FINAL

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ANCHOR QEA

Memorandum

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

Date: January 28, 2026

From: John Ferguson, HCP Coordinating Committees Chair

cc: Kristi Geris, HCP Coordinating Committees Support

Re: Final Minutes of the December 15, 2025, HCP Coordinating Committees Conference Call

The Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island Hydroelectric Projects Habitat Conservation Plan Coordinating Committees (HCP-CCs) met virtually by Microsoft Teams on Monday, December 15, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:10 a.m. Attendees are listed in Attachment A to these conference call minutes.

Action Item Summary

1. Douglas PUD will share the Wells Dam Spillway 2 Flap Gate Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) Detection design concept once it is available (Item I-C).
2. Chelan PUD will review past Fish Passage Center (FPC) Annual Reports for references to the radio telemetry (RT) studies that support guidance on how to best manage head differentials and transport channel velocities during high river flows at the four entrances to the Rock Island Dam Right Bank Adult Fishway (Item I-C).
3. The next scheduled HCP-CCs meeting is on Tuesday, January 27, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and will be held virtually by Microsoft Teams conference call. The next joint session (Joint Session 13) with the Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee (PRCC) to discuss subyearlings will be held this same day (schedule to be determined) (Item VI-B).

Decision Summary

1. Wells HCP-CC representatives present approved the 2025 Wells Dam Post-Season Bypass Report and Passage-Dates Analysis (Item III-A).
2. Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP-CCs representatives present approved the *Chelan PUD Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCPs Draft 2025 Fish Spill Report* (2025 Rocky Reach and Rock Island Fish Spill Report), as revised (Item IV-A).

Agreements

1. There were no HCP Agreements discussed during today's conference call.

Review Items

1. The draft *2026 Total Dissolved Gas Abatement Plan* and appended *Wells Bypass Operating Plan* (2026 GAP/BOP) and associated draft *Statement of Agreement* were distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Kristi Geris on January 23, 2026 (Item III-C).
2. The draft *2026 Wells HCP Action Plan* was distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Kristi Geris before the HCP-CCs meeting on January 27, and an updated draft (version 2) was distributed after the meeting on January 27, 2026.

Finalized Documents

1. The final report, *Osoyoos Lake Sockeye Salmon (Oncorhynchus nerka) return abundance (1977-2023), adult age composition (1985-2023), and marine survival (1998-2021) (Bailey et al. 2025)*, was distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Kristi Geris on January 27, 2025.[1]
2. The final Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) report, *Okanagan Fish and Water Management Tools (FWMT) water year 2024-2025*, was distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Kristi Geris on December 8, 2025.
3. The final 2025 Rocky Reach and Rock Island Fish Spill Report was distributed to the Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP-CCs by Kristi Geris after the conference call on December 15, 2025 (Item IV-A).
4. The final 2025 Wells Dam Post-Season Bypass Report and Passage-Dates Analysis was distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Kristi Geris on December 18, 2025 (Item III-A).
5. The final *2025 Rocky Reach Juvenile Fish Bypass System Operations Plan*, which was approved by the Rocky Reach HCP-CC on March 25, 2025, was distributed to the Rocky Reach HCP-CC by Kristi Geris on January 5, 2026.
6. The *2024 Rock Island Dam Smolt Monitoring Program and Gas Bubble Trauma Evaluation Final Report*, which was approved by the Rock Island HCP-CC on March 25, 2025, was distributed to the Rock Island HCP-CC by Kristi Geris on January 5, 2026.
7. The final statement of agreement, *Closure of Rock Island Right Bank Adult Fishway TRE Entrance During High Flows and Tailwater Elevation*, which was approved by the Rock Island HCP-CC on March 25, 2025, was distributed to the Rock Island HCP-CC by Kristi Geris on January 5, 2026.
8. The *Northern Pikeminnow Predator Control Program Rocky Reach and Rock Island Hydroelectric Projects Final Summary Report 2023*, which was finalized on May 27, 2025, after a 60-day review, and edits and comments received from the Parties were fully vetted and revisions were approved by the commentors, was distributed to the Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP-CCs by Kristi Geris on January 5, 2026.
9. The final ONA report, *Osoyoos Lake: In-lake 2023 (BY2022), and Historical Temporal Summary*, was distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Kristi Geris on January 5, 2026.

[1] Reporting finalization and distribution of this report was inadvertently overlooked in January 2025, so including this here for the administrative record.

I. Welcome

A. Review Agenda (John Ferguson)

John Ferguson welcomed the HCP-CCs and reviewed the agenda. Ferguson asked for any additions or changes to the agenda. The following revisions were requested:

- Tom Kahler added 2026 GAP/BOP.
- Kristi Geris added National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) HCP Representation Designation Letter.

B. Meeting Minutes Approval (Kristi Geris)

The HCP-CCs reviewed the revised draft November 25 conference call minutes. Kristi Geris said edits received were minor clarifications, which were incorporated into the revised minutes. John Rohrback and Keely Murdoch each provided one additional clarifying edit. Geris acknowledged the shortened review period resulting from the Thanksgiving holiday and rescheduled December meeting and asked whether HCP-CCs representatives were ready to approve or would like additional time. HCP-CCs representatives present approved the November 25 conference call minutes, as revised.

C. Last Meeting Action Items (John Ferguson)

Action items from the HCP-CCs meeting on November 25 and follow-up discussions were as follows *(Note: Italicized text corresponds to agenda items from the meeting on November 25)*:

1. *Chelan PUD will reach out to Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) about Rocky Reach HCP-CC approval of Chelan PUD's request for an early outage of the Rocky Reach Dam adult fishway during the upcoming winter maintenance period (Item I-C).*
   Lance Keller said he and Chad Jackson spoke this morning and covered this early outage topic. Jackson said he appreciated the explanation and has nothing to add.
2. *Douglas PUD will follow up with Buchanan Statistical Services regarding the draft 2025 Wells Dam Passage-Dates Analysis and will provide the draft report for Wells HCP-CC review as soon as possible (Item III-A).*
   The draft 2025 Wells Dam Post-Season Bypass Report and Passage-Dates Analysis were distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Kristi Geris on December 3.
3. *Douglas PUD will share the Wells Dam Spillway 2 Flap Gate PIT Detection design concept once it is available (Item III-C).*
   This action item will be carried forward.
4. *Chelan PUD will query PIT-tag files of the unclipped recaptures at Rock Island and Rocky Reach dams in 2025, to potentially reduce the number of unknown fish reported in the draft 2025 Rocky Reach and Rock Island Fish Spill Report (Item IV-A).*
   This will be discussed during today's conference call.

5. *The Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP-CCs will submit edits and comments on the draft 2025 Rocky Reach and Rock Island Fish Spill Report by December 10, and will be prepared for a decision during the conference call on December 15, 2025 (Item IV-A).*
   This will be discussed during today's conference call.
6. *Chelan PUD will review past FPC Annual Reports for references to the RT studies that support guidance on how to best manage head differentials and transport channel velocities during high river flows at the four entrances to the Rock Island Dam Right Bank Adult Fishway (Item IV-D).*
   This action item will be carried forward.

II. HCP Hatchery and Tributary Committees Update

A. HCP Hatchery and Tributary Committees Update (Tracy Hillman)

Tracy Hillman said the HCP Hatchery Committees (HCP-HCs) will meet on December 17 and 18, 2025.

Hillman said the HCP Tributary Committees (HCP-TCs) did not meet in December; however, they did address a couple of decision items via email:

- *Entiat Tributary Baseflow Habitat Restoration Project:* The Rock Island HCP-TC received a time extension request from Cascadia Conservation District on the Entiat Tributary Baseflow Habitat Restoration Project. The sponsor indicated that because wildfires prevented the implementation of the project in 2025, they asked to extend the contract from October 31, 2026, to October 31, 2027. The Rock Island HCP-TC agreed to extend the contract period to October 31, 2027.
- *Okanagan Lake Dam East Salmon Passage Project:* The Rock Island HCP-TC received a budget amendment request from the Okanagan Nation Alliance on the Okanagan Lake Dam East Salmon Passage Project. The sponsor requested a transfer of $22,274.17 from "Contract Labor" and $100 from "Sponsor: Travel" to "Professional Services: Other." In addition, they requested a transfer of $157.26 from "Sponsor: Travel" to "Professional Services: Engineering." The Rock Island HCP-TC agreed to the budget line-item adjustments. The total contribution from the Rock Island Plan Species Account will not change as a result of this amendment.
- *NMFS Representation:* In a recent letter from Nancy Munn, NMFS designated Scott Carlon as their representative and Sean Gross as their alternate on the HCP-TCs.
- *Next Meeting*: The next meeting of the HCP-TCs will be on January 8, 2026.

III. Douglas PUD

A. DECISION: 2025 Wells Dam Passage-Dates Analysis (Tom Kahler)

Tom Kahler said the draft 2025 Wells Dam Post-Season Bypass Report and Passage-Dates Analysis were distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Kristi Geris on December 3. Kahler asked whether Wells

HCP-CC representatives had a chance to review this, have any questions, or would like a walk-through. Bill Gale requested a walk-though.

Kahler said there are five bypass bays at Wells Dam, and the Wells HCP specifies that a bypass must be operating when the adjacent turbine is operating. All five bypass bays must be operating when Chief Joseph Dam is discharging 140,000 cubic feet per second (140 kcfs) or greater. The Wells HCP also stipulates that bypass operations must cover the 95th percentile of the spring and summer migrations of HCP Plan Species. In the past, the Wells Dam bypass started on April 12 of each year based on historical hydroacoustic and fyke-net data that indicated that the 5th percentile of spring migrants passes Wells Dam by this date. In 2012, this start date was moved to April 9 based on the analysis of run timing at the Rocky Reach Juvenile Fish Bypass Sampling Facility (RRJFBS), which suggested an earlier migration for yearling Chinook Salmon. In 2025, this start date was adjusted again to April 3 based on a bootstrap method. Termination of bypass operations is based on the Columbia River Data Access in Real Time Program RealTime estimate of the date on which the 95th percentile of subyearling migrants pass Rocky Reach Dam. A travel-time adjustment between Rocky Reach and Wells dams is applied to that date to determine how well the migration was covered at Wells Dam. Columbia Basin Research, formerly Drs. John Skalski and Rich Townsend and now Drs. Rebecca Buchanan and Townsend, develop this Passage-Dates Analysis each year to report on how well these start and end dates covered the outmigration of Coho Salmon, yearling and subyearling Chinook Salmon, steelhead, and Sockeye Salmon.

Outmigration timing for Sockeye Salmon is based on index counts at RRJFBS. Timing for all other species of yearling migrants is based on detection at RRJ[2] of PIT tags from above Wells Dam. For subyearlings, timing is based on index counts at RRJFBS, but this is also scrutinized by passage timing of PIT-tagged wild subyearlings from above Wells Dam detected at RRJ. For bypass performance, the Wells HCP does not specify looking separately at hatchery versus wild; rather, just the migration of these Plan Species. That is, the combined hatchery and wild reporting represents how well the 95% standard was achieved. Kahler reviewed each table, figure, and appendix in this Passage-Dates Analysis. In 2025, bypass operations were provided for greater than 95% of the outmigration for each Plan Species at Wells Dam.

Kahler said, again, this document is reporting what happened this year, and the results will be considered for bypass operations next year. Douglas PUD is hoping for approval of the report this calendar year but also recognizes the short review period and understands the potential need for additional time for review.

Emi Melton left the conference call.

[2] Rocky Reach surface collector PIT array (site code RRJ in the Columbia Basin PTAGIS).

Keely Murdoch said because this document is reporting what happened last year, the Yakama Nation (YN) is supportive of voting to approve today. Regarding this document teeing up a plan for next year, she recalled asking in the past why protect only the tail 95% of the yearling migration and front 95% of the subyearling migration and whether there is a way to break up spring and summer spill where there is a gap in the middle. Her concern is the current bypass operations at Wells Dam are systematically under-protecting the wild portion of both runs. This does not affect this document, but it would affect the GAP/BOP. She asked whether this approach was memorialized in a statement of agreement and were implications to wild fish discussed at that time. Kahler said there used to be a hiatus between spring and summer spill, but now the tails overlap and there is no gap between the emigration distributions of spring and summer migrants. During the era of fyke netting and hydroacoustic investigations, there was a gap in those distributions, but at some point, these converged. Instead of a spring stop and summer start, this just became one single bypass spill covering both spring and summer. It was more of an evolution of decision-making rather than conscience decision to just work on the front end. K. Murdoch suspects it would be practical to do it this way, but it would still be helpful to review these conversations to see whether implications to wild fish were considered. Kahler said Douglas PUD would not propose implementing a gap in bypass operations again but would be supportive of further discussing what is happening during the front end of the migration.

Bill Gale said the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is also supportive of voting to approve when the other Parties are ready. What struck him is that there does appear to be a difference between the wild and hatchery spring Chinook Salmon migrations. Wild fish either have a more protracted migration period or are selecting earlier dates to migrate; maybe it is both. This makes him wonder whether the HCP-HCs should consider moving hatchery releases to earlier dates. These data suggest that wild fish are doing something different than the hatchery programs, and the hatchery programs are meant to mirror the wild migration, not the other way around. Kahler said this has been discussed in the past. Absolutely wild and hatchery fish are different. Hatchery managers are choosing migration dates for hatchery fish. However, there are HCP-HCs considerations which make it challenging to change release-date timing. For example, the HCP-HCs have a goal to achieve a maximum hatchery replacement rate (HRR). To do this, hatchery fish are acclimated at acclimation sites with a desire to release these fish in the best outmigration conditions possible. If the freshet is late, hatchery managers will hold these fish as long as possible. If managers change the release strategy for hatchery fish to match wild fish, there may be consequences for HRR that would not mesh with the objectives of the HCP-HCs. Further, it seems that wild fish have this longer tail at the front end of the migration. How do managers choose which hatchery fish to release early to match this wild fish distribution? Ideally, all hatchery fish are released at the peak of the wild migration. Then managers would not hold back hatchery releases to match the tail end of the migration. There is still some mismatch of these distributions even when managers try to match them. Gale agreed the wild and hatchery distributions may never match, but it seems there could be options such as

staggered hatchery releases instead of all occurring at the same time. He said managers are doing what they believe is best for hatchery fish, but clearly wild fish are making a different decision. John Ferguson said this could just be variable environmental conditions.

Andrew Murdoch said under the current paradigm, in general, hatchery fish are released at or after spill starts. When evaluating spill operations with combined wild and hatchery fish, these numbers will always look like this. There are so many more hatchery fish than wild fish, the numbers will always look good. This is controlled by releasing hatchery fish after spill starts. He wants to consider how to evaluate spill using project independent data to get a better assessment of what is really happening. Under the current paradigm, hatchery fish are protected no matter what.

Ferguson said this was a good discussion to consider while drafting the forthcoming 2026 GAP/BOP. He is unsure whether there is a way to test an early release. Kahler believes this would require developing a study approach. Ferguson asked whether the other Parties are ready to vote on this draft 2025 Wells Dam Post-Season Bypass Report and Passage-Dates Analysis.

Wells HCP-CC representatives present approve the 2025 Wells Dam Post-Season Bypass Report and Passage-Dates Analysis.

The final document was distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Geris on December 18, 2025.

B. Wells Dam Maintenance Update (Andrew Gingerich)

Andrew Gingerich said the maintenance schedule for Wells Dam is the same as last month.

Wells Dam Adult Fishway Winter Maintenance Update

Gingerich reviewed the adult fishway winter maintenance updates for Wells Dam, as follows:

- The east fish ladder maintenance is complete. This was the shorter outage.
- The west fish ladder maintenance is scheduled for the last week in December. Tentatively, on Monday, December 29, the upper section will be dewatered, and on Wednesday, December 31, the collection gallery will be dewatered. This will be the longer outage (4 to 6 weeks).

A Wells Dam east ladder fish salvage memorandum was distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Kristi Geris on December 4, 2025. John Ferguson asked whether there was anything noteworthy to report. Gingerich said nothing noteworthy about Plan Species salvaged, but one adult Pacific Lamprey and 10 juvenile Pacific Lamprey were rescued and released. Other noteworthy species included one Tiger Trout and one Bull Trout.

C. 2026 GAP/BOP (Andrew Gingerich)

Andrew Gingerich said if the Wells HCP-CC is interested in discussing alternate Wells Dam bypass operations start and stop dates for 2026, there is some time but not a whole lot. Douglas PUD hopes to distribute a package for review by early to mid-January for approval in February, and submittal to

the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) by February 28. Recall, this package is also cross walked with the Aquatic Settlement Work Group (SWG) per a Washington State Department of Ecology requirement. The package includes the Bypass Operating Plan, Gas Abatement Plan, and Spill Playbook. These documents guide bypass operations to meet FERC dam safety requirements, maximize safe passage of migrating Plan Species, and minimize total dissolved gas production.

John Ferguson expressed a little concern about timing given the Item III-A discussion that just occurred and suggested blocking out time in the January meeting for this agenda topic. This discussion could take a while and may require an extra meeting between the January and February meetings. Any proposed changes here will also need to be reviewed and approved by the Aquatic SWG, all before the FERC deadline at the end of February.

The draft 2026 GAP/BOP and associated draft *Statement of Agreement* were distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Kristi Geris on January 23, 2026.

D. Wells Dam PIT-Detection Update (Tom Kahler)

Tom Kahler reviewed PIT-detection updates for the Wells Project, as follows.

Spillway 2 Flap Gate

The impetus for exploring better detection at Wells Dam was to get away from relying on a Rocky Reach-to-Wells travel-time estimation to estimate passage timing at Wells Dam. This Spillway 2 Flap-Gate design is Douglas PUD's attempt to improve detection probability, and detection in general, at Wells Dam. If this flap gate design works in Spillway 2, the plan is to expand this detection design to Spillway 10. Douglas PUD is also looking into other more complicated options for spill gate detection in the future.

The Spillway 2 Flap-Gate detection system is behind schedule. Douglas PUD hoped to have this operational when the Pateros Railroad Bridge PIT Detection System went operational. Kahler recalled that the original flap-gate design was rejected during a review by internal engineering and operations staff, but the new design has been accepted. Douglas PUD has started the process of obtaining FERC approval. The first step is to have engineers write up a report to FERC on the flap-gate design, as proposed, describing the ability to remain attached to the flap-gate without changing the hydraulic characteristics of the structure itself, and remain complaint with dam safety, among other things. Due to availability and necessary expertise, Douglas PUD's internal engineering staff requested consulting an outside engineering firm to provide this report. This process is in the works. Douglas PUD is getting contracting in place, but there is no chance this will be completed in time to begin work prior to 2026 bypass operations. Therefore, Douglas PUD hopes to have the Spillway 2 Flap-Gate detection system in place for 2027 bypass operations.

Tracy Hillman asked whether a flap-gate is the same as a bypass control gate. Kahler said no and yes, and he suggested that Hillman join Douglas PUD and Emi Melton on a tour of Wells Dam to view this infrastructure.

John Ferguson asked about the horizontal distribution through the Wells Dam spillways. Would Spillway 10 get more detection than Spillway 2? Kahler said based on the historical fyke-net data, yearlings tend to pass more from the middle to the right side of the project, so Spillway 2 to Spillway 4, whereas subyearlings passed more from Spillway 8 to Spillway 10. Douglas PUD believes this may be why the Spillway 2 detector (WEJ[3]) has more detections of particularly steelhead but also Coho Salmon and less so yearling Chinook Salmon, and very few subyearlings. If these old data hold, Douglas PUD expects a Spillway 10 Flap-Gate detection system could detect more subyearlings.

Pateros Railroad Bridge

As discussed last month, the Pateros Railroad Bridge PIT-Tag Detection System is now operational. This site is also now live on PTAGIS and is called "Methow Train Bridge," or "MTB". Kahler described the antenna identification system, which can be found here: https://www.ptagis.org/Sites/InterrogationSites?code=MTB#siteInfo--configuration.

To date, there have been 28 detections, including 15 adult steelhead and a couple adult Coho Salmon, and the rest are juvenile Chinook Salmon and orphan tags. In talking with Ben Goodman (WDFW), these are probably wild Chinook Salmon tagged at screw traps or via electrofishing efforts.

Andrew Gingerich received a photograph from the recent heavy rainfall when river flow was nearly 10 kcfs out of the Methow Basin, which is peak level freshet flow, and yet the top of MTB was still out of water. This was somewhat of an early test in terms of improved systematic detection during high river flow. The system survived and there was top-to-bottom detection. Ferguson asked if 10 kcfs is the 10-year or 20-year recurrence interval. Kahler guessed the 10-year. Gingerich agreed and added that sometimes the freshet in the Methow is higher, but this does not typically occur in December. *(Note: The photograph of MTB during high river flow was distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Geris after the conference call on December 15.)*

Bill Towey left the conference call.

IV. Chelan PUD

A. DECISION: 2025 Rocky Reach and Rock Island Fish Spill Report (Lance Keller)

The revised 2025 Rocky Reach and Rock Island Fish Spill Report was distributed to the Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP-CCs by Kristi Geris on December 12. Lance Keller recalled discussing a number of revisions last month that were incorporated into this revised report. Per the last remaining action

[3] Wells Dam bypass sampler (site code WEJ in the Columbia Basin PTAGIS).

item, one fish was moved from unknown to hatchery. As suspected, the graph did not visually change, but this revision is reflected here.

Keely Murdoch noted that the same issues she raised about the 2026 Wells Dam GAP/BOP (see Item III-A) applies to the 2026 Rocky Reach and Rock Island bypass operations documents.

Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP-CCs representatives present approved the 2025 Rocky Reach and Rock Island Fish Spill Report), as revised.

The final report was distributed to the Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP-CCs by Geris after the conference call on December 15, 2025.

B. Rocky Reach Dam and Rock Island Dam Maintenance Updates (Lance Keller)

Lance Keller reviewed maintenance updates at Rocky Reach Dam and Rock Island Dam, as follows.

Rock Island Dam

In Powerhouse 1, work continues on Turbine Unit B2 with a return-to-service date of Q1 2027. Work continues on Turbine Unit B8 with a return-to-service date of Q2 2028.

In Powerhouse 2, Turbine Unit U6 was returned to service on December 3. Work continues on Turbine Unit U5 with a return-to-service date of Q2 2027.

Rocky Reach Dam

Rocky Reach Dam is still an 11-unit plant operating in full Kaplan capability. Looking ahead, Turbine Unit C4 will be removed from service on January 5 to inspect and replace the thrust cooler. The return-to-service date is January 23, 2026.

C. Rocky Reach Dam and Rock Island Dam Adult Fishway Winter Maintenance Updates

Lance Keller reviewed the details described in a Rocky Reach and Rock Island Adult Fishway Fish Rescue Email (Attachment B), which was distributed to the HCP-CCs by Kristi Geris after the conference call on December 15, 2025.

D. Rock Island Dam Right Bank Adult Fishway Tailrace Entrance Engineering Solution Update (Lance Keller)

Lance Keller said Chelan PUD has no updates to share on this topic today.

V. Upper Columbia River Steelhead Overshoots

A. General Updates (All)

John Ferguson asked for any updates.

Chad Jackson said WDFW's legal review is still in process.

Bill Gale said USFWS has no update, but he understands the PUDs and NMFS are working on some level of response to the YN's letter,[4] and he is curious about the status of this.

Keely Murdoch said that since the last HCP-CCs meeting, the YN had individual meetings with Chelan PUD and Douglas PUD to discuss this letter. David Blodgett, III, has also reached out to Nancy Munn to schedule a meeting with NMFS, but he has not yet heard back. K. Murdoch wants to be clear that the YN's office of legal counsel is advising that the HCPs apply to all anadromous steelhead. This is the agreement the YN signed. The YN considers that any assertion that steelhead impacted by the projects falls outside of the HCPs constitutes noncompliance with the HCPs. The YN is taking this very seriously. The YN appreciates the Chelan PUD and Douglas PUD meetings; however, she does not believe everything has been resolved. It will be important to have a discussion with NMFS. At the end of the Douglas PUD meeting, the YN did request that Douglas PUD provide a response in writing. This same request was made to Chelan PUD via email following the in-person meeting.

Scott Carlon said Munn responded to Blodgett with a request for dates after the New Year, but Carlon is unsure whether Blodgett has responded. K. Murdoch will follow up with Blodgett about scheduling this meeting.

Andrew Gingerich said there were both productive and unproductive parts to Douglas PUD's meeting with the YN. Douglas PUD and the YN have different interpretations of the issues. He believes Douglas PUD's interpretation is consistent with NMFS. Douglas PUD also takes Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance seriously. The HCP-CCs have been discussing overshoots over the past few years, including mention of some out-of-basin stocks not covered under Section 10. This presents a challenge with ESA requirements. Douglas PUD shared with the YN that Douglas PUD sent a letter to NMFS seeking technical assistance from NMFS, understanding that these out-of-basin fish are interacting with the Wells Project and Douglas PUD intends to remain compliant with ESA. Douglas PUD suspects this will lead to Section 7 consultation. Douglas PUD believes the YN letter underscores the importance that these fish are not protected under Section 10. There have been good discussions within the HCP-PCs, and now with NMFS. More to come on this topic. Ferguson asked what this letter means in terms of process. Carlon confirmed that Douglas PUD's letter initiated an informal consultation process, or "pre-consultation discussions" that may or may not lead to consultation under the ESA. Gingerich noted that Douglas PUD does intend to provide a written response to the YN, as requested.

[4] Regarding, "HCP Definitions of Plan and Permit Species Must Include Overshooting Steelhead," distributed to the HCP-PCs on August 22, 2025.

Lance Keller said Chelan PUD also sent NMFS a technical assistance memorandum. Chelan PUD also takes ESA compliance seriously and is waiting to hear from NMFS regarding next steps.

Gale asked whether NMFS's recommendation via this informal consultation between NMFS and the PUDs requires coming back to the HCP Parties. It seems there are conversations ongoing outside of the HCP-CCs, and he is curious how this comes back to the HCP Parties. Carlon said these initial conversations are still being vetted internally by NMFS. NMFS has some thoughts on how to do this—he does not see this happening in a vacuum, and he believes everything will come out naturally as the process proceeds. Ferguson recalled a comment from Ritchie Graves (former NMFS HCP-PCs representative) during the last HCP-PCs meeting[5] that if this goes to formal consultation, that will only be between the PUDs, NMFS, and FERC, which is why Graves was pushing the HCP-CCs to reach agreement within the HCP-CCs where all Parties are present. Coordination will occur with the other Parties, but the formal consultation process involves the PUDs, NMFS, and FERC. *(Correction: After reviewing the HCP-PCs meeting minutes, Graves said this process only involves the PUDs, USFWS, and NMFS.)*

Gingerich said the HCP-CCs can agree that Entiat and Wenatchee fish are HCP Plan Species, so Douglas PUD plans to share data in January toward why these fish are overshooting, management strategies in the lower river, and in general what data are available. Ferguson agreed discussing these data is consistent with the HCP-PCs guidance to the HCP-CCs.

VI. HCP Administration

A. NMFS HCP Representation Designation Letter (John Ferguson)

John Ferguson said a representation designation letter was distributed to the HCP-CCs by Kristi Geris on December 8, 2025. As discussed last month, Emi Melton is the new NMFS HCP-CCs alternate. Also, Nancy Munn is officially the new NMFS HCP-PCs representative, Jennie Franks is the new NMFS HCP-PCs alternate, Scott Carlon is officially the new HCP-TCs representative, and Sean Gross is the new HCP-TCs alternate.

Carlon added that Franks is the interim supervisor but may become the new supervisor. Franks replaced Ritchie Graves (NMFS, retired) in the Branch Chief position.

B. 2025 HCP Annual Report Schedules (John Ferguson)

John Ferguson reviewed the following schedule:

- Wells: HCP-CC 70-day review is from Friday, February 20 to Tuesday, May 5.

[5] HCP-PCs meeting on April 8, 2025.

- Rock Island and Rocky Reach: HCP-CCs 70-day review is from Tuesday, February 24 to Thursday, May 7.

Ferguson noted that he plans to help with review of the annual reports.

C. Next Meetings (John Ferguson)

The next scheduled HCP-CCs meeting is on January 27, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and will be held virtually by Microsoft Teams. The next joint session (Joint Session 13) with the PRCC to discuss subyearlings will be held this same day (schedule to be determined).

The HCP-CCs meetings on February 24 and March 24 are from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and will be held virtually by Microsoft Teams.

VII. Joint Session with the PRCC

A. Subyearling Chinook Salmon Workshop Recap (John Ferguson and Larissa Rohrbach)

The HCP-CCs and PRCC convened Joint Session 12 to discuss the 2024 Subyearling Chinook Salmon Workshop (see separate joint session minutes).

List of Attachments

Attachment A List of Attendees
Attachment B Rocky Reach and Rock Island Adult Fishway Fish Rescue Email

Attachment A
List of Attendees

Name	Organization
John Ferguson	Anchor QEA
Kristi Geris	Anchor QEA
Tracy Hillman	BioAnalysts
Lance Keller*	Chelan PUD
Catherine Willard*	Chelan PUD
Bill Towey†	Chelan PUD
Tom Kahler*	Douglas PUD
Andrew Gingerich*	Douglas PUD
John Rohrback	Douglas PUD
Scott Carlon*	National Marine Fisheries Service
Emi Melton*†	National Marine Fisheries Service
Bill Gale*	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Chad Jackson*	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Andrew Murdoch*	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Keely Murdoch*	Yakama Nation

Notes:

* Denotes HCP-CC representative or alternate.

† Bill Towey left the conference call after Item III-D, and Emi Melton left the conference call during Item III-A.