FINAL

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ANCHOR QEA

Memorandum

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

Date: March 25, 2026

From: Tracy Hillman, HCP Coordinating Committees Chair

cc: Kristi Geris, HCP Coordinating Committees Support

Re: Final Minutes of the February 24, 2026, 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 Tuesday, February 24, 2026, from 1:15 p.m. to 3:30 p.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 reviewed past Fish Passage Center (FPC) Annual Reports and will share 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 during the HCP-CCs March 24, 2026, meeting (Item I-C).
3. The Wells HCP-CC will identify questions to address regarding Douglas PUD's forthcoming Survival Verification Study 2030 species selection for discussion during the HCP-CCs March 24, 2026, meeting (Item IV-C).
4. Chelan PUD will distribute the draft *2026 Fish Spill Plan, Rock Island and Rocky Reach Dams Public Utility District No. 1 of Chelan County* (2026 Rock Island and Rocky Reach Fish Spill Plan) and associated statement of agreement (SOA), and the Rock Island and Rocky Reach HCP-CCs will submit edits and comments by March 6; at which time Chelan PUD will determine whether an additional meeting is needed toward obtaining approval of these documents (Item V-A). *(Note: The draft SOA was distributed on February 27, the draft spill plan was distributed on March 3, and revised spill plans were distributed on March 4 and March 6. The SOA and spill plan were approved via email on March 10 and March 11, 2026, respectively.)*
5. Chelan PUD will reach out to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) about today's discussion on the draft 2026 Rock Island and Rocky Reach Fish Spill Plan and associated SOA (Item V-A).
6. Rock Island HCP-CC representatives will submit a vote via email on the revised *Rock Island Dam Smolt Monitoring and Gas Bubble Trauma Evaluation Plan 2026* (2026 Rock Island Bypass Monitoring Plan) and draft SOA titled, *Establish Rock Island Juvenile Bypass Operating Period of March 15-August 31 Annually* (Rock Island Bypass March 15 SOA), by March 6, 2026 (Item V-B). *(Note: These documents were approved.)*

7. Rocky Reach HCP-CC representatives will be prepared to vote on the draft *2026 Rocky Reach Juvenile Fish Bypass System Operations Plan* (2026 RRJSF Protocol) during the HCP-CCs March 24, 2026, meeting (Item V-B).
8. Chelan PUD will distribute the draft 2025 Rock Island and Rocky Reach Juvenile Bypass Reports, and Rock Island and Rocky Reach HCP-CCs representatives will be prepared to vote during the HCP-CCs March 24, 2026, meeting (Item V-C).
9. The next scheduled HCP-CCs meeting is on Tuesday, March 24, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and will be held in person at the Confluence Technology Center in Wenatchee, Washington, with a virtual Microsoft Teams option. The next joint session (Joint Session 15) with the Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee (PRCC) to discuss subyearlings will be held this same day (schedule to be determined) (Item VII-A).

Decision Summary

1. Wells HCP-CC representatives present approved the *2026 Total Dissolved Gas Abatement Plan* and appended *Wells Bypass Operating Plan* (2026 GAP/BOP), with an April 1 bypass start date. The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CTCR) approved via email on February 19, 2026. USFWS approved via phone call with Douglas PUD prior to today's conference call (Item IV-A).
2. Wells HCP-CC representatives present approved the *2026 Wells HCP Action Plan*, as revised (Item IV-B).
3. Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP-CCs representatives present approved the *2026 Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP Action Plan*, as revised (Item V-D).
4. The Rock Island HCP-CC approved the 2026 Rock Island Bypass Monitoring Plan, as revised, and the Rock Island Bypass March 15 SOA, as revised, via email as follows: the CTCR abstained on March 5, and the Yakama Nation (YN), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), USFWS, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and Chelan PUD approved on March 6, 2026 (Item V-B).
5. The Rock Island HCP-CC approved the SOA *Establish Rock Island Fish Spill Dates, 2026-2030* (Rock Island Fish Spill Date SOA), as revised, via email as follows: the YN approved on March 3; the CTCR abstained on March 5; WDFW, NMFS, USFWS, and Chelan PUD approved on March 10, 2026 (Item V-A).
6. The Rock Island and Rocky Reach HCP-CCs approved the 2026 Rock Island and Rocky Reach Fish Spill Plan, as revised, via email as follows: the YN approved on March 6; WDFW, NMFS, USFWS, and Chelan PUD approved on March 10; and the CTCR abstained on March 11, 2026 (Item V-A).

Agreements

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

Review Items

1. The draft 2026 RRJSF Protocol was distributed to the Rocky Reach HCP-CC by Kristi Geris on February 19. Chelan PUD will request approval of this plan during the HCP-CCs March 24, 2026, meeting (Item V-B).
2. The draft 2025 Wells HCP Annual Report was distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Geris on February 20 and is available for a 70-day review with edits and comments due to Geris by May 5, 2026.
3. The draft 2025 Rock Island and Rocky Reach HCP Annual Reports were distributed to the Rock Island and Rocky Reach HCP-CCs by Geris on February 24 and are available for a 70-day review with edits and comments due to Geris by May 7, 2026.
4. The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission's annual request to tag Sockeye Salmon at Wells Dam in 2026 was distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Geris on March 3. Douglas PUD will request approval during the HCP-CC April 28, 2026, meeting.
5. The draft 2026 Broodstock Collection Protocols were distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Geris on March 18. Douglas PUD will request approval during the HCP-CC March 24, 2026, meeting.

Finalized Documents

1. The final *2026 Wells HCP Action Plan* was distributed to the HCP-CCs by Kristi Geris on February 24, 2026 (Item IV-B).
2. The final 2026 GAP/BOP was filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on February 27 and was distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Geris on March 3, 2026 (Item IV-A).

I. Joint Session with the PRCC

A. Subyearling Chinook Salmon Workshop Recap (Larissa Rohrbach and Tracy Hillman)

The HCP-CCs and PRCC convened Joint Session 14 to discuss PUD updates on draft study plans (see separate joint session minutes).

II. Welcome

A. Review Agenda (Tracy Hillman)

Tracy Hillman welcomed the HCP-CCs and reviewed the agenda. Hillman asked for any additions or changes to the agenda. No additions or changes were requested.

B. Meeting Minutes Approval (Kristi Geris)

The HCP-CCs reviewed the revised draft January 27 conference call minutes. Kristi Geris said edits received were minor clarifications that were incorporated into the revised minutes. Geris added distribution of a few review items. There was one outstanding comment from Tom Kahler under the

HCP Hatchery Committees (HCP-HCs) Update, and a parenthetical note was added to address this. HCP-CCs representatives present approved the January 27 conference call minutes, as revised.

C. Last Meeting Action Items (Tracy Hillman)

Action items from the HCP-CCs meeting on January 27 and follow-up discussions were as follows *(Note: Italicized text corresponds to agenda items from the meeting on January 27)*:

1. *Douglas PUD will share the Wells Dam Spillway 2 Flap Gate PIT Detection design concept once it is available (Item I-C).*
   This action item will be carried forward.
2. *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 I-C).*
   Lance Keller said he and Thad Mosey (Chelan PUD) located the reports referenced in the FPC reports, will review the reports, and will have something to share next month.
3. *Chelan PUD will confirm with Spheros Environmental (Spheros)[1] details about the calculated collection efficiency for the Rock Island Juvenile Fish Bypass Trap associated with Powerhouse 2, as presented during today's meeting, including what model and inputs were used, and notably how to interpret the temperature data (Item IV-A).*
   Keller said Spheros clarified that the negative correlation is related to a decrease in collection efficiency as temperature increases. Spheros also indicated that metrics such as temperature are highly correlated to the day of year and photoperiod. Keely Murdoch said she was thinking these data meant the opposite, and she asked about Spheros producing a memorandum on these findings. Keller said a report is still under internal review, but Chelan PUD is still tracking this request.
4. *Chelan PUD will distribute a draft SOA memorializing the following: 1) the new March 15 to August 31 juvenile bypass period for Rock Island Dam; 2) completion of the 10-year requirement to review that bypass operations are adequately protecting 95% of the spring and summer migrations of juvenile Plan Species; and 3) the juvenile bypass operational period will be evaluated again in 10 years (2034), per Section 5.4.1. of the Rock Island HCP (Item IV-A).*
   This will be discussed during today's meeting.
5. *Chelan PUD will distribute the draft Rock Island and Rocky Reach Dams 2025 Juvenile Bypass Reports, 2026 Fish Spill Plan, and 2026 Juvenile Bypass Protocols and will communicate a proposed document approval schedule[2] in the correspondence (Item IV-B).*
   Keller said some of these documents have been distributed, the spill plan will be discussed during today's conference call, and the bypass reports are forthcoming.

[1] Formerly Four Peaks Environmental Science and Data Solutions.
[2] Including the draft *2026 Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP Action Plan*, which was already distributed on January 27, 2026.

6. *USFWS and the CTCR will coordinate their respective votes on the several Decision Items planned for next month's HCP-CCs meeting, ahead of their absence (Item VII-B).*
   This will be discussed during today's conference call.

III. HCP Hatchery and Tributary Committees Update

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

Tracy Hillman updated the HCP-CCs on the following actions and discussions that occurred during the HCP Tributary Committees (HCP-TCs) meeting on February 12, 2026:

- *Review of HCP-TCs Policies and Procedures:* The HCP-TCs reviewed both their Operating Procedures and Policies and Procedures for Funding Projects. They updated the membership list in their Operating Procedures. No changes were made to the Policies and Procedures document.
- *2026 HCP Action Plans:* The HCP-TCs reviewed the tributary portions of the draft 2026 HCP Action Plans. Members had no comments or edits.
- *Presentation and Discussion on the Coordinated Resource Management Riparian Stewardship Package Project (with the PRCC Habitat Subcommittee):* Last year, Cascade Fisheries applied for funding from the HCP-TCs to support efforts to adaptively manage riparian and instream restoration actions across 28 project sites in the Wenatchee and Entiat watersheds as well as in two smaller tributaries to the Columbia River. Although the HCP-TCs did not support the project as proposed, the HCP-TCs indicated that they would consider funding stewardship efforts in high-priority areas that support Plan Species. Cascade Fisheries joined the February meeting to identify and discuss high-priority areas that support Plan Species. The sponsor developed site prioritization criteria to identify and rank sites. The HCP-TCs will review the prioritization criteria and ranked list of project sites and determine whether they want the sponsor to submit a proposal for adaptively managing specific project sites. Keely Murdoch asked what is considered a high-priority area. Traditionally, this would have been natal streams, but the latest information suggests it may be more important to restore areas in the mainstem where fish are rearing. Hillman said these are "cheap and cheerful" restoration actions (low-tech process-based actions) such as PALs and BDAs,[3] implemented primarily in tributaries. These types of structures require more management because these can blow out. This work is to maintain structures that were installed in the past. The primary criterion is whether Plan Species use the area. If not, it is not a priority. K. Murdoch said, so these are specific actions. Hillman said this is correct.
- *Plan Species Account Deposits:* Both Chelan PUD and Douglas PUD deposited funds into the Plan Species Accounts in January 2026. Douglas PUD deposited $380,341.72 into the Wells Plan Species Account and Chelan PUD deposited $1,047,474 into the Rock Island Plan Species

[3] Post-assisted log structures and beaver dam analogs.

Account and $496,104 into the Rocky Reach Plan Species Account. As of the end of January, the unallocated balances within each account are $1,176,829 in the Wells Plan Species Account, $2,072,752 in the Rocky Reach Plan Species Account, and $1,987,076 in the Rock Island Plan Species Account. The total unallocated balance across all accounts is $5,236,657.

- *Next Meeting:* The next meeting of the HCP-TCs will be on March 12, 2026.

Hillman updated the HCP-CCs on the following actions and discussions that occurred during the HCP-HCs meeting on February 18 to 19, 2026 *(Note: Joint HCP-HCs/PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee items are noted by "joint," Wells HCP-HC items are noted by "Wells," and Rock Island and Rocky Reach HCP-HC items are noted by "Rock Island/Rocky Reach")*:

- *Hatchery M&E Plan Update (joint):* The HCP-HCs continue to work through the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan. They have revised and updated most of the sections in the plan. They will continue to work through the juvenile monitoring section and are waiting on fish health and hatchery managers to complete their input on the Fish Health section. They hope to have the plan completed and approved by May 2026.
- *2026 Broodstock Collection Protocols (joint):* The HCP-HCs are reviewing the draft 2026 Broodstock Collection Protocols. They plan to approve the protocols during their March meeting and will then submit the protocols to the Wells HCP-CC for approval. The final protocols are due to NMFS on April 15, 2026.
- *Wenatchee Spring Chinook Salmon HGMPs (joint):* The HCP-HCs continue to work on the Wenatchee River spring Chinook Salmon Hatchery and Genetic Management Plans (HGMPs). They plan to have these HGMPs completed by May.
- *Twisp River Steelhead Broodstock Collection (Wells):* Douglas PUD proposed the collection of up to six pairs of natural-origin adult steelhead for inclusion in the brood year 2026 Twisp River steelhead conservation program. Currently, five pairs of natural-origin steelhead are collected for the conservation program. The increase of one pair is primarily in response to lower fecundity observed in the recent past and increased incidence of bacterial coldwater disease. The Wells HCP-HC approved the collection of up to six pairs of natural-origin adult steelhead only if the additional pair is needed.
- *Twisp River Spring Chinook Salmon Genetic Criteria (Wells):* The Wells HCP-HC revisited the criteria for collecting broodstock for the Twisp River spring Chinook Salmon program. In recent years, the program has been unsuccessful in meeting broodstock collection targets for the Twisp River program. NMFS evaluated the revised criteria and concluded that they are consistent with permits.
- *Tagging Studies using Wells Summer Chinook Salmon (Wells):* Douglas PUD reported that the Wells HCP-CC is currently evaluating a study plan to assess the effects of temperature, fish size, and tagging on fish survival and tag retention. Douglas PUD plans to use 2,000 brood year (BY) 2025 subyearling Chinook Salmon from the Wells summer Chinook Salmon yearling program for the study. These studies will be conducted at Wells Hatchery and are needed

before conducting a subyearling survival study in the Wells Dam project area. The use of 2,000 subyearlings should not affect the release target of 320,000 yearling summer Chinook Salmon from the Wells summer Chinook Salmon yearling program. After the Wells HCP-CC approves the study, Douglas PUD will request approval from the Wells HCP-HC, likely during the March or April meeting.

- *2026 Chelan PUD Hatchery M&E Implementation Plan (Rock Island/Rocky Reach):* Last month, Chelan PUD shared their 2026 M&E Implementation Plan with the Committees. Based on comments received, Chelan PUD updated the 2026 M&E Implementation Plan. After review and discussion, the Rock Island and Rocky Reach HCP-HCs approved the Implementation Plan.
- *Monitoring Database (Rock Island/Rocky Reach):* Chelan PUD continues to work on the M&E database. They are coordinating with WDFW and are currently uploading raw data into the database.
- *Tagging Studies using Chelan Falls Summer Chinook Salmon (Rock Island/Rocky Reach)*: Chelan PUD reported that the Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP-CCs and PRCC are currently evaluating a study plan to assess the effects of temperature, fish size, and tagging on fish growth, survival, and tag retention. They plan to use 6,000 BY 2025 subyearling Chinook Salmon from the Chelan Falls summer Chinook Salmon program for the study. These studies will be conducted at the USFWS Abernathy Fish Technology Center and are needed before conducting a subyearling survival study in the Rocky Reach and Rock Island project areas. The use of 6,000 Chinook Salmon fry should not affect the release target of 535,283 summer Chinook Salmon yearling smolts from the Chelan Falls program. After the Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP-CCs approve the study, Chelan PUD will request approval from the Rocky Reach HCP-HC, likely during the March meeting.
- *Next Meeting:* The next meetings of the HCP-HCs will be on March 18 to 19, 2026.

IV. Douglas PUD

A. DECISION: 2026 GAP/BOP and SOA (Andrew Gingerich)

Andrew Gingerich said the draft 2026 GAP/BOP and associated draft SOA were distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Kristi Geris on January 23. Gingerich spoke with Kirk Truscott and the CTCR approved the 2026 GAP/BOP and SOA via email on February 19, with the April 2 start date but indicated a preference for April 1. Gingerich spoke with Keely Murdoch, had a good discussion, the YN also prefers an April 1 start date, as included in the YN's comments on the draft SOA distributed on February 19. Gingerich requested feedback about the proposed bypass start date from NMFS and WDFW.

Scott Carlon asked for a summary of the request. Gingerich recalled that Wells Dam bypass operations have traditionally started on April 9. Based on feedback from the Wells HCP-CC over the

last few years, there has been an emphasis on providing protection for wild spring Chinook Salmon. Last year, operations started on April 3. This year, Douglas PUD is proposing a start date of April 2, based on the 5-year average of arrival timing at Rocky Reach. Douglas PUD is also proposing to use this method to determine the bypass start date moving forward. Carlon said NMFS is supportive of this.

Chad Jackson said he reviewed the SOA and thanked Douglas PUD for taking a step toward an earlier start date. WDFW is supportive of an April 1 start date, which seems to be the earliest possible until further studies can be conducted to better inform project passage of wild fish. He also has additional edits to the SOA that will make WDFW more comfortable with the language.

Gingerich summarized that the CTCR, the YN, and now WDFW prefer an April 1 start date. Douglas PUD wanted to use a tool with data to support it to identify a flexible bypass start date. The YN's edits to the SOA removes this tool, which is difficult for Douglas PUD, and he and K. Murdoch discussed this on the phone.

K. Murdoch reiterated what WDFW said, that the YN really appreciates Douglas PUD putting this SOA forward. She appreciates the intent behind it. The YN's concern is, currently, there is no monitoring in place to inform the natural-origin run timing at Wells Dam, so this SOA seems premature. This SOA relies largely on monitoring at Rocky Reach to inform natural-origin run timing and this monitoring, except for 1 in 10 years, does not start until April 1. This SOA says that Wells Dam bypass operations will protect 95% of the natural-origin spring Chinook Salmon migration, but this is incorrect if monitoring does not start until April 1. This means bypass operations are only protecting 95% of fish migrating after April 1. Another concern is the 5-year average. Right now, there is one data point with an early start of March 1, but as time moves on, this data point will fall off. Douglas PUD did try to resolve this concern by proposing to fix the 2024 data point in the 5-year calculation as one data point falls off each year. She discussed this internally, but this approach still means that except for 20% of the data, this dataset is largely based on an April 1 start date. Considering all available data, the YN believes that April 1 is probably not protective enough, but recognizing the current regulatory framework, April 1 is the earliest start the YN can propose. She does not disagree with the benefit of using a tool that is informed, but for natural-origin run timing at Wells, there is no tool yet. During her most recent internal conversation with policy staff, it was suggested that instead of a multi-year SOA, maybe make this a 1-year SOA. She is not certain whether this will be resolved by next year, but the Pateros Railroad Bridge PIT array is now operational and other PIT-detection efforts are underway at Wells. If this is a 1-year SOA, this gives the Wells HCP-CC time to continue discussing what future monitoring might look like.

Gingerich said these are all good points, notably Douglas PUD's suggestion to keep the 2024 early start datapoint in the 5-year dataset. Where Douglas PUD and the YN left it, was possibly separating the SOA process from the 2026 GAP/BOP, which is due to FERC on February 27. Douglas PUD and

the YN both agreed maybe it is too early for this SOA, as K. Murdoch explained. Recognizing the limitations and where this stands now, Douglas PUD is proposing to include an April 1 start date in the 2026 BOP and put the SOA aside for now. Douglas PUD does not see a lot of utility in a 1-year SOA, which would likely be something similar to the YN's edits, which eliminates the tool for start date determination.

Tracy Hillman said the Aquatic Settlement Work Group (Aquatic SWG) approved the 2026 GAP/BOP via email on February 18, understanding that the proposed Wells Dam bypass start date is April 2, but will be no sooner than April 1 pending Wells HCP-CC guidance. So now, the Wells HCP-CC is voting on the 2026 GAP/BOP with an April 1 start date and not voting on the SOA. Gingerich said this is correct. Tom Kahler noted that he spoke with Bill Gale, and USFWS prefers an April 1 start date for reasons discussed today but would approve an April 2 start date if this is what the Wells HCP-CC preferred.

Wells HCP-CC representatives present approved the 2026 GAP/BOP, with an April 1 bypass start date. The CTCR approved via email on February 19, 2026. USFWS approved via phone call with Douglas PUD prior to today's conference call.

Hillman asked about next steps for the SOA. Gingerich suggested holding off for now—there is more work to do, and today's agenda is full. Douglas PUD will continue discussing this offline and will bring it back to the agenda when something is ready. He would like to keep thinking about how to use data to inform a start date.

(Note: The final 2026 GAP/BOP was filed with FERC on February 27 and was distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Geris on March 3, 2026.)

B. DECISION: 2026 Wells HCP Action Plan (Tom Kahler)

An updated draft *2026 Wells HCP Action Plan* (version 2) was distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Kristi Geris on January 27. Tracy Hillman said the Wells HCP-TC and Wells HCP-HC already reviewed and had no comments on their portions of the action plan. Tom Kahler said no comments were received from the Wells HCP-CC either. He said as discussed last month, the "version 2" included his additions under No. 2 "Monitor Program RealTime" and "No. 11 Subyearling Chinook Temperature and Tag-Retention Study."

Wells HCP-CC representatives present approved the *2026 Wells HCP Action Plan*, as revised.

(Note: The final action plan was distributed to the Wells HCP-CC by Geris after the conference call on February 24, 2026.)

C. Survival Verification Study 2030 Species Selection (Tom Kahler and Andrew Gingerich)

Tom Kahler recalled that the last two survival verification studies used yearling summer Chinook Salmon to verify the continued achievement of Phase III (Standard Achieved) for yearling spring migrants (Chinook Salmon, steelhead, and Coho Salmon) migrating through the Wells Project. Coho Salmon were added to this phase designation in 2015, based on surrogacy, and among the Phase III (Standard Achieved) species are the only ones that have not been studied. During the last species selection discussion for the 2020 survival verification study, the Wells HCP-CC considered the challenges associated with studying each candidate species, including which broodstock program to use and where to rear the study fish, among other standard concerns. Particularly with Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed spring Chinook Salmon, can this use be permitted in time? At that time, Douglas PUD had just completed consultation on Methow spring Chinook Salmon hatchery programs, but the new permit did not include anything about releasing an additional 100,000-plus spring Chinook Salmon in the Wells Project (for a survival study). Ultimately, the Wells HCP-CC settled on a practical approach of studying yearling Chinook Salmon for 1 more year, but also agreed for study in 2030, to consider obtaining permit coverage to study yearling spring Chinook Salmon or default to Coho Salmon. This path forward is captured in a Wells HCP-CC June 26, 2018, SOA.[4] For the 2030 study, this requires collecting broodstock in 2028. If spring Chinook Salmon are selected, this will require permit coverage, so Douglas PUD has already started this discussion with NMFS, who recommended first obtaining direction from the Wells HCP-CC. Douglas PUD is starting this discussion with the Wells HCP-CC now, and has also started this discussion with the CTCR and USFWS representatives (not in attendance).

Andrew Gingerich said the 2018 SOA compelled Douglas PUD to start engaging with NMFS to provide sufficient time to consider spring Chinook Salmon for study in 2030. After coordinating with NMFS recently, the direction now is to start this discussion with the Wells HCP-CC, which has 2 years to reach agreement and get through the ESA-consultation and National Environmental Policy Act permitting process, if this is the preferred route.

Keely Murdoch said that "collecting broodstock and obtaining permits" seems to be assuming that fish raised in a hatchery will be used for study fish. In addition to species selection, there needs to be a discussion about fish source. Considering all of the improvements in study methodologies in recent years, she would like to consider whether this next study can use fish that are more representative of actively migrating fish and potentially even wild fish. There also needs to be a discussion about delayed mortality, which informs which sample sizes are required, which tag types are needed, and

[4] SOA titled *Regarding the Selection of Study Fish for Douglas PUD's 2020 Wells Project Survival Verification Study for Yearling Spring Migrants in Phase III (Standard Achieved)*, as approved by the Wells HCP-CC on June 26, 2018, and distributed that same day.

whether there is a need to raise hatchery fish. She believes the HCP-CCs are due for a more in-depth survival study discussion than just species selection.

Kahler said last time, it took several meetings to get through these discussions, which partly included what K. Murdoch just described, and he agreed there is a lot to discuss again. Thinking about sequencing, there is some "chicken and egg" here to sort out. If the study uses spring Chinook Salmon and there is delayed mortality, there is a sample-size demand associated with this. If there is no delayed mortality, then there is still a sample-size demand, but this depends on tags used. In this case, this is a survival verification study, not a new survival study, which has a little different ramifications than a new study. For example, if studying subyearlings, the Wells HCP first requires 3 years of valid studies. This is not the case. This is verifying survival for Plan Species in Phase III (Standard Achieved), which requires using the same methods as used in the past. For Douglas PUD, this means using PIT tags. If studying springers, this will require about 150,000 fish, which is not possible with wild only, so this means using hatchery fish. All of these things need to be considered. In 2005, when Chelan PUD moved from PIT to acoustic tags, this first required side-by-side PIT versus acoustic studies, which Kahler believes is a necessary step to change methodologies from past studies.

K. Murdoch agreed this is a chicken and egg conversation, and the Wells HCP-CC needs to think strategically about where to start. She suggested starting with delayed mortality, which includes sample size and tag type, and then move through species selection and fish source. She also thinks there should be discussion about what a survival verification study is. She agrees this needs to verify survival standards are still being met. This is the core essence of what this is. However, a lot of early studies (by others) that led to Phase III (Standard Achieved) were using larger tags, which required larger fish; and in the case of the Wells Project, these studies used hatchery fish, which are larger than wild fish. These early studies have inherent biases, and using the same methods to verify Phase III (Standard Achieved) keeps replicating these biases. Moving forward in this 50-year agreement, with better study designs and sample sizes, the goal should be to improve this estimate, remove biases, and get closer to the true value of what fish migrating through a project is experiencing.

Gingerich said, for the record, he stands behind Douglas PUD's 2020 Survival Verification Study and the ones before this as the gold standard of survival studies—high sample sizes and paired releases. It will never be perfect in the field, but in terms of high-quality study design effort, he takes a little offense to hearing that these studies were biased in an extreme way. Regarding fish size, the goal is to consider the distribution of spring migrants and use some middle component of the distribution. If there is a desire to include smaller fish, there also needs to be larger fish. His intention is to balance the comments here. K. Murdoch clarified she was not trying to imply that past studies are hugely biased, but she does believe using hatchery-only introduces bias. Wild fish are much smaller, and hatchery fish survive at higher rates. How to get more wild fish in the sample has been debated extensively. If a study can use smaller sample sizes, maybe this opens the door for wild fish.

Andrew Murdoch said past studies for the Wells Project have estimated hatchery fish survival and have drawn inferences from this for wild fish. It is now known that there are a lot of differences between hatchery and wild fish, so maybe this requires wild and hatchery survival studies.

Kahler reminded the Wells HCP-CC that there is no way to collect fish passing Wells Dam. There is no gatewell dipping and there is no bypass that allows for capture or enumeration of fish. To use wild fish in a study design—where would these fish be collected? Fish source, collection methods, screening process—these are all part of the equation. Douglas PUD is not interested in studying tag effects as part of a study. Douglas PUD wants to study fish that are run-of-river behavior. Douglas PUD will always prefer PIT tags because this does not add an element of handling and procedure, and there are no lingering major concerns about tagger or tagging effect. Douglas PUD continues to hear this desire to do something different, but from where? Douglas PUD can raise these fish in a hatchery, but at the end of the day, these are still hatchery fish, which is not ideal for evaluating true wild fish survival. All of these things need discussion, and meanwhile, the clock is ticking on a NMFS consultation process.

K. Murdoch asked, when Chelan PUD has used run-of-river fish for survival studies, including ESA--listed and wild fish, were there other permits needed? Or is this a fish reared in hatchery issue? Lance Keller said he would need to verify, but he does not recall obtaining additional permits, besides a Scientific Collection Permit and approval from the HCP-CCs. K. Murdoch wondered whether this is embedded in the Rocky Reach Biological Opinion (BiOp). Keller said he believes so. K. Murdoch asked whether Douglas PUD has needed extra permits because of the plan to rear in hatchery. Kahler said he will need to review the minutes. He recalled last time discussing taking Methow spring Chinook Salmon and releasing fish at the mouth of the Okanogan River, so the expectation of where those fish may go upon return was not clear. Brood source discussed was conservation program fish intended to go back to the basin. Using hatchery fish undoubtedly played into this. He believes it was Charlene Hurst (NMFS) who was working on that BiOp.

Tracy Hillman recommended that the Wells HCP-CC identify questions to address regarding Douglas PUD's forthcoming Survival Verification Study 2030 species selection for discussion during the HCP-CCs March 24, 2026, meeting.

D. Wells Dam Maintenance Update (Andrew Gingerich)

Andrew Gingerich shared a Wells Dam Maintenance Update and Wells Dam Adult Fishway Winter Maintenance Update, as described in a Wells Dam Maintenance and Fishway Update Email (Attachment B), which was distributed to the HCP-CCs by Kristi Geris after the conference call on February 24, 2026.

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

Tom Kahler said Douglas PUD is waiting for contracting advice on the Spillway 2 Flap Gate and hopes to have answers by tomorrow. Another update will be provided next month.

V. Chelan PUD

A. 2026 Rock Island and Rocky Reach Fish Spill Plan (Lance Keller)

Lance Keller said Chelan PUD has not yet distributed this draft plan. He recalled last month while discussing Rock Island bypass operations, the YN proposed an April 1 fish spill start date and a disconnect from the run-timing monitoring associated with the bypass system. He took this request back internally, and has since spoken with the YN, WDFW, NMFS, and the CTCR. He was unable to connect with USFWS. He had the same conversation with each representative. Chelan PUD feels the YN's suggestion is an opportunity under adaptive management to look at optimization of fish spill at Rock Island Dam. Therefore, Chelan PUD agrees to start spring fish spill of 10% of the estimated daily average river flow on April 1 at 0000 hours. As a compromise, Chelan PUD is proposing to continue using run-time data at Rock Island on the backside to determine fish spill end dates based on the historical average. Chelan PUD believes that 95% coverage is a foundation for Plan Species.

Keller shared on Microsoft Teams the following spreadsheet:

	RI Subyearling Chinook							Spill		
			Percent Passage							Stop
Year	Estimate Type	1%	2.5%	5%	50%	95%	97%	Start Date	Stop Date	Percent passage
2016	Forecast/Hindcast	3-Jun	5-Jun	7-Jun	28-Jun	26-Jul	30-Jul	29-May	11-Aug	99.34
2017	Forecast/Hindcast	1-Jun	3-Jun	5-Jun	27-Jun	5-Aug	12-Aug	26-May	18-Aug	98.73
2018	Forecast/Hindcast	1-Jun	2-Jun	3-Jun	28-Jun	31-Jul	6-Aug	25-May	14-Aug	99.28
2019	Forecast/Hindcast	1-Jun	3-Jun	6-Jun	6-Jul	4-Aug	9-Aug	2-Jun	19-Aug	99.26
2020	Forecast/Hindcast	1-Jun	2-Jun	2-Jun	27-Jun	6-Aug	10-Aug	23-May	18-Aug	99.20
2021	Forecast/Hindcast	1-Jun	2-Jun	3-Jun	27-Jun	3-Aug	3-Aug	4-Jun	16-Aug	99.51
2022	Forecast/Hindcast	3-Jun	4-Jun	6-Jun	28-Jun	9-Aug	13-Aug	1-Jun	21-Aug	99.32
2023	Forecast/Hindcast	2-Jun	4-Jun	7-Jun	25-Jun	31-Jul	6-Aug	1-Jun	11-Aug	98.48
2024	Forecast/Hindcast	6-Jun	8-Jun	10-Jun	27-Jun	4-Aug	8-Aug	7-Jun	15-Aug	98.90
2025	Forecast/Hindcast	3-Jun	6-Jun	7-Jun	20-Jun	28-Jul	31-Jul	6-Jun	4-Aug	97.64
10 Year Mean	**Forecast/Hindcast**	**2-Jun**	**3-Jun**	**5-Jun**	**27-Jun**	**2-Aug**	**6-Aug**	**31-May**	**14-Aug**	**98.97**
5 Year Mean	**Forecast/Hindcast**	**3-Jun**	**4-Jun**	**6-Jun**	**25-Jun**	**2-Aug**	**6-Aug**	**3-Jun**	**13-Aug**	**98.77**

This is a summary of run-timing estimates for subyearlings in forecast/hindcast from 2016 to 2025. The daily predictions update as daily points come in, and the forecast/hindcast are the final dates that Chelan PUD uses to evaluate how the fish spill program performed each year. Keller reviewed the percent passage dates and noted that the 10-year mean and 5-year mean for 95% passage are both August 2. He reviewed the spill stop dates and noted that the percent passage when fish spill ended has been 97.6% and greater. Therefore, Chelan PUD is proposing an end date of August 2, which the data suggest is a conservative approach. Additionally, looking at the front end, or 1% passage, this has historically been as early as June 1, 2, and 3. Therefore, Chelan PUD is proposing an

instantaneous transition from spring to summer spill on June 1 to capture the front end of the subyearling outmigration.

Keller said while discussing this proposal with the CTCR, Kirk Truscott questioned the 95% passage data on the backend, and there was discussion about dwindling index counts on the backend. Ultimately, there was agreement for Chelan PUD to continue monitoring run-timing data and use the 5-year mean dataset to evaluate the backend component. Keller envisions an SOA to memorialize this Rock Island fish spill date adjustment that will be revisited every 5 years to verify that the fish spill end date is still appropriate.

K. Murdoch said the YN discussed Chelan PUD's proposal internally, and the YN is supportive of this proposal. She also likes what Keller just described about continued monitoring, so the backend can be adjusted if the data changes. Keller added that Chelan PUD also continues to see value in site-specific monitoring.

Tracy Hillman asked about next steps. Keller said this needs to be a fast turnaround to modify the draft spill plan to keep Rocky Reach as is, memorialize what was just described for Rock Island, and then generate an SOA. The next HCP-CCs meeting is on March 24, which does not provide much time before the proposed spill start date on April 1. Keller asked whether NMFS and WDFW can provide initial feedback now. Scott Carlon said NMFS supports this. Chad Jackson said WDFW also supports this as described; however, he would like to review the draft documents before approving.

Chelan PUD will distribute the draft 2026 Rock Island and Rocky Reach Fish Spill Plan and associated SOA, and the Rock Island and Rocky Reach HCP-CCs will submit edits and comments by March 6, at which time Chelan PUD will determine whether an additional meeting is needed toward obtaining approval of these documents. *(Note: The draft Rock Island Fish Spill Date SOA was distributed on February 27, and the draft spill plan was distributed on March 3.)*

Chelan PUD will reach out to USFWS about today's discussions.

(Note: A revised spill plan was distributed on March 4, which included edits from the YN to the introduction noting that current spill timing is calibrated to hatchery-dominated run-timing data, and that wild spring Chinook Salmon migrate earlier and are too few to shift the curve. A second revised spill plan was distributed on March 6, which included a few minor edits from Chelan PUD to the YN's revisions.)

The Rock Island HCP-CC approved the Rock Island Fish Spill Date SOA, as revised, via email as follows: the YN approved on March 3; the CTCR abstained on March 5; WDFW, NMFS, USFWS, and Chelan PUD approved on March 10.

The Rock Island and Rocky Reach HCP-CCs approved the 2026 Rock Island and Rocky Reach Fish Spill Plan, as revised, via email as follows: the YN approved on March 6; WDFW, NMFS, USFWS, and Chelan PUD approved on March 10; and the CTCR abstained on March 11, 2026.

B. DECISION: 2026 Rock Island and Rocky Reach Juvenile Bypass Protocols (Lance Keller)

The draft 2026 RRJSF Protocol and draft 2026 Rock Island Bypass Monitoring Plan were distributed to the Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP-CCs by Kristi Geris on February 19, 2026.

2026 Rock Island Bypass Monitoring Plan

Lance Keller noted the comment flagged in the draft 2026 Rock Island Bypass Monitoring Plan that run timing will be discussed at the HCP-CCs meeting on February 24. He will remove this comment and update the plan to reflect discontinuation of using run timing to determine a spill start date, as just discussed.

Keller shared on Microsoft Teams a draft Rock Island Bypass March 15 SOA. He reviewed the *Agreement Statement* and *Background*, and said this is in line with what has been discussed with the Rock Island HCP-CC. Keely Murdoch requested time to review the SOA before voting. Keller plans to distribute this draft SOA and a revised 2026 Rock Island Bypass Monitoring Plan and request a vote via email by March 6.

The revised 2026 Rock Island Bypass Monitoring Plan and draft Rock Island Bypass March 15 SOA were distributed to the Rock Island HCP-CC by Geris on February 24.

(Note: A revised SOA was distributed on March 6, which included clarifying edits from the YN to the Background *to describe the two different evaluations and dates.)*

The Rock Island HCP-CC approved the 2026 Rock Island Bypass Monitoring Plan, as revised, and the Rock Island Bypass March 15 SOA, as revised, via email as follows: The CTCR abstained on March 5; and the YN, WDFW, USFWS, NMFS, and Chelan PUD approved on March 6, 2026.

2026 RRJSF Protocol

Keller said the draft 2026 RRJSF Protocol is the same as last year. Chelan PUD will request approval next month.

Keely Murdoch asked about an analogous bypass operations evaluation SOA for Rocky Reach (as the Rock Island Bypass March 15 SOA). Keller said the evaluation for Rocky Reach will just be memorialized in the meeting minutes because there was no change in bypass operations resulting from the evaluation.

Rocky Reach HCP-CC representatives will be prepared to vote on the draft 2026 RRJSF Protocol during the HCP-CCs March 24, 2026, meeting.

C. 2025 Rock Island and Rocky Reach Juvenile Bypass Reports (Lance Keller)

Chelan PUD will distribute the draft 2025 Rock Island and Rocky Reach Juvenile Bypass Reports, and Rock Island and Rocky Reach HCP-CCs representatives will be prepared to vote during the HCP-CCs March 24, 2026, meeting.

D. DECISION: 2026 Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP Action Plan (Lance Keller)

The draft *2026 Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP Action Plan* was distributed to the Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP-CCs by Kristi Geris on February 12. Lance Keller said no comments were received from the Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP-CCs. Tracy Hillman said the Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP-TCs and HCP-HCs also reviewed their portions of the action plan. The Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP-HCs provided a recommendation shown in red in the draft action plan. Hillman asked for additional questions. None were expressed.

Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP-CCs representatives present approved the *2026 Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP Action Plan*, as revised.

E. 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.

<u>Rocky Reach Dam</u>

As reported last month, Turbine Unit C2 is offline for a brief overhaul with a return-to-service of February 27. Looking ahead, Turbine Unit C6 is scheduled for a brief outage from April 13 to May 1, and Turbine Unit C7 from May 18 to June 5, both outages are to inspect newly installed thrust coolers.

<u>Rock Island Dam</u>

Since last month, there have been no out-of-plant outages that could impact turbine operations.

In Powerhouse 1, work continues on Turbine Units B2, B8, and B10, with no changes to the return-to-service dates (Q1 2027, Q2 2028, and June 12, 2026, respectively).

In Powerhouse 2, work continues on Turbine Unit U5 with no change to the return-to-service date (Q2 2027). The Turbine Unit U2 overhaul will start on March 23 and will be completed in mid-May 2026. *(Note: Keller later clarified that Turbine Unit U2's return-to-service is mid-June 2026.)*

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

Lance Keller reviewed the adult fishway maintenance schedules at Rocky Reach Dam and Rock Island Dam, as follows.

Rocky Reach Dam

The Rocky Reach adult ladder was returned to service on February 19, well ahead of the March 1 deadline, consistent with language included in the early outage request to return the ladder to service early if maintenance is completed ahead of March 1. It is worth noting, the work on the auxiliary water supply flap gate was a key driver for the early outage request in 2025. Chelan PUD thought this work would require additional years to complete, but the contractor crew and Rocky Reach Dam contractor oversight staff worked six 12-hour shifts to complete this work within this maintenance period.

Rock Island Dam

Last month, work continued on the right ladder and the middle ladder was just returned to service. The left ladder was taken out of service on January 29, and a fish rescue was conducted that same day. Keller reviewed the fish rescue numbers as described in a RI Fishway Update Email (Attachment C), which was distributed to the HCP-CCs by Kristi Geris after the conference call on February 24, 2026. Keller said the left ladder was returned to service on February 9. Work continues on the right ladder. He will provide an update to the HCP-CCs once this work is complete. *(Note: Notification that the Rock Island Right Bank Adult Fishway was fully watered and operational on February 26, was distributed to the HCP-CCs by Geris on February 27, 2026.)*

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

Lance Keller said he has no further updates on this topic than what was covered under the action items.

VI. Upper Columbia River Steelhead Overshoots

A. General Updates (All)

Tracy Hillman asked for general updates. Nothing was shared.

VII. HCP Administration

A. Next Meetings (Tracy Hillman)

The next scheduled HCP-CCs meeting is on March 24, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and will be held in person at the Confluence Technology Center in Wenatchee, Washington, with a virtual Microsoft

Teams option. The next joint session (Joint Session 15) with the PRCC to discuss subyearlings will be held this same day (schedule to be determined).

The HCP-CCs meetings on April 28 and May 26 are from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and will be held in person at the Confluence Technology Center in Wenatchee, Washington, with a virtual Microsoft Teams option. *(Note: The May 26, 2026, meeting will now be held at the Douglas PUD Auditorium in East Wenatchee, Washington.)*

List of Attachments

Attachment A List of Attendees
Attachment B Wells Dam Maintenance and Fishway Update Email
Attachment C RI Fishway Update Email

Attachment A
List of Attendees

Name	Organization
Kristi Geris	Anchor QEA
Tracy Hillman	BioAnalysts
Lance Keller*	Chelan PUD
Catherine Willard*	Chelan PUD
Tom Kahler*	Douglas PUD
Andrew Gingerich*	Douglas PUD
John Rohrback	Douglas PUD
Scott Carlon*	National Marine Fisheries 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.

From:	Kristi Geris
To:	Jackson, Chad S (DFW); murk; Lance.Keller; kirk.truscott; Kristi Geris; Scott Carlon; tkahler; Tracy Hillman; "william_gale@fws.gov"
Cc:	Andrew Murdoch (Andrew.Murdoch@dfw.wa.gov); andrew.gingerich; Bill Towey; Catherine.Willard; emi.melton; john.rohrback
Subject:	FW: RI Fishway Update
Date:	Tuesday, February 24, 2026 16:55:59

Hi RI HCP-CC Reps: Please see the email below from Lance, which was shared during today's CC 2/24 call. Thanks! -kristi

Kristi Geris
M (360) 220-3988

From: Lance Keller <Lance.Keller@chelanpud.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 10:20
To: Kristi Geris <kgeris@anchorqea.com>
Subject: RI Fishway Update

Hi Kristi,

Please find information below regarding the fish rescue that was conducted when the Rock Island Left Adult Fishway was dewatered for winter maintenance on January 29, 2026:

10 – Rainbow/Steelhead Adipose intact (AI), 6"

4 - Rainbow/Steelhead Adipose intact (AI), 10"

1 – Chinook adipose intact (AI), 4"

1 – Adult Carp

1 – Whitefish

12 – Red side shiner, (including one mortality)

I will also be covering this topic during today's CC meeting.

Thanks Kristi,

Lance Keller | Senior Fisheries Biologist – Fisheries Programs
Public Utility District No.1 of Chelan County | 203 Olds Station Rd. | Wenatchee, WA 98801
509-661-4299 (w) | 509-669-8722 (c) | Lance.Keller@ChelanPUD.org

From:	Kristi Geris
To:	Jackson, Chad S (DFW); murk; Lance.Keller; kirk.truscott; Kristi Geris; Scott Carlon; tkahler; Tracy Hillman; "william_gale@fws.gov"
Cc:	Andrew Murdoch (Andrew.Murdoch@dfw.wa.gov); andrew.gingerich; Bill Towey; Catherine.Willard; emi.melton; john.rohrback
Subject:	FW: Wells Dam Maintenance and fishway update
Date:	Tuesday, February 24, 2026 16:46:10

Hi Wells HCP-CC Reps: Please see the email below from Andrew, which was shared during today's CC 2/24 call. Thanks! -kristi

Kristi Geris
M (360) 220-3988

From: Andrew Gingerich <andrew.gingerich@dcpud.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 09:09
To: Kristi Geris <kgeris@anchorqea.com>
Cc: tkahler <tkahler@dcpud.org>; john.rohrback <john.rohrback@dcpud.org>; Tracy Hillman <tracy.hillman@bioanalysts.net>
Subject: Wells Dam Maintenance and fishway update

Kristi, anticipating a full agenda I thought it might save some time this month to provide the Wells Hydro and Fishway update via email. Please distribute to the CC.

Wells is currently an 8 unit plant.

- Unit 9 turbine rebuild- RTS 5/1/2027
- Unit 5 biannual maintenance RTS- late April

Wells will be a 7 unit plant starting next week 3/2/26

- Unit 6 biannual maintenance
- Units 9&5 as described above
- Transformer 3 replacement (serves Unit 5 &6)

Wells is expected to be a 9 unit plant again in late April once biannual and transformer work completes.
Unit outages will not affect bypass operations in April. The bypass will run as normal consistent with the BOP and HCP.

West fishway was returned to service on 2/5/2026 at 4:30 pm. Since then both fishways have been operating normally. We may need an upper east ladder outage before the spring for a short period of time to fix a poorly seating operating valve. If so, we'll communicate that work to the CC and schedule an upper ladder fish salvage (should it need to occur). This work is not expected to take the entire ladder out of service. The lower section will remain watered and supplied with auxiliary water via fish pumps.

Finally, Grand Coulee is drafting for drum gate maintenance through March 15. BOR is targeting 1255 msl. They have 15-16 ft to take out of FDR to get there and are sending about 4ft of content our way weekly (in addition to passing inflows). As such, flows at Wells are above average for this time of year. The April through Sept runoff is expected to be 100% of average at Grand Coulee this year. At least that is the current water supply forecast. The upper Columbia is one of the few bright spots for snowpack in the basin.

Please let me know if you have any questions.
Andrew
509-881-2323