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Memorandum

To: Mike Schiewe
From: Tracy Hillman
CC: Tributary Committees
Date: 20 April 2015
Re: HCP Tributary Committees Meeting Progress Report

The Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island Hydroelectric Projects Habitat Conservation Plans Tributary Committees met at Grant PUD in Wenatchee, Washington, on Thursday, 9 April 2015 from 9:30 am to 1:00 pm.

Budget Amendment

The Rocky Reach Tributary Committee received a budget amendment request from Trout Unlimited on the *Clear Creek Fish Passage and Instream Flow Enhancement Project*. The sponsor asked to move \$5,000 from “Excavation/Heavy Equipment Work” to “Sponsor Salaries and Benefits.” Thus, the final amount allocated for Excavation/Heavy Equipment Labor would be \$49,000 and the final amount allocated for Sponsor Salaries and Benefits would be \$5,000. After careful consideration, **the Rocky Reach Tributary Committee approved the budget amendment**. The total budget amount will not change as a result of this amendment.

Scope Change

The Rock Island Tributary Committee received a request from Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group to change the scope on the *Chiwawa Nutrient Enhancement Project*. The sponsor asked to change the scope of the project from a four-year effort to a two-year effort, with the expectation that the sponsor will secure necessary funding to extend the project to the original four-year period. After much discussion, **the Rock Island Tributary Committee elected not to support the change in scope at this time**. They requested that the sponsor do the following before the Committee reconsiders the change in scope:

1. Acquire the necessary permits.
2. Secure the additional funding needed to complete the project in four years.
3. Submit a Small Projects Application to the Committees seeking the funds necessary to develop an effectiveness monitoring plan.

The Committee noted that if the sponsor is unable to secure the additional funds needed to complete the four-year project, the project may fail to demonstrate any treatment effects. That is, with only two years of data, it is unlikely that the sponsor will be able to determine if nutrient enhancement is a cost-effective method for boosting fish survival and productivity within the Chiwawa River basin.

Change in Designated Alternative Representation

The Tributary Committees received a letter from William Dobbins, General Manager of Douglas PUD, stating that Chas Kyger will replace Shane Bickford as Douglas PUD’s designated alternative representative for the Wells HCP Tributary Committee. Tom Kahler will continue his current duties as Douglas PUD’s representative on the Wells Tributary Committee.

SRFB/TC Draft Proposal Schedule

Draft SRFB/TC proposals are due on 17 April. The Committees will review the draft proposals during their 11 June meeting. Project tours are scheduled for 7 May (Methow) and 13 May (Wenatchee). Final proposals will be delivered to the Tributary Committees on 19 June. The Committees will make funding decisions on 9 July.

Plan Species Account Balances

The unallocated balances within each account are \$4,722,682 in the Rock Island Account, \$1,759,935 in the Rocky Reach Account, and \$1,321,590 in the Wells Account.

Presentations

Tracy Hillman shared with the Committees presentations that were prepared by NOAA Fisheries and presented at the recent Life-Cycle Modeling Workshop in Seattle. The first presentation was titled, "*Ocean Conditions in 2014; Potential Consequences for Salmon.*" This presentation described the different ecosystem indicators that researchers evaluate, and how the indicators relate to salmon runs. Analysis of Pacific Decadal Oscillation, Oceanic Nino Index, Sea Surface Temperatures, Zooplankton, Ichthyoplankton, and oddities in 2014 suggest bad news for future runs of salmon. On the other hand, measures of Chlorophyll *a* indicate good news for salmon. The Upwelling Index and juvenile salmon surveys are open to several interpretations. Forecasting models indicate decreased salmon runs in the future; however, the confidence intervals associated with the estimates are very large, indicating much uncertainty in the estimates. The large uncertainty is primarily because of the unique patterns observed in the ecosystem indicators in 2014. Most of the patterns documented in 2014 have never before been observed.

The second presentation was titled, "*Estimation of Survival and Run Timing of Adult Spring/Summer Chinook from the Columbia River Estuary to Bonneville Dam.*" The presentation identified the numbers of pinnipeds counted in the estuary from 2010 through 2014, and provided an early estimate for 2015, which is about four times greater than the number estimated in 2014. Based on mark-recapture studies in the estuary since 2010, average annual Chinook salmon survival has ranged from 55-90%. Mortality was highest and travel times to Bonneville Dam were longest for fish tagged in March and April. The higher mortality and longer travel times coincided with peak numbers of sea lions. In addition, the average annual survival of Chinook decreased from 2010-2014, which correlates with the number of sea lions hauled out near Astoria. The study indicated that parent-based genetics testing shows promise for evaluating hatchery and tributary-level information on Chinook survival and movement. The increasing numbers of pinnipeds in the estuary could create bottlenecks for some runs of salmon.

Icicle Peshastin Irrigation District Pumpback O&M Costs

The Committees received an email from Chelan County Natural Resources Department (CCNRD) describing different pumpback alternatives and associated O&M costs that the Icicle Work Group is considering for water management within the Icicle Creek drainage. CCNRD asked the Committees three questions: (1) are pumpback O&M costs an eligible expense for your organization, (2) how much funding could your organization provide, and (3) please describe your organization's limitations and constraints on providing pumpback O&M funding.

The Committees reviewed and discussed the information provided by CCNRD and concluded that they could not respond to the three questions without further information. They asked the CCNRD to provide responses to the following questions: (1) what are the current O&M costs, (2) how many shareholders are there, and (3) what is the cost per shareholder? Once the Committees receive responses from CCNRD, they will discuss their level of commitment to the project.

Discussions with Chelan-Douglas Land Trust

During the end of the meeting, the PRCC Habitat Subcommittee and representatives from Chelan-Douglas Land Trust (CDLT) joined the Tributary Committees to discuss CDLT's commitment to restoration work on their properties and to hear a presentation on the Enlow Acquisition Project.

Because of liability issues, some members of the Committees questioned CDLT's commitment to restoring habitat on properties purchased with Plan Species Account funds or PRCC funds. Bob Bugert with CDLT explained that the CDLT is strongly committed to protecting and restoring habitat for ESA-listed species. Bob indicated that with regard to the restoration work proposed by the FCRPS Action Agencies on the Entiat River, CDLT is fully committed to the projects; however, they are concerned with the issue of Personal Injury. That is, there is no legislative relief if someone is hurt or killed on a restoration structure on CDLT property. If this happens, each member of the CDLT Board is liable. CDLT is currently working with Washington Land Trusts, BPA, and the Washington Department of Natural Resources to find ways to reduce the risk to the Board. At this time, the Board is willing to accept the risk and is fully committed to restoring habitat on their properties.

David Morgan with the CDLT gave a brief presentation on the Enlow Acquisition Project on the Entiat River. The goal of the project is to purchase, permanently protect, and encourage significant floodplain restoration on the property located in the Entiat Stillwaters Reach near river mile 16.3. The Enlow property includes about 1,300 feet of riverbank and over 13 acres of low floodplain, most of which is inundated by overbank flow during a 10-year event. The total cost of the project is \$512,700. CDLT is seeking \$437,700 for the project. *Following the Tributary Committees' meeting, the PRCC Habitat Subcommittee agreed to fund the project.*

Next Steps

If necessary, the next meeting of the Tributary Committees will be on Thursday, 14 May 2015 at Grant PUD in Wenatchee.