

Memorandum

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

Date: September 28, 2021

From: John Ferguson, HCP Policy Committees Chairman

cc: Kristi Geris, HCP Policy Committees Support

Re: Final Minutes of the June 8, 2021, HCP Policy Committees Conference Call

The Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island Hydroelectric Projects Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Policy Committees met by conference call on Tuesday, June 8, 2021, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:10 p.m. Attendees are listed in Attachment A to these conference call minutes.

Action Item Summary

- The HCP Policy Committees will take note about the HCP Hatchery Committees challenges in determining what to do with surplus hatchery production (Item III-A).
- The HCP Policy Committees will take note that conflicts of interest are sometimes perceived by entities outside of the HCP Tributary Committees when project proposals are submitted by representatives of the HCP Tributary Committees, particularly when representatives submitting applications vote on applications submitted by nonrepresentative sponsors competing for Plan Species Account funds (Item III-B).
- The HCP Policy Committees will consider participating in tours of Chelan PUD and Douglas PUD facilities, either individually or as a committee, once in-person meetings are allowed following the lifting of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) restrictions (Item IV-G).
- The next scheduled HCP Policy Committees meeting will be held in spring or early summer 2022 (Item V-A).

Decision Summary

- There were no HCP Policy Committees Decisions approved during today's conference call.

Agreements

- There were no HCP Policy Committees Agreements discussed during today's conference call.

Review Items

- There are no HCP Policy Committees items that are currently available for review.

Finalized Documents

- There are no HCP Policy Committees documents that have been recently finalized.

I. Welcome

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

John Ferguson welcomed the HCP Policy Committees. He recalled the Committees agreeing that this is a good time of year to reconvene annually to touch base and make sure the Committees and HCPs are functioning properly. He reviewed the agenda and asked for any additions or changes.

Mike Livingston said he has no changes to the agenda but wanted to announce that Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is currently working to fill the Region 2 Director position. Livingston said Andrew Murdoch (WDFW Eastern Washington Science Manager) has been the acting director since the departure of Jim Brown (former Region 2 Director). The second round of interviews are ongoing right now and he hopes to have another update in the near future.

David Blodgett, III, announced that since Bob Rose (former Yakama Nation [YN] Hydro Coordinator) retired, his position had gone unfilled for a few years; however, Elaine Harvey was recently hired to fill this position. The YN is redistributing duties internally and Harvey's involvement may increase in the HCPs.

Ritchie Graves announced that Dale Bambrick (former National Marine Fisheries Service [NMFS] Eastern Washington Branch Chief) retired last week, and Justin Yeager is now the new Branch Chief. Graves said Bambrick was also the NMFS HCP Policy Committees Alternate and he is guessing Yeager will now fill this role.

No additions or changes to the agenda were requested.

II. Overview of the HCPs

A. Rock Island and Rocky Reach HCPs (Alene Underwood)

Alene Underwood shared the presentation *Chelan PUD Update* (Attachment B), which was distributed to the HCP Policy Committees by Kristi Geris following the HCP Policy Committees conference call on June 8, 2021. This presentation provided a high-level overview of Chelan PUD's progress in meeting No Net Impact (NNI) goals for HCP Plan Species through project survival, habitat enhancement, and hatchery mitigation. It also briefly touched on adaptive management and outcome-based standards and the effects of ocean conditions on salmon and steelhead survival. Underwood noted that these results are presented annually to their Board of Commissioners (Board),

so the Board is up to date on Chelan PUD's partnerships and the work the HCP Committees are accomplishing.

Underwood said, to date, Chelan PUD has measured juvenile and adult survival of steelhead, spring Chinook salmon, and sockeye salmon for the Rock Island and Rocky Reach projects and has met the 91% combined juvenile and adult project survival standard for each species and each project (Phase III Standard Achieved). Once these goals are met, survival needs to be retested every 10 years to make sure project operations continue to meet these standards. Currently, Chelan PUD is in the middle of retesting yearling Chinook salmon survival through the Rock Island Project (i.e., 2021 Rock Island Survival Confirmation Study). A study plan was developed in concert with a consultant group and approved by the Rock Island HCP Coordinating Committee. Study fish were released from April 23 to May 22, 2021. Approximately 1,000 acoustic tags were deployed in total. Dr. John Skalski (University of Washington, Columbia Basin Research) will be running the statistics, with preliminary results expected by August 2021. Final results are expected to be available in September 2021, at which time the results will be presented to the Rock Island HCP Coordinating Committee. Also, Chelan PUD is currently planning for retesting survival through the Rocky Reach Project (i.e., 2022 Rocky Reach Survival Confirmation Study).

Underwood said each year, Chelan PUD contributes to Plan Species Accounts that fund various habitat enhancement projects throughout the Rock Island and Rocky Reach projects. These accounts are overseen by the HCP Tributary Committees. She reviewed projects funded in 2020 and mentioned that one noteworthy project is the City of Leavenworth Fish Screen project, which involved a large effort to improve fish screens at this location. In 2020, Chelan PUD contributed approximately \$1 million to enhancement projects in the local area. To date, most of the "low hanging fruit" projects have been completed and the projects left involve a bigger vision and higher value, which means more planning is involved. Chelan PUD is working with stakeholders and the Regional Technical Team to sort through the potential projects and looks forward to continuing these coordinated efforts in the future.

Ritchie Graves said this is consistent with what he is hearing at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Northwest Fisheries Science Center, that upcoming work will involve larger, more complex projects, and he is glad Chelan PUD is on the same page. Underwood agreed and said finding entities who have the vision and authority to bring these large projects to implementation can be challenging.

Next, Underwood reviewed hatchery production for Chelan PUD HCP programs in 2020. She noted that every 10 years, the HCP Hatchery Committees have the opportunity to recalculate hatchery production requirements, which the HCP Hatchery Committees are preparing to do now. For the final rearing sites used to acclimate hatchery produced fish prior to release, some are Chelan PUD-owned

and operated, while some are Chelan PUD-owned and the District pays WDFW to operate them. In addition, Chelan PUD does not own the kł çpəlk' stim Hatchery in Penticton, British Columbia, but provides annual funding to this program, which releases sockeye salmon in Okanagan and Skaha lakes. Chelan PUD provides funding to the Chief Joseph Hatchery programs. Although not included in this presentation, Chelan PUD also provides funding to the YN for a coho salmon reintroduction program. Lastly, she noted that production objectives and total number released do not always match. People understand this can occur in hatchery environments due to any number of factors, including changes in fecundity, the potential for disease, and the occasional catastrophic event. Ultimately, Chelan PUD provides funding and capacity, but on occasion there are production shortfalls.

Underwood said that one intent of the HCPs is to constantly optimize current conditions fish are experiencing, and Chelan PUD is currently working on two such items. First, each quarter and every 3 years, the HCP Coordinating Committees review the latest data, literature, and technology to determine whether subyearling Chinook salmon survival through Chelan PUD projects can be studied and estimated. To date, there is still no way to do this with enough statistical rigor to meet survival standards, given the caliber of study needed and this species' unique life history. However, given all the acoustic telemetry gear deployed for the 2021 Rock Island Survival Confirmation Study, Chelan PUD thought why not take advantage of this and tag subyearlings to monitor behavior through the project to evaluate metrics such as route-specific passage? Therefore, beginning in late June and extending through July 2021, and provided that water temperatures remain within limits, Chelan PUD is planning on conducting a 6-week study of subyearling Chinook salmon behavior in the Rock Island reservoir and how tagged fish approach and pass Rock Island Dam. This is described as optimization because Chelan PUD wants to understand how to best optimize project operations and spill for these fish. Second, at Rocky Reach Dam, there is a requirement to spill 9% of the daily average river flow during summer for the protection of subyearlings. While the volume of spill required is established by the HCP, the shape and pattern were developed by Chelan PUD. The current spill shape was established based on historical radio telemetry data; however, a recent review of the last 10 years of passive integrated transponder (PIT) tag detection data at the Rocky Reach Dam surface collector structure shows subyearling Chinook salmon diel passage and the current summer spill shape at Rocky Reach Dam are the inverse of each other. Last month, Chelan PUD presented these data to the Rocky Reach HCP Coordinating Committee and indicated plans to change the shape of this spill within a 24-hour period to one that mirrors subyearling passage at Rocky Reach Dam. The Committee indicated their support and appreciation for what Chelan PUD was proposing to implement at Rocky Reach Dam. The Rock Island HCP Coordinating Committee asked about applying this same approach at Rock Island Dam where there is a requirement to spill 20% of the daily average river flow during summer to provide safe passage conditions for subyearling Chinook salmon. Chelan PUD reviewed the available data and presumed the fish behave similarly at

Rock Island Dam. Therefore, Chelan PUD is now working to develop new spill shapes for Rock Island Dam. Summer spill has been initiated at both projects, but Chelan PUD is working internally to make these spill adjustments at both projects this year.

Underwood said that as part of their annual update to the Board, they present topics that are outside the purview of Chelan PUD but can affect Chelan PUD projects. One such topic is salmon and steelhead survival in the ocean. Recent publications by Welch et al. (2020) and Crozier et al. (2021) suggest that hydropower is not the culprit in declining salmon populations; rather, it is likely ocean conditions. This is further supported by various marine temperature trend analyses and biological responses. The actions the PUDs are taking through implementation of the HCPs will improve freshwater survival at the local scale, but this is just a small portion of the larger salmon life cycle. Underwood said one goal of their update is to address questions from the Board about how to most effectively stay involved and contribute to these topics.

John Ferguson asked when this update will be presented to the Board. Underwood said next week. These topics are near and dear to Steve Wright (Chelan PUD General Manager), and he believes in looking beyond Chelan PUD's purview.

Graves said most everyone on this call is aware of the discussions within the Northwest Power and Conservation Council on ocean topics, and it is not difficult to show that the ocean is important for the productivity of anadromous fish stocks. NMFS agrees this is important and that there are some really terrible trends in ocean productivity. He cautioned putting too much stock in the Burke et al. paper—not that it is bad work, but rather, the paper relies heavily on one metric, sea surface temperature. A lot of people at NOAA think the ocean is more complex than that single metric, and there also seems to be differences among species. While resource managers are limited in our abilities to combat global climate change, it is important to think about how to make a population of fish as resilient to these factors as possible. Where are the strongholds likely to be in freshwater? What measures are needed to further protect these populations? Graves said on behalf of the NOAA Northwest Fisheries Science Center, when presenting to the Board, he asked to please also mention the need to look hard at resiliency on the freshwater side of the equation and not paint a picture that this side is completely hopeless. Underwood said she appreciates Graves' comments and that she will make this clear. She said Graves' comments also relate to Chelan PUD's involvement in habitat projects and looking where more can be done with available funding and resources.

Ferguson said he appreciates what Chelan PUD is doing with subyearling studies at Rock Island Dam and the spill shape revisions at the Rock Island and Rocky Reach projects. The HCP Coordinating Committees also expressed an appreciation for Chelan PUD leaning forward, looking at detection capabilities, and thinking ahead to gather more information on subyearlings.

Graves noted the interesting range of flow conditions that occurred during the 2021 Rock Island Confirmation Survival Study and noted the travel times for the different release groups during the different flow periods will be especially interesting.

B. Wells HCP (Andrew Gingerich)

Andrew Gingerich shared the presentation *Wells Project HCP* (Attachment C), which was distributed to the HCP Policy Committees by Kristi Geris following the HCP Policy Committees conference call on June 8, 2021. Gingerich said material in this presentation was also presented to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council recently. He provided an overview of the Wells HCP, noting that it is a collaborative approach to provide protection in the form of NNI to Plan Species. For the Wells Project, achieving NNI involves a three-pronged approach, which includes meeting juvenile survival standards, hatchery production, and funding tributary projects.

Gingerich said the 93% juvenile project survival standard is based on total losses, including at the dam, in the tailrace, and losses to piscivorous fish and birds in the reservoir. In 2020, Douglas PUD conducted the most recent survival study, which was a 10-year check-in. Consistent with past study methodologies, fish were PIT-tagged, released at the confluences of the Methow and Okanogan rivers upstream of Wells Dam (treatment) and in the tailrace (control), and tracked through the hydrosystem, and then survival of the treatment and control groups were compared. He noted that Wells Dam is an unconventional design. It is a hydrocombine that integrates what is typically a dedicated powerhouse and adjacent spillways, which is optimal for downstream migrating smolts as supported by multiple years of hydroacoustic data and studies. This design is beneficial because the top of the turbine intakes are located approximately 75 feet below the water surface and the spillway intakes are located above the turbine intakes. Bypass barriers are installed in certain spillways, which creates a bypass entrance and attraction flow through open spillways for safe passage of surface-oriented fish. He reviewed Wells Project juvenile survival rates from the last 5 years of study, including the most recent results from 2020, which average 96.04%. This translates to a need for 3.96% hatchery mitigation towards meeting NNI objectives.

Gingerich noted a unique aspect of the Wells HCP is a requirement to consider direct, indirect, and delayed mortality when testing survival. This means Douglas PUD has an obligation to not just look at survival through the Wells Project, but to also determine if traveling through the Wells Reservoir puts undo stress on test fish compared to control fish, where these losses manifest into delayed mortality in the lower Columbia River and in the ocean, affecting these fish as they return as adults. Using PIT tag detection, Douglas PUD has worked with Drs. John Skalski and Richard Townsend who analyze whether there is a difference in survival as fish pass additional dams or differences in return rates. In the last five studies, Skalski and Townsend have found no evidence of delayed mortality for fish migrating through the Wells Project.

Gingerich reviewed NNI hatchery compensation obligations, by species, reared at Methow Fish Hatchery, the Twisp Acclimation Pond, and Wells Fish Hatchery, which are all Douglas PUD-owned. He noted that Douglas PUD also provides funding for Chief Joseph Hatchery programs. The sockeye salmon compensation obligation is 7%; however, through the development, updating, and annual implementation of the Okanagan Fish and Water Management Tool (FWMT), the net result has been a 700% increase in annual adult sockeye salmon returns following development of the FWMT. Implementation of the FWMT is a collaborative effort to increase sockeye salmon populations in the Okanagan River Basin, and directly improves natural production from Osoyoos and Skaha lakes in Canada. Gingerich reviewed the different metrics that feed into the FWMT, as well as the mechanics, data sources, and outputs generated by the FWMT. Sockeye salmon counts at Wells Dam for post-FWMT period (2008 to 2020) was approximately 200,000 fish, which is roughly a 7-fold increase over the 30,000 fish counted each year during the pre-FWMT period (1977 to 2007).

Ritchie Graves said the graphic on page 18 of Attachment C highlights something NOAA tried to highlight in their recent Columbia River System Biological Opinion: sockeye salmon counts from 2008 to 2020 show a striking pattern of much higher adult returns in even numbered years compared to odd numbered years. This is consistent with patterns starting to emerge in the literature from Canadian research about potential impacts to Columbia River stocks from high levels of juvenile pink salmon produced in hatcheries in Alaska that are released in odd years and compete with our stocks for food. He believes this is important and he is trying to make it clear internally that this needs to be addressed. This is also another example of forcing factors that occur outside of the Columbia River Basin. He hopes the PUDs lend their concerns in conversations with the State, because it is important for all managers to push in the same direction on these types of things. Gingerich said he appreciates these comments and agrees this gets to the point Alene Underwood was making. There are some things resource managers can control and fish are affected by other factors that dictate returns.

Gingerich summarized achievements accomplished through the successful implementation of the Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island HCP Tributary Plan Species Accounts. He noted that by combining forces, there can be a much larger impact. He reviewed two examples of habitat actions to increase natural production in Osoyoos Lake and in Skaha Lake that were funded by PUD accounts.

Gingerich reviewed Wells Project adult passage survival rates, which are estimated based on PIT tag detections at the Rocky Reach Dam adult trap and at Pool 68 at Wells Dam (the last point of detection before fish enter the tributaries). Based on the most recent 5-year average for each Plan Species, Douglas PUD feels confident about adult conversion through the Wells Project. He also reviewed fates of adult Methow River Basin wild spring Chinook salmon from brood years 2009 to

2013 returning over Bonneville Dam. He noted that beginning with detections at Priest Rapids Dam, adult survival and conversion through the Mid-Columbia River Basin has been exemplary for these fish. However, once fish reach the Methow and Okanogan rivers, it is harder to account for fish because detection probabilities are subject to changes in river flow.

Gingerich reviewed hatchery adult-to-adult return rates by stock and hatchery mitigation objectives (conservation and harvest). Based on these data, these fish are performing well and Douglas PUD's NNI and hatchery mitigation programs are delivering what these programs are intended to do. He noted, however, that replacement rates for wild stocks are somewhat concerning.

Lastly, Gingerich summarized the outcomes and how the Wells HCP has been implemented to date as bulleted on page 27 of Attachment C.

Mike Livingston said for him, this is all a learning opportunity, and he appreciates both presentations by Chelan PUD and Douglas PUD. This was a lot of information to digest. The work up in Canada highlights to him the importance of identifying where regional fisheries managers can do work in the Upper Columbia River Basin, finding those opportunities in the headwaters, and hopefully reversing trends in the ocean. He also appreciates the information about how Wells Dam is different—it was very interesting.

Graves asked if there are any emerging issues for the PUDs regarding steelhead overshoots. He explained that these overshoots are fish migrating upriver during the fall, but ultimately passing the spawning tributaries and spending weeks to months above the tributaries, then dropping back down through the dams that fall or the following spring after overwintering. He understands this was not explicitly contemplated in the HCPs, because there was no way of knowing to what extent this behavior was occurring. He wanted to flag this because these discussions for other hydro projects are starting, including what operations may be required to help address this issue at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-owned projects in the Lower Snake River and at McNary Dam. He said while reviewing PIT tag data and other information, he encouraged the PUDs to also look at these data.

Gingerich said he knows Tom Kahler reviewed the paper on steelhead movement coauthored by Andrew Murdoch¹. Gingerich pointed out that there are dissimilarities in processes between entities operating solely under a Biological Opinion versus under the HCPs. Underwood said Chelan PUD is also reviewing the steelhead movement paper and asked if Graves is aware of other research, or whether his comments are based only on this single paper? Graves said his comments are not specific to the movement paper. NMFS is also reviewing available PIT tag data, which clearly show this pattern of overshoot in some areas and where fish are passing five dams, hanging out for weeks

¹ Murdoch, A., K. See, and B. L. Truscott. 2020. Abundance and Migration Success of Overshoot Steelhead in the Upper Columbia River.

to months, then dropping back down. The issue is that the juvenile fish bypass systems are not designed to safely pass adults. The remedy that is being attempted at the four Lower Snake River projects and McNary Dam was first implemented during fall 2020. These projects can provide a surface-oriented passage route through spillway weirs, so federal agencies are required to open this passage route 4 hours per day on 3 nonconsecutive days per week. The idea is that steelhead seem to have a bit of patience and if these passage routes are opened occasionally, the hope is the fish will use the passage route rather than sounding and passing through turbines. Early results seem to indicate the fish are using the surface spill route, but what proportion are using it is not clear. These operations are required during non-juvenile fish spill periods, which are primarily September to November and February to March. The hope is that providing this alternate passage route will help adults get downstream—back to their natal stream. Chad Jackson said these discussions are occurring within the Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee (PRCC). He noted that overshoots are not a new issue; rather, now managers have data to look closely at this and it appears adult survival might be a bigger issue than expected.

III. Report Out by Committee Chairs on HCP Implementation

A. HCP Hatchery Committees (Tracy Hillman)

Tracy Hillman shared the presentation *HCP Hatchery Committees Perspectives from the Chair* (Attachment D), which was distributed to the HCP Policy Committees by Kristi Geris following the HCP Policy Committees conference call on June 8, 2021. This presentation included an overview of the purpose of the HCP Hatchery Committees, how the Committees function, highlights of successes, and how things are going.

Hillman reviewed the purpose of the HCP Hatchery Committees as specifically described in the HCPs, including providing hatchery compensation for Plan Species, implementing hatchery programs to achieve NNI, and reevaluating hatchery production every 10 years and readjusting production as necessary. He said part of his job as the Chairman is to make sure the Committees are consistent with the HCPs. He also noted that this year, the HCP Hatchery Committees began recalculation of hatchery production levels and hope to have a plan completed this year for implementation next year (for brood year 2022, released in 2024). He reviewed functions of the HCP Hatchery Committees, including overseeing the development and implementation of the hatchery elements of the HCPs. He noted that some HCP Hatchery Committees representatives have been a part of these Committees for a long time, which plays an important part in the successful implementation of these programs. He reviewed the several successes accomplished by the HCP Hatchery Committees, including continually providing funding and infrastructure to meet targets, implementing robust hatchery programs, completing comprehensive monitoring and evaluation reports, monthly reports, and annual reports, and producing annual broodstock collection protocols. The PUDs are continually

upgrading hatchery infrastructure, which Hillman highly recommended touring once facilities are open to the public again. He recalled talking to a contact at NMFS many years ago, who said most of these stocks would be functionally extinct if it were not for the Districts. He said the effort put into the Okanagan Sockeye Salmon Reintroduction Program, as described by both PUDs, is a prime example of this. The successes of this program are known to the general public, beyond just the fisheries science community.

Lastly, Hillman shared his thoughts, as the Chairman, on how things are going. He said the fact that there have been no formal disputes to date really speaks to the ability of the HCP Hatchery Committees to function as a group. The Committees also convene joint meetings with the PRCC Hatchery Subcommittee. Given the complexity of these programs it is helpful to have veteran members on the Committees who have a tremendous amount of institutional knowledge. Some discussions have been difficult when new members join the Committees and need to keep up with such a steep learning curve. For example, NMFS recently had a high turnover in representation, which slowed down some discussions. The HCP Hatchery Committees are responsible for reviewing a lot of information. Given time constraints and workloads, sometimes everything is not reviewed by all members and this manifests in the meetings. Generally, having too many fish is better than not enough fish. However, hatchery managers are getting better at improving survival in-hatchery and on occasion there are more fish than required. The HCP Hatchery Committees then need to figure out what to do with these fish, and sometimes it is difficult to decide when, for example, these fish are wild-by-wild. John Ferguson said the HCP Policy Committees will take note about the HCP Hatchery Committees challenges in determining what to do with surplus hatchery production.

Ritchie Graves thanked Hillman for mentioning the hiccups regarding NMFS' participation in the Committees. He asked, moving forward, if the Committees feel NMFS is not being responsive to please let him know and he can talk internally. He said part of this was likely due to an internal shuffling of roles, which has since been resolved. Hillman said he is glad to hear the Committees have Graves' support.

B. HCP Tributary Committees (Tracy Hillman)

Tracy Hillman shared the presentation, *HCP Tributary Committees Perspectives from the Chair* (Attachment E), which was distributed to the HCP Policy Committees by Kristi Geris following the HCP Policy Committees conference call on June 8, 2021. This presentation included an overview of the purpose of the HCP Tributary Committees, how the Committees function, highlights of successes, and how things are going.

In the interest of time, Hillman quickly reviewed the purpose and functions of the HCP Tributary Committees, as bulleted in pages 3 to 4 of Attachment E. He reviewed pie charts that show the different types of projects the HCP Tributary Committees are involved with and fund, such as fish

passage, instream flows, and protection programs. Enhancement projects restore or fix natural processes and have long-term benefits. These projects are where the largest amount of tributary funds are typically spent.

Hillman shared his thoughts, as the Chairman, on how things are going. He noted importantly that the HCP Tributary Committees have funded high quality restoration and protection projects, as shown by the pie charts. He recalled the potential dispute that arose in 2019 that the HCP Policy Committees convened to discuss. The advice the HCP Policy Committees provided to the Wells HCP Tributary Committee (and was applied to the other HCP Tributary Committees) was very helpful and there have been no new situations since then. Also, there have been a large number of project proposals submitted by HCP Tributary Committees representatives, and agencies have been contacting Hillman asking if these are conflicts of interest because these projects are being approved for funding by the same HCP Tributary Committees representatives. Non-HCP Tributary Committees representatives do not like this because it only takes one vote to not approve funding for a project. John Ferguson said the HCP Policy Committees will take note that conflicts of interest are sometimes perceived by entities outside of the HCP Tributary Committees when project proposals are submitted by representatives of the HCP Tributary Committees, particularly when representatives submitting applications vote on applications submitted by nonrepresentative sponsors competing for Plan Species Account funds.

Lastly, Hillman said the HCP Tributary Committees want the best possible projects to be implemented, and there have been times when the Committees failed to implement a good project because it was not an excellent project. That is, the Committees on rare occasions let "excellent" get in the way of a good project. The Committees are working through this. Ultimately, the HCP Tributary Committees representatives are very smart and knowledgeable about habitat restoration.

C. HCP Policy and Coordinating Committees (John Ferguson)

John Ferguson shared the presentation *HCP Implementation* (Attachment F), which was distributed to the HCP Policy Committees by Kristi Geris following the HCP Policy Committees conference call on June 8, 2021. This presentation is Ferguson's perspective, as Chairman to the HCP Policy and Coordinating Committees, on how well things are functioning and why, and the processes in place to make sure the HCP Policy and Coordinating Committees are working well.

Ferguson said the way the HCPs are structured, and the roles of the Chairmen and support staff, take the logistical load off the Committees so the representatives can focus on the technical issues. This allows representatives to come to meetings prepared, and having frank, two-way discussions help ensure the successful implementation of the HCP objectives. The HCPs create a clear structure to work within, which is important. He described other projects he works on in California focused on improving salmon and steelhead survival that have not been nearly as successful as the HCPs

because there has been no clear process or path forward like the HCPs have. Because Chelan PUD and Douglas PUD already covered a lot of the survival study, phase designation, and adult passage information included in his slides, he will skip over this information. He did note that in 2019, the PUDs updated their flow duration curves to define what environmental conditions are considered representative during survival studies. For the Wells Project in 2020 and Rock Island Project in 2021, these respective survival studies fell within the bounds of the flow duration curve requirements, which means that test fish experienced representative conditions those years.

Ferguson said the Committees have an open rapport. The HCP Coordinating Committees meet each month and email in between, as needed. When issues arise, the PUDs and other signatories immediately respond, as in the case of the Rock Island Dam spill shape revision Alene Underwood discussed. The PUDs and Committees work collaboratively to adjust programs as needed, such as deferment of survival studies, winter maintenance outages, bypass operation dates, accommodating research, and reviewing and approving schedules. Committee representatives are respectful to one another. Ferguson said from his perspective, the HCP Committees function well at the committee level and the HCPs are a good framework for success.

IV. Report Out from Each Signatory on HCP Implementation (HCP Parties)

A. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Mike Livingston)

Mike Livingston said he agrees the HCPs created the forums and financial support to be successful. He understands the science that goes into these discussions is not always agreed upon, but these Committees provide an opportunity to work through these topics. Livingston said for him, this is an opportunity to learn what is going on in the Mid-Columbia River Basin. He has no specific questions at this time, but it seems the summaries provided are accurate. He will defer to Chad Jackson for any specific questions, and he noted that Jackson has been keeping him informed to date. Jackson said he has nothing to add. He agrees the HCP processes are going well. He appreciates the Districts' responsiveness and coordination with the signatories. He has been the WDFW HCP Coordinating Committees Representative for little more than 3 years, and this is still a lot of information to digest.

B. Yakama Nation (David Blodgett, III)

David Blodgett, III said he has no specific issues at this time. It sounds like the general message is the HCPs and its Committees are functioning really well. He appreciates the good facilitation at these groups. He recognizes there have been issues from signatories at times, but the Committees have been able to work through these internally. He appreciates that these Committees function well in comparison to other avenues and parties. Resource managers are in this major time frame where there is a need for uplifting stocks and a call for action, and all groups are finally coming on board.

He appreciates how these HCP Policy Committees can come together at this level. There are still opportunities to come, and he hopes to continue to build upon historical knowledge. One such opportunity is the upcoming hatchery mitigation recalculation. He hopes the HCP Hatchery Committees can identify what was learned last time to make this recalculation even more successful. In general, everything is going well, and he appreciates everyone's time and opportunity to speak on this.

C. Colville Confederated Tribes (Cody DeSautel)

Cody DeSautel said he has nothing more to add. He agrees the HCPs are working well. He also agreed that figuring out what to do with surplus hatchery fish should be discussed further to figure out how to streamline that process.

D. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Jim Craig)

Jim Craig said he thinks Douglas PUD and Chelan PUD work well and cooperatively with HCP Committees members. It has been a pleasure to be the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service HCP Coordinating Committees Representative for 14 years. The unanimous decision-making approach has been challenging at times, but it is a good process. He feels the PUDs have a genuine care for fish and natural resources. Meeting the survival standards benefits salmon and steelhead and also benefits all other native species. On top of this, the HCP Hatchery Committees and HCP Tributary Committees work well to provide compensation for unavoidable losses. The HCP Hatchery Committees wrestle with difficult data and discussions, and there is a lot of work involved. The HCP Tributary Committees have done a tremendous amount of work protecting and improving habitat, and improving instream flow, all of which make progress toward more functional habitat. The FWMT is an awesome success story. In summary, the HCPs are working very well. He thinks it is good that Grant PUD is participating alongside the HCP Hatchery Committees. It is good to collaborate throughout the entire Mid-Columbia River Basin. These HCPs are unique in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission hydro world, and he thinks they are a success.

E. National Marine Fisheries Service (Ritchie Graves)

Ritchie Graves said he was a part of the third NMFS team that was negotiating these settlements in 2002. He recalled that U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had this idea about HCPs, but it was nothing that has been done in this region. This has been a well-thought-out process. People were honest and transparent about what they thought needed to happen, which is one of the strengths of these HCPs. There was a lot of fighting in the 1970s and 1980s, and signatories to these HCPs were able to come to agreement by collaboratively working together. He is happy to be a part of it and he thinks the resources have benefited from this work. It is amazing to see the response in the sockeye salmon population, but he is worried that other stocks will be less responsive. There are more riddles to be solved. His pledge is to welcome discussions about issues as they arise. He thinks communication is

becoming increasingly important in the face of climate change and other issues. He appreciates everyone's commitment.

F. Chelan PUD (Alene Underwood)

Alene Underwood thanked everyone for participating on this 3-hour call, which is quite a commitment considering everyone's busy schedules. Any good relationship or agreement takes care and tending, and this group has done well with this. She thinks it is beneficial to regularly convene the HCP Policy Committees, just as it is important with the other Committees. She appreciates everyone's support when the Committees agree and disagree.

G. Douglas PUD (Andrew Gingerich)

Andrew Gingerich said it would be ideal to convene the HCP Policy Committees in-person. He agreed with Tracy Hillman's comment earlier about the benefit of touring the PUD facilities. Douglas PUD would gladly host a tour, as a group or individually, of Wells Fish Hatchery or the Wells Dam bypass to see how it operates. Site tours can be very informational. He is looking forward to working with this group more. John Ferguson said the HCP Policy Committees will consider participating in tours of Chelan PUD and Douglas PUD facilities either individually or as a committee once in-person meetings are allowed following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.

V. HCP Administration

A. Next Steps and Next Meetings (John Ferguson)

John Ferguson said a lot was covered today. There were a few items flagged to keep in front of the Committees; however, he did not hear any reason to schedule another meeting before next year. The HCP Policy Committees should plan to convene again next year, at a minimum. These routine check-ins are a good way to keep in touch and function better as a committee.

The next scheduled HCP Policy Committees meeting will be held in spring or early summer 2022.

VI. List of Attachments

- Attachment A List of Attendees
- Attachment B Chelan PUD Update
- Attachment C Wells Project HCP
- Attachment D HCP Hatchery Committees Perspectives from the Chair
- Attachment E HCP Tributary Committees Perspectives from the Chair
- Attachment F HCP Implementation

Attachment A
List of Attendees

Name	Organization
John Ferguson	Anchor QEA, LLC
Kristi Geris	Anchor QEA, LLC
Tracy Hillman	BioAnalysts
Alene Underwood*	Chelan PUD
Tom Kahler	Douglas PUD
Andrew Gingerich	Douglas PUD
Ritchie Graves*	National Marine Fisheries Service
Jim Craig*	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Mike Livingston*	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Chad Jackson	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
David Blodgett, III*	Yakama Nation
Cody Desautel*	Colville Confederated Tribes

Notes:

* Denotes HCP Policy Committees representative or alternate