through this. It is not simply "us versus them," it is a whole mosaic. Graves agreed it is not an easy answer.

Graves said another challenge is that Barry Thom left his position as NMFS Regional Administrator in early March 2022 to become the new Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission Executive Director, so the NMFS chain of command is shorter now. NMFS is typically a very flat agency, organizationally anyway, and now, two links have been removed. The good news is he has more influence than normal because layers are removed, but this is both a blessing and curse. Ultimately, he encouraged folks to be engaged.

Alene Underwood asked if this federal process will include some form of reintroduction above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams? Graves said there is a group of federal agencies talking about this fish passage issue and what the agencies can collectively do. Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams are part of the Columbia River system, as defined. Part of the complication is that there is already a

system in place to resolve these questions, but how does the new mediation process interact or override these other processes? He does not know the answer. There is a group thinking about a best path forward, which is either to merge or keep separate the disparate operations.

B. Lower Columbia River Survival Rates (Ritchie Graves)

Ritchie Graves said last year juvenile survival rates, with the exception of Snake River yearling Chinook Salmon, were poor in the Lower Columbia River between McNary and Bonneville dams. He is trying not to overreact, but there is concern regarding how the high spill levels are affecting survival at John Day and Bonneville dams. There is also the ongoing Caspian Tern and other avian predation issues. NMFS is watching this very closely. He believes data from this year will be highly influential. If survival rates increase, this might suggest last year was a fluke. If rates decrease, there are plans to further review the data to determine if these high spill levels are more hurtful than beneficial. Data will not be available until about September or October 2022.

John Ferguson asked how poor the rates were. Graves said he does not have the data in front of him, but the numbers were on the low end of the spectrum for all spring migrating species. Snake River summers were okay, but all Lower Columbia River and other Snake River stocks were low.

Joe Peone said he thought ocean conditions are improving. Graves said he heard this, too. The NMFS Science Center just completed their spring cruise and picked up a good assemblage of species. He thinks in 2020 there started to be indication the previously horrible ocean conditions were turning a corner. In 2021, conditions looked pretty good. This year he has not seen an official indicator yet, but he understands ocean conditions continued to improve over 2019 and the prior few years.

VI. HCP Administration

A. Next Steps and Next Meetings (John Ferguson)

John Ferguson said he appreciates everyone taking the time to convene this meeting, At this time, there are no next steps and no follow-up meetings. Another annual meeting will be convened this time next year.

VII. List of Attachments

Attachment A List of Attendees

Attachment B Presentation titled, *Chelan PUD HCP PC Meeting June 7, 2022*

Attachment C Presentation titled, *Wells Project HCP Framework and Collaborative Success*

Attachment A

Name	Organization
John Ferguson	Anchor QEA, LLC
Kristi Geris	Anchor QEA, LLC
Tracy Hillman	BioAnalysts
Alene Underwood*	Chelan PUD
Shane Bickford*	Douglas PUD
Tom Kahler	Douglas PUD
Andrew Gingerich	Douglas PUD
Ritchie Graves*†	National Marine Fisheries Service
Bill Gale*	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Chad Jackson*†	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Joe Peone†∞	Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
David Blodgett, III*†	Yakama Nation

Notes:

- * Denotes HCP Policy Committees member or alternate
- † Joined by phone
- ∞ Joined after Item III-B and before Item IV-A