



Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island HCP Tributary Committees Notes 8 September 2022

Members Present: Jeremy Cram (WDFW), Chris Fisher (CTCR), Tom Kahler (Douglas PUD), Brandon Rogers (Yakama Nation), Catherine Willard (Chelan PUD), Justin Yeager (NOAA Fisheries), and Tracy Hillman (Committees' Chair).

Members Absent: Kate Terrell (USFWS).¹

Others Present: Becky Gallaher (Tributary Project Coordinator). Chris Johnson (MSRF), Camden Shaw (MSRF), Nick Legg (Wolf Water Resources), and Steve Rodriguez (Wolf Water Resources) joined the meeting for the Methow 3R Floodplain Feasibility Project discussion. Jason Lundgren (Cascade Fisheries), Mickey Fleming (Chelan-Douglas Land Trust), Laura Zanetto (Natural Systems Design), and Joey Smith (Natural Systems Design) joined the meeting for the Peshastin RM 2.5 Project discussion.

The Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island Hydroelectric Projects Habitat Conservation Plans Tributary Committees held a conference call on Thursday, 8 September 2022 from 10:30 am to 12:15 pm.

I. Review and Adopt September Agenda

Tracy Hillman welcomed everyone to the meeting and the Committees adopted the proposed agenda with two changes: (1) added a time extension request from Chelan County Natural Resources Department and (2) added a scope change request from Cascade Fisheries.

II. Review and Approval of the August Meeting Minutes

The draft 11 August 2022 meeting notes were reviewed and approved by the Tributary Committees.

III. Monthly Update on Ongoing Projects

Becky Gallaher gave an update on funded projects. Most are progressing well or had no salient activity in the past month.

- Barkley Irrigation – Under Pressure Project – The sponsor (Trout Unlimited; TU) reported that the Barkley Department of Transportation (DOT)/Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) easements have been signed and recorded. The Methow Valley Irrigation District (MVID) is working with DOT and FAA to finalize their easements. The sponsor completed three of the Barkley individual well easements and hopes to finalize the remaining two easements by the end of September.

¹ Kate provided her votes on decision items following the meeting.

- Chiwawa Nutrient Enhancement Project – This project is complete. The third annual report and final report were uploaded to the Extranet site.
- Johnson Creek Habitat Restoration Project – The sponsor (TU) reported that they submitted the final design package, including traffic control plan and hydraulic report, to DOT for final review.
- Lower Wenatchee Instream Flow Enhancement Project – The sponsor (TU) reported they are in the process of arranging a meeting with the Jones Shotwell Ditch Company (JSDC) director and the JSDC attorney to go over next steps.
- Peshastin RM 3.4 Side Channel Project – The sponsor (Chelan County Natural Resources Department; CCNRD) did not provide an update this month.
- Beaver Creek Barrier #40016 Correction Project – The sponsor (CCNRD) reported that there was no new activity on this project.
- Chumstick Baseflow and Riparian Enhancement Project – The sponsor (Cascadia Conservation District; CCD) did not provide an update this month.
- Nason Kahler Instream Complexity Project – The sponsor (CCNRD) did not provide an update this month. Justin Yeager indicated that this project has some issues with turbidity that need to be resolved.
- Big Meadow Creek Fish Passage Project – The sponsor (Cascade Fisheries; CF) reported that they met onsite with the Forest Service and discussed comments on 60% designs and identified items that need to be addressed before proceeding to 95% designs. They also secured additional funding from the PRCC Habitat Subcommittee for implementation.
- Lower Chiwawa River Floodplain Reconnection and Instream Enhancement Project – The sponsor (CCNRD) reported they continued to work on alternatives and preparation of a Concept Development Report. They also continued coordination with the Forest Service and private landowners.
- Alder Creek Floodplain Restoration Project – The sponsor (Yakama Nation; YN) reported that construction is underway and they have completed about 50% of the channel excavation work and associated jams.
- Wenatchee Entiat Beaver-Powered Restoration Project – The sponsor (TU) reported that there was no new activity on this project.
- Methow Thermal Refugia Restoration Assessment Project – The sponsor (Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation; MSRF) reported that they initiated field site sampling.
- Nason Kahler Instream Complexity Project – The sponsor (CCNRD) did not provide an update this month.
- Wenatchee River Juvenile Detection PIT Barge – This project is complete. The final report was uploaded to the Extranet site.
- Mission Wood Amendment Project – The sponsor (CF) reported that they completed felling work in Libby Creek. Because the project is well under budget, the sponsor has requested a scope change (see discussion under Scope Change below).
- Thirteen Fish Passage Designs Project – The sponsor (CF) reported they received final designs for the Goose Creek project and pre-design work continues on the other culverts.

- Nason RM 12 Floodplain Reconnection Project – The sponsor (CCNRD) reported that they continue to identify potential restoration opportunities at the site and they have begun preparation of a memo to identify those opportunities.
- Methow Horseshoe Habitat Enhancement Project – The sponsor (YN) reported that this project is complete. Revegetation work will be completed in September/October.
- Lower Little Bridge Creek Restoration Project – The sponsor (YN) reported that this project is complete. Revegetation of the staging area will be completed in October.
- Mystery and War Creek Reach Large Wood Restoration Project – The sponsor (YN) reported that this project is complete. Revegetation of the staging area will be completed in October.
- Methow 3R Floodplain Restoration Feasibility Study Project – The sponsor (MSRF) reported that they held multiple meetings to address the final draft memo and attachments for the feasibility study.
- Salmon Creek Channel Realignment Project – The sponsor (City of Okanogan and MSRF) did not provide an update this month.
- Peshastin Creek RM 2.5 Project – The sponsor (CF) reported that Natural Systems Design has developed three alternatives that will be shared with the Committee during the September meeting (see discussion below).
- Level II Surveys in Priority Reaches Project – The sponsor (CF) reported they have initiated coordination with the Forest Service, Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board, Upper Columbia Regional Technical Team, and regional sponsors. They anticipate survey work to begin this fall in reaches in the Methow subbasin and possibly in the Entiat or Wenatchee subbasins. Most of the survey work is planned for summer 2023.

Becky reported that CCNRD will not need funding from the Rocky Reach Tributary Committee for the Lower Chiwawa AU, Area D – Preliminary Design Project. In June 2022, the Rocky Reach Tributary Committee approved funding (\$24,725) for this project. CCNRD indicated that Inter-Fluve will develop the preliminary designs with funding from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Becky also noted that the Sponsor Agreement for this project has not been signed. Thus, the allocation of \$24,725 for this project will be returned to the Rocky Reach Plan Species Account.

IV. Time Extension

Lower Chiwawa River Floodplain Reconnection and Instream Enhancement Project

The Rock Island Tributary Committee received a time extension request from Chelan County Natural Resources Department on the Lower Chiwawa River Floodplain Reconnection and Instream Enhancement Project. The sponsor indicated that they need additional time to complete the Draft Concept Development Report, which was scheduled to be completed by 30 July 2022. The sponsor indicated the delay is due to the challenges of scheduling meetings with landowners and stakeholders. Therefore, they asked to extend the contract from 30 November 2022 to 31 December 2022. Under this timeline, the sponsor will complete the draft report by 31 October 2022 and submit the final report to the Committee by 31 December 2022. The Rock Island Tributary Committee agreed to extend the contract to 31 December 2022.

V. Scope Change

Mission Project Wood Amendment

The Wells Tributary Committee received a request from Cascade Fisheries for a scope change on the Mission Project Wood Amendment. The sponsor asked to use remaining funds (~\$18,462) to expand the project into Little Bridge and Poorman creeks in the Twisp River watershed. The expanded scope will allow the sponsor to fell a total of 160 streamside trees directly into 6.5 miles of stream in reaches on Little Bridge and Poorman creeks that the Forest Service identified for this type of treatment in their Twisp Aquatic Restoration Plan. The Wells Tributary Committee approved the scope change. The total cost of the project does not change as a result of this scope change.

VI. Methow 3R Floodplain Feasibility Project Discussion

Chris Johnson (MSRF), Camden Shaw (MSRF), Nick Legg (Wolf Water Resources), and Steve Rodriguez (Wolf Water Resources) joined the meeting for the Methow 3R Floodplain Feasibility Project discussion. Camden began by providing a general overview of the project and their coordination with landowners. Camden reminded the Committee that the purpose of this project, which is mostly funded by the Wells Tributary Committee, is to complete a feasibility study to evaluate potential restoration opportunities along the Methow River between RM 46.0 and RM 47.3. This reach of the Methow River has multiple opportunities to reconnect side channels and floodplains, increase thermal refugia, and enhance instream complexity. Camden pointed out that this reach has three, unique, cold-water sites that they intend to enhance. He added that they have worked closely with the Methow Conservancy and other landowners in this reach. The landowners in this reach have expressed support for enhancement work.

Nick Legg described enhancement opportunities in the reach (see Attachment 1). He began by describing the feasibility approach, which included identifying a menu of potential restoration actions, hydraulic modeling, evaluation of potential biological benefits, and estimated costs. He then talked about the priority of the reach for restoration and the priority life stages in the reach. He noted that stream temperature, woody debris, floodplain connectivity, side channels, riparian habitat, and canopy cover are functioning “at risk” or “unacceptable” in the reach. He said within the one-mile reach, they have engaged with about 75% of the landowners. He also noted that the three cold-water refuges within this reach lack habitat complexity. He said these cold-water refuges are 4.0-5.0°C cooler than the mainstem during the summer and 2.5-3.0°C warmer than the mainstem during the winter.

Nick then identified restoration opportunities within the reach. They have identified several side channel enhancement opportunities within the reach, some of which take advantage of the thermal refuges but do not dilute the benefits of the thermal areas. They also identified 13 acres of riparian restoration opportunities and a high potential floodplain reconnection project at the upstream end of the reach. Nick showed results from physical habitat simulation modeling, which indicated that the weighted useable area (WUA) for Chinook and steelhead was relatively low during “normal” snowmelt conditions. However, with restoration work, the WUA for Chinook could be increased by about 18% during typical snowmelt (2,500 cfs). He then summarized by stating that access and landowner willingness is good, FEMA No Rise requirement is manageable, and recreational user safety is important and manageable.

Nick identified the design elements and rationale for this project. He indicated that they have prioritized the various elements based on modeling results and biological benefits. He then identified the estimated cost for each priority design element and estimated the total cost of implementing the priority elements at \$1.1M. He described the methods they will use to dial in the cost versus benefit of the project. He concluded that the feasibility study and 10% concept development indicate a high potential to expand thermal refuge, habitat complexity, floodplain connectivity, and riparian conditions while managing risks (e.g., landowner issues, regulator issues, and recreation). He asked the Wells Tributary Committee whether they (1) support the prioritized restoration elements, (2) want to participate in future design phases, and (3) would like the project to move to permit-ready designs in two phases (30% and 60%).

The Wells Tributary Committees thanked Cascade Fisheries and Wolf Water Resources for the update and discussion and indicated they would provide their responses to the three questions in a couple weeks.

VII. Peshastin Creek RM 2.5 Project Discussion

Jason Lundgren (Cascade Fisheries), Mickey Fleming (Chelan-Douglas Land Trust), Laura Zanetto (Natural Systems Design), and Joey Smith (Natural Systems Design) joined the meeting for the Peshastin RM 2.5 Project discussion. Jason began by providing an overview of the project. He reminded the Rocky Reach Tributary Committee that the purpose of the project is to conduct an appraisal of the 20.5-acre floodplain located on lower Peshastin Creek and develop conceptual restoration designs. Jason said they hired Natural Systems Design (NSD) to develop conceptual designs. They have completed three different alternatives for the Committee to review. As for the appraisal, Mickey reported that the appraisal, which will identify both the cost of an acquisition and the cost for a conservation easement, will be completed by the end of this month. She said Pacific Appraisal Associates, which is an approved Tributary Committee appraiser, is completing the work.

Laura then provided a presentation on the development of restoration alternatives for the site (see Attachment 2). She began by providing an overview of the site, its location, and size. She identified the priority habitat conditions by fish species that need to be enhanced and noted that stream flows, temperature, floodplain connectivity, side channels, and instream structure are lacking in the reach. She also provided results from relative elevation modeling, which clearly showed low-lying floodplain swales and depressions. She described the mainstem as a confined, steep, plane-bed channel. She also described the vegetation communities in the project area, which mostly consists of narrow bands of riparian trees and shrubs.

Joey described the hydraulic conditions at the site. Under existing conditions at 757 cfs, the low-lying floodplain depressions backwater and the channel along the toe of SR97 embankment becomes engaged. At a 2-year flood condition (1,170 cfs), relict channels become engaged and floodplain depressions backwater. At the 100-year flood condition (4,340 cfs), floodplain inundation expands but the terrace remains disconnected.

Laura identified and described the three restoration alternatives selected to enhance the site. Alternative 1 is designed to increase instream habitat complexity. It includes the installation of seven in-channel ELJs that will increase habitat diversity and cover for fish and some of them will be located to direct flow towards floodplain depressions. Alternative 2 expands on Alternative 1 by including an additional in-channel ELJ and excavating targeted pilot channels that will increase hydraulic complexity and redistribute flows for engagement of floodplain wetland complexes. Alternative 3 expands on Alternative 2 by adding five additional in-channel ELJs, expanding floodplain habitat, increasing riparian vegetation, and constructing a side channel through the lower terrace.

Jason asked the Rocky Reach Tributary Committee to provide feedback on which alternative they prefer. The Rocky Reach Tributary Committee thanked Jason and Natural Systems Design for the update on the project and said they would provide feedback within a few weeks.

VIII. Information Updates

The following information updates were provided during the meeting.

1. Approved Payment Requests received in July and August 2022:

Rock Island Plan Species Account:

- \$73.50 to Clifton Larson Allen for Rock Island financial administration in August 2022.
- \$811.52 to Cascade Fisheries for the Chiwawa Nutrient Enhancement Project.

- \$2,593.56 to Cascade Fisheries for the Level II Surveys in Priority Reaches Project.
- \$2,405.44 to Chelan County Treasurer for the Lower Chiwawa River Floodplain Reconnection Project.
- \$5,975.59 to Chelan County Treasurer for the Nason RM 12 Floodplain Reconnection Project.
- \$81,793.76 to WDFW for the Wenatchee River Juvenile Detection PIT Barge.

Rocky Reach Plan Species Account:

- \$73.50 to Clifton Larson Allen for Rocky Reach financial administration in August 2022.
- \$6,050.46 to Cascade Fisheries for work on the Peshastin RM 2.5 Project.

Wells Plan Species Account:

- \$17,002.93 to Cascade Fisheries for work on the Mission Project Wood Amendment Project.

2. Tracy Hillman reminded the Committees that the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) has scheduled a site visit for the HCP Tributary Committees and the PRCC Habitat Subcommittee for 12-13 October 2022. Tracy shared a draft agenda with the Committees. Chris Fisher indicated that he would show members the culvert replacement projects on Johnson Creek on the way up to Canada. During the return trip, members will visit Enloe Dam on the Similkameen River. Chris will work with ONA on a final agenda, which Tracy will share with the Tributary Committees as soon as it is available. Brandon Rogers asked that the agenda include time for a discussion on the management of sockeye salmon and the numbers of adults that are allowed to pass into Okanagan Lake. Chris will relay this suggestion to ONA. Jeremy Cram shared that those going to Canada will need to download and complete the “ArriveCAN” app.
3. Because of a lack of time, the Committees were unable to discuss the NMFS Five-Year Status Report. They will discuss the report during the November meeting.

IX. Next Steps

The Tributary Committees will not officially meet in October. Some members of the Tributary Committee will participate on the site tours in Canada on 12-13 October. The next meeting of the Tributary Committees will be on 10 November 2022.

Meeting notes submitted by Tracy Hillman (tracy.hillman@bioanalysts.net).