Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island HCP Tributary Committees Notes 14 May 2026

Members Present: Tracy Bowerman (USFWS), Jeremy Cram (WDFW), Chris Fisher (CTCR), Tom Kahler (Douglas PUD), Brandon Roger (YN), Catherine Willard (Chelan PUD), and Tracy Hillman (Committees' Chair).

Members Absent: Scott Carlon (NOAA).[1]

Others Present: Becky Sadler (Tributary Project Coordinator) and Dave Duvall (Grant PUD and PRCC Habitat Subcommittee).

The Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island Hydroelectric Projects Habitat Conservation Plans Tributary Committees held a conference call on Thursday, 14 May 2026 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Tracy Hillman welcomed everyone to the HCP Tributary Committees (Committees) meeting.

II. Review and Adopt the Agenda

Members of the Committees reviewed and adopted the proposed agenda with one addition: Budget Amendment for the Lower Peshastin Creek Protection RM 2.5-3.5 Project.

III. Review and Approval of the April Meeting Minutes

The draft 9 April 2026 meeting notes were reviewed and approved by the Tributary Committees.

IV. Monthly Update on Ongoing Projects

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

- Lower Wenatchee Instream Flow Enhancement Project – The sponsor (Trout Unlimited; TU) reported that the project reached substantial completion on 22 April. Final commissioning and inspection will occur as water demand increases. The Jones Shotwell Ditch Company is expected to take control of the system in early July. The sponsor is also assisting shareholders with service connections and system operation. Early feedback has been very positive.
- Wenatchee Entiat Beaver-Powered Restoration Project – The sponsor (TU) reported that in April their returning three-person seasonal crew completed training on low-tech process-based restoration protocols. The sponsor continues to plan for implementation on Beaver Creek, which is scheduled to begin in mid-July. A site visit is planned in May to assess December storm damage and finalize structure layout.

[1] Scott provided his votes on decision items after the meeting.

- Thirteen Fish Passage Designs Project – The sponsor (Cascade Fisheries; CF) reported that there was no new activity on this project. Pole Creek barrier removal is scheduled for 2027.
- Peshastin Creek RM 2.5 Project – The sponsor (CF) reported that they continue landowner coordination. Landowners remain engaged and supportive as the project progresses. In the coming month, Strider Construction will begin submitting construction submittals for review and approval. The sponsor will also finalize the agreement with Washington Department of Transportation authorizing project construction to proceed.
- Goodwin Side Channel Design and Implementation Project – The sponsor (CF) reported that Pipkin Construction initiated construction submittals for project review. These materials were reviewed by the sponsor and the project engineer and were either approved or returned with comments for revision. Next month, the sponsor will finalize the agreement with Washington Department of Transportation authorizing project construction to proceed.
- Entiat Tributary Baseflow Project – The sponsor (Cascadia Conservation District; CCD) reported that they plan to complete permitting over the next few months for the upstream low-tech work planned for 2026.
- Lower Chiwaukum Creek Restoration Project – The sponsor (CF) reported that the consultant progressed project designs to the draft final stage, incorporating feedback from the March site visit with funders and technical experts. They also began preparing for permitting.
- Wilson Side Channel Adaptive Management Project – The sponsor (Chelan County Natural Resources Department; CCNRD) did not provide an update on this project.
- Nason Creek RM 12 Final Design Project – The sponsor (CCNRD) reported that they received feedback from the Bonniville Power Administration (BPA) and WDFW on the draft final designs and work began on the construction-ready plan set. Efforts continued to support the Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) approval process, and the development of the Adaptive Management Plan required under BPA implementation funding.
- Mission Creek Protection Project – The sponsor (Chelan Douglas Land Trust; CDLT) reported that the surveyor is making progress on the certificates of exemption and boundary line adjustment needed for the appraisal and eventual conservation easement. The appraisal timeline is likely out a couple of months.
- Goat Creek Fan Restoration Final Design Project – The sponsor (CF) reported that they are coordinating with landowners to schedule a meeting with Okanogan County to address concerns about potential impacts on future residential development. Design finalization and next permitting steps remain on hold pending execution of a construction landowner agreement.
- Goat Creek Floodplain Reconnection Project – The sponsor (CF) reported that there that was no activity on this project.
- Habitat Connectivity at Twisp Ponds Project – The sponsor (Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation; MSRF) reported that permit packages were submitted to the Army Corps of Engineers in April, with the construction planning set to begin in May.
- M2@3R Final Design Project – The sponsor (MSRF) reported that they continue to hold regular design team meetings.
- M2@3R Habitat Construction Project – The sponsor (MSRF) reported that they conducted a site visit with the Methow Conservancy to review the draft final design and easement impacts. They coordinated with left bank landowners on access, staging, and delivery options. They also met with a WDFW habitat biologist to review the project.

- Okanagan Lake Dam East Salmon Passage Project – The sponsor (Okanagan Nation Alliance; ONA) reported that the project is complete. The final report has been uploaded to the Extranet site.
- Peshastin RM 8.8 Preliminary Design Project – The sponsor (CCNRD) reported that no work is planned until November 2026.
- Roaring Creek Floodplain Reconnection Project – The Sponsor (CCD) did not provide an update on this project.
- Lower Peshastin Creek Protection Project – The Sponsor (CDLT) reported that they reviewed the appraisal with the landowner and are requesting a budget amendment (see Section V).
- Equesis Creek – Westside Weirs Fish Passage Restoration Project – The Sponsor (ONA) did not provide an update on this project.
- Upper Methow Salmon Cassel Implementation Project – The Sponsor (MSRF) reported that they completed the 80% draft design. In May they plan to install groundwater monitoring wells.
- Fulton Ditch Irrigation Efficiency Project – The Sponsor (TU) reported that they submitted a funding application to the USFWS Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Mitigation Act (FRIMA) grant program for additional implementation funds. They also initiated a formal water-right change review for the Report of Examination (ROE) application. In the coming month, the sponsor plans to pursue additional implementation funding and refine the overall project funding strategy.

V. Budget Amendment

Lower Peshastin Creek Protection RM 2.5-3.5 Project

The Rocky Reach Tributary Committee received a budget amendment request from Chelan Douglas Land Trust on the Lower Peshastin Creek Protection RM 2.5-3.5 Project. The Committee understands that because the appraisal was less than expected, the sponsor asked to reallocate line-item amounts and reduce the total request from $428,000 to $302,000. After review, the Rocky Reach Tributary Committee approved the budget amendment. The total contribution from the Rocky Reach Plan Species Account will be reduced to $302,000.

VI. General Salmon Habitat Program Draft Proposals

The Committees received five Salmon Recovery Funding Board/General Salmon Habitat Program draft proposals. The Committees reviewed each draft proposal and identified those they believe warranted a final proposal. Projects the Committees dismissed were either inconsistent with the intent of the Plan Species Accounts, did not have strong technical merit, or had low benefits per cost (not cost effective). The Committees assigned draft proposals to one of two categories: "Fundable" (would like to see a final application) and "Not Fundable" (would not like to see a final application). It is important to note that these are ratings of draft proposals and do not reflect ratings of final proposals. The Committees directed Tracy Hillman to notify sponsors with appropriate projects to submit a final proposal, with a discussion of the questions/comments identified for each draft proposal listed below. Tracy Hillman will also notify sponsors with projects that have no chance or a low likelihood of receiving funding from the Tributary Committees.

Nason Creek Floodplain Restoration: PUD Transmission Line Relocation Conceptual Design Project (Fundable)

The Committees recommend that the project sponsor (Chelan County Natural Resource Department) address the following comments/suggestions as they develop the full proposal:

- The sponsor should focus on the feasibility of relocating the transmission lines, alternatives analysis, and conceptual designs. Less attention should be given to alternative analysis for potential stream enhancement work after transmission line relocation. The Committees already understand potential enhancement work.
- Although the Committees may support the proposed work (Phase 1), it is unlikely they will support Phases 2 and 3 of this project. This is because they believe infrastructure grants should be used to support those phases of the project.

Upper Columbia Instream Habitat Assessment Project (Not Fundable)

The Committees recommend that this project, sponsored by Cascade Fisheries, should not be submitted as a full proposal to the Tributary Committees for the following reason:

- The Committees believe that much of this assessment work will occur in lower priority areas for restoration. Indeed, some of the targeted areas appear outside the distribution of Plan Species and some do not appear to be identified as important data gaps in the MaDMC data gaps list.

Salmon Creek Fish Passage Barrier Design Project (Not Fundable)

The Committees recommend that this project, sponsored by Cascade Fisheries, should not be submitted as a full proposal to the Tributary Committees for the following reason:

- The Committees are not convinced that these are significant barriers to Plan Species. Indeed, adult steelhead have been observed spawning upstream from the barriers. Based on conversations during the site tour, rerouting might be a legitimate and cost-effective option, but only if it is determined that correcting the current passage conditions is a critical need and backwatering will not suffice to accomplish the objective.

Lower Chiwawa Area D Implementation Project (Fundable)

The Committees recommend that the project sponsor (Chelan County Natural Resource Department) address the following comments/suggestions as they develop the full proposal:

- The sponsor needs to address the comments provided by the Regional Technical Team and Tributary Committees following the presentation and site visit.

Beaver Creek Confluence Acquisitions Project (Fundable)

The Committees recommend that the project sponsor (Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation) address the following comments/suggestions as they develop the full proposal:

- The sponsor should provide additional information on the restoration potential and constraints in the acquisition parcels and in the 12-acre common area (shaded yellow in the figure in the draft application). The application indicates that the landowners of the common area are supportive of restoration, but it is not clear whether there are constraints on restoration work there (e.g., no floodplain reconnection).

VII. General Salmon Habitat Program Application

Beaver Creek Passage Barrier Culvert Replacement Project

Trout Unlimited is the sponsor of the Beaver Creek Passage Barrier Culvert Replacement Project. The purpose of the project is to restore connectivity to five miles of upstream habitat on Beaver Creek, a tributary to the Wenatchee River, by replacing a 67% passage barrier (undersized culvert and earthen bridge) and a 100% passage barrier (improperly designed beaver coexistence flow device). The total cost of the project is $635,693.66. The sponsor requested $364,745.32 from HCP Plan Species Account Funds. Following review, the Committees determined that they need additional information before they can make a funding decision. To help inform their decision, they would like to know whether the

December flooding altered habitat conditions in Beaver Creek. Thus, the sponsor needs to provide additional information on current conditions and whether passage has changed as a result of the flooding. In addition to providing current information on habitat and passage conditions, the sponsor needs to provide a separate cost estimate for (1) culvert and earthen bridge replacement and (2) beaver coexistence flow device removal.

It is important to point out that the Committees struggled with this proposal. The Committees currently believe the potential benefits to Plan Species from this project do not justify the cost. As such, it will be important for the sponsor to provide as much justification as they can for this project.

Following the meeting, the sponsor provided the following responses to the Committees:

Thank you for the response. I appreciate the committee's careful consideration of this proposal. I will try to provide some more information in response to the committee's questions:

1. *We have conducted multiple site visits both to the Stone Water Ranch property and to other project sites farther up in the watershed, and we have not seen substantially altered habitat conditions related to the December flooding. The floods also do not appear to have affected fish passage conditions on the project site. This past winter, our team completed some analysis of slope stability and burn severity related to our ongoing work with USFS in the Beaver Creek Watershed. We found that the lower watershed has low risk of slope failures and debris flows. There are tributaries to Beaver Creek that present medium to high risk of debris flows, but these are mostly in the highest parts of the watershed and would be unlikely to present impacts in the vicinity of any of our project sites.*
2. *Costs for culvert and earthen bridge replacement and beaver coexistence flow device removal are difficult to separate because, in a nutshell, replacement of the culvert in conjunction with the other work that has already been done on this project site render the cost of removal of the flow device insubstantial, meaning that essentially all project funding will go toward replacing the culvert. Previous efforts by TU to provide cost share to the landowner to relocate irrigation infrastructure removed the need the landowner had for the flow device. Removal is authorized under the same permits that allow for replacement of the culvert. TU has an arrangement with the landowner to use our staff technicians along with labor and equipment from the landowner to remove the flow device at minimal cost.*

I would also like to provide some valuable context for this project. These barriers are the most downstream passage barriers on Beaver Creek and the only confirmed barriers remaining on the Beaver Creek main stem. This funding request, along with the other secured funds for implementation, represents the final component of nearly $200,000.00 that have been spent to address habitat concerns on this property and to exhaust all options for improving instream flow. Located as it is in the lower watershed, the passage barriers on this property constrain the benefits of the seven upstream barriers that have been corrected to date as well as the 2 completed and 1 planned stream restoration projects in the upper watershed. TU also completed a Watershed Restoration Action Plan with USFS this past year, which opens up further restoration and stewardship opportunities in partnership with them. The Beaver Creek watershed has intrinsic potential for summer steelhead and spring chinook, and both are identified in the Statewide Washington Integrated Fish Distribution Map as documented below the Stone Water Ranch Property.

I appreciate the Committee's concerns over cost. This is a project that has taken many twists and turns throughout its 8-year lifespan, and costs have overshot expectations at many points along the way. However, the project has been bid for construction and is ready for a fixed construction contract for the final phase. TU is currently in a position where we will need to delay construction if the Committee does not grant funding. As a result, we would need to re-bid the project next year, likely at a higher cost, or consider abandoning the effort. I understand the Trib Committee has many high-quality projects to consider, and not all can be funded. I happen to believe this project presents an important opportunity for chinook and steelhead in the Wenatchee basin, and I hope you will consider helping to make it happen.

The Committees reviewed the sponsor's responses to questions and by 29 May 2026, all members of the Rock Island Tributary Committee elected to contribute $364,745.32 to the project.

VIII. Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) Riparian Stewardship Package (with the PRCC Habitat Subcommittee)

Tracy Hillman reminded the Committees that during the last meeting, members worked through the table of sites that identify and rank restoration projects for adaptive management. During the review last month, the Committees realized the coordinates for project sites did not match with the Site Name or Stream in the spreadsheet. This made members question whether the other information in the spreadsheet (e.g., RM, Stream Length Affected, Riparian Acres, BDAs, etc.) matched correctly with the Site Name and Stream. Members opined that only the coordinates were incorrect; however, without knowing for sure, the Committees were unable to identify which sites they would recommend being included in a proposal. Tracy Hillman shared this concern with the sponsor, and the sponsor provided an updated spreadsheet with corrected information.

The Committees worked through the updated spreadsheet and would like to see a proposal requesting funds to adaptively manage the following restoration sites:

- Lower Peshastin
- Merrit Oxbow (Nason Creek)
- Alder-DS
- Peshastin 2.5
- Jones (Chumstick Creek)
- Roaring Creek-DS
- Roaring Creek-US
- Goodwin Side Channel (Wenatchee River)
- Stormy Creek

As the sponsor prepares the proposal for the HCP TCs, they need to describe each project site, what work was completed on each site, identify possible adaptive management actions, and identify the estimated cost by site. Much of this information is already contained in their spreadsheet; therefore, it should be relatively easy for the sponsor to provide this information in the proposal.

IX. Information Updates

The following information updates were provided during the meeting.

1. Approved Payment Requests received in May 2026:

   Rock Island Plan Species Account:

   - $249.37 to Clifton Larson Allen for Rock Island financial administration (May).

- $15,479.11 to Cascade Fisheries for work on the Peshastin Creek RM 2.5 Final Design and Construction project.
- $29,398.21 to Okanagan Nation Alliance for work on the Okanagan Lake Dam East Salmon Passage Project.

Rocky Reach Plan Species Account:

- $249.38 to Clifton Larson Allen for Rocky Reach financial administration (May).

2. Tracy Hillman reviewed the Salmon Recovery Funding Board/Tributary Committees proposed schedule for 2026. Important dates are noted below:
    - Tributary Committees Review Draft Applications: 14 May 2026
    - Final Application Due: 27 May 2026
    - Tributary Committees Review Final Applications: 11 June 2026

X. Next Steps

The next meeting of the Tributary Committees will be on 11 June 2026.

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