

# Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island HCP Tributary Committees Notes 9 January 2014

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**Members Present:** Dale Bambrick (NOAA Fisheries), Lee Carlson (Yakama Nation), Jeremy Cram (WDFW), Chris Fisher (Colville Tribes), Steve Hays (Chelan PUD), Tom Kahler (Douglas PUD), Kate Terrell (USFWS), and Tracy Hillman (Committees Chair).

**Others Present:** Becky Gallaher (Tributary Project Coordinator), Justin Yeager (NOAA Fisheries), and Jeff Osborn (Chelan PUD).

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The Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island Hydroelectric Projects Habitat Conservation Plans Tributary Committees met in the Chelan PUD First Floor Conference Room in Wenatchee, Washington, on Thursday, 9 January 2014 from 10:00 am to 12:15 pm.

Dale Bambrick introduced Justin Yeager, who may replace Dale on the Committees if Dale finds that his workload will not allow him to participate on the Tributary Committees in the future.

## **I. Review and Adopt Agenda**

Tracy Hillman welcomed everyone to the meeting and the Committees adopted the proposed agenda.

## **II. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The Committees reviewed and approved the 15 November 2013 meeting notes with edits from Chris Fisher.

## **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.

- Nason Creek Upper White Pine Reconnection – Chelan PUD Powerline Reconnection Alternatives Analysis – The sponsor (Chelan County Natural Resources Department; CCNRD) did not provide an update on the project. Jeff Osborn noted that CCNRD will be meeting with Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) to review the letter of agreement from Chelan PUD to move power lines and to ensure that the project is feasible.
- Chewuch River Instream Passage Project – The project is complete and the sponsor (Trout Unlimited) will submit a final report soon.
- Nutrient Enhancement Assessment Project – The sponsor (Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group; CCFEG) noted that Ecology has postponed their decision to grant the Administrative Order for the nutrient work in the Chiwawa River basin until January or February. If they receive the permit, they may acquire up to 50,000 lbs of analogs at no cost through the RFEG/WDFW surplus hatchery salmon contract. If they receive these analogs, the costs will drop significantly (\$70,000/year) for the Chiwawa nutrient enhancement project.
- Large Wood Atonement Project – The sponsor (CCFEG) held a conference call on 9 December with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Systems Design (engineering firm), and Gravity

Environmental to discuss logistics and timing for summer 2014 construction. The project is moving forward with construction this summer.

- Nason Creek Lower White Pine Alcove Acquisition Project – This project is complete and the Rocky Reach Tributary Committee received a final report from the sponsor (Chelan-Douglas Land Trust). The sponsor noted that the primary challenge with this project was coordination among the landowners. They thanked the Committee for their contribution to the project and their willingness to increase the grant to meet a higher valuation on one of the properties.
- Silver Protection Project – The sponsor (WDFW) provided no update on the project. Kate Terrell said that the project is moving forward. She noted that discussions are taking place that will try to keep the uplands in the tax base.
- Coulter Creek Barrier Replacement Project – The project sponsor (CCNRD) provided no update on this project.
- Wenatchee Levee Removal and Riparian Restoration Project – The project sponsor (CCNRD) noted that they began the cultural resource process for the riparian restoration portion of the project. A Centennial Grant funds the cultural resource investigation and is the source of funds for riparian restoration. Kate Terrell asked why the sponsor did not complete the cultural resource investigation (SHiPO 106) earlier (before removing the levee). Following the meeting, Becky Gallaher shared Kate’s question with the project sponsor. CCNRD responded that because they did not disturb the original ground surface during the removal of the levee, they did not need to do a cultural resources investigation for this portion of the project. They stated that the material removed was fill material, which was less than 50 years old, and the ground surface was not disturbed. Therefore, they believe they did not need a cultural resources survey for the levee removal portion of the project.
- Upper Beaver Habitat Improvement Channel Restoration Project – The project sponsor (Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation; MSRF) coordinated the removal of the pre-project fish screen and infrastructure from the decommissioned section of the Batie Ditch. They re-purposed the fish screen paddle wheel and associated bits to the new facility. They left the measuring weir and screen box at the site for the WDFW screen shop to salvage at their convenience. MSRF has been monitoring icing at the new diversion and throughout the reconstructed channel on a weekly basis. As the ice breaks up, the creek will likely scour and mobilize material from both the floodplain and constructed channel. MSRF provided the Rocky Reach and Wells Tributary Committees with a description of the work accomplished, challenges, and photos of the project site.
- Lower Foster Creek Steelhead Habitat Enhancement Project – Becky Gallaher said that Jason Lundgren (CCFEG) spoke with Foster Creek Conservation District regarding this project. Apparently, the Conservation District Board has concerns working on federal property and they do not believe there is enough money in the budget to do the design/build project. CCFEG indicated that they would like to take on the project if they have enough resources. The Wells Committee directed Tracy Hillman to send a letter to the Conservation District indicating that the Committee will not enter into a contract with the District on this project.
- Twisp River-Poorman Creek Wetland Habitat Acquisition – The Sponsor (MSRF) submitted a proposed budget amendment to the Wells Tributary Committee. **The Committee reviewed the budget amendment request and concluded that they cannot approve a budget amendment for a project that has changed significantly from its original scope.** The Committee originally agreed to help fund an acquisition project, which has since merged with another project and morphed into a conservation easement. The budget modification indicated that \$54,350 would be used to purchase irrigation efficiencies. This money was to be used to help purchase the property.

Not only is this a large departure from the original use of the money, but there was no information provided that allows the Committees to evaluate costs and benefits of the irrigation efficiencies. In addition, the Committee noticed that the cost of the conservation easement (\$313,650) is greater than the value of the acquisition. There was no explanation of why this was so. Finally, it does not appear that the Committee's appraiser was used to determine the value of the conservation easement. Although most of the cost of the conservation easement was covered by RCO, it appeared that the modified budget was requesting Wells Plan Species Account funds to help cover the costs of transaction fees and professional services associated with the appraisal. The Committee indicated that they would not approve these budget items, because their appraiser was not used to evaluate the value of the easements. Because the project has changed significantly and is no longer an acquisition project, which the Committee agreed to help fund, the Wells Committee elected to terminate the Twisp River-Poorman Creek Wetland Habitat Acquisition Project. However, the Committee indicated that they would review a new proposal seeking money to help fund habitat enhancements on the properties. In this case, the sponsor may submit the proposal out of phase of the annual General Salmon Habitat Program funding cycle.

- Shingle Creek Fish Passage Project – Chris Fisher reported that there were some issues with coordination between the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) and the contractor (Westhills) that delayed the project. He indicated that the dam will be removed and a series of vortex weirs will be installed to stabilize the channel and to create a series of riffles. The engineer may need to re-stake the locations for the vortex weirs. Construction work is scheduled to begin during summer 2014. Re-vegetation work will occur during autumn 2014.
- Methow/Chewuch Shallow Groundwater Monitoring Project – Water-level logger data collected during the pump test was processed and has been sent to Gina McCoy (WDFW) for analysis. Water-level loggers continue to collect data.
- Silver Side Channel Design Project – The project sponsor (CCFEG) collaborated with the USFWS and WDFW in the development of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for engineering. The RFP was sent to eight firms on 23 December 2013.
- Twisp to Carlton Reach Assessment Project – The project sponsor (CCFEG) continues to coordinate with the Bureau of Reclamation on data collection and the development of an RFP. The sponsor expects to send out the RFP this week.

#### **IV. Review of Policies and Procedures Documents**

Tracy Hillman asked if the Committees had any changes or edits to the Policies and Procedures for Funding Projects and the Tributary Committee Operating Procedures documents. After reviewing the documents, members had no changes to the Policies and Procedures or the Operating Procedures. However, they did discuss the option of opening the General Salmon Habitat Program (GSHP) to receive proposals at any time. Currently, the schedule for the GSHP is coordinated with the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) process. Thus, GSHP pre-proposals are received in early May and final proposals are received in late June. The proposed change would allow project sponsors to submit GSHP proposals at any time during the year. The Committees would continue to coordinate with the SRFB process because sponsors often include Plan Species Account Funds as cost shares in SRFB proposals. The Committees directed Tracy Hillman to provide the Committees with draft language to the Policies and Procedures document for their review during the February meeting.

#### **V. Decision Items Approved in December**

Tracy Hillman indicated that because the Committees reviewed several decision items in December but did not meet formally in December, he would review those decision items so they are captured in meeting notes.

*Wenatchee Levee Removal and Riparian Restoration Budget Amendment*

In November, the Rock Island Tributary Committee received a budget amendment request from Chelan County Natural Resources Department on the *Wenatchee Levee Removal and Riparian Restoration Project*. The sponsor requested that \$7,000 be moved from contract labor to sponsor salaries and benefits. The Committee was unable to approve the amendment request at that time because the Committee needed more information on why additional funds are needed for sponsor salaries and benefits. Following the November meeting, the sponsor informed the Committee that the additional funds were needed to help navigate the Water Conservancy Board process and to insure the landowner can replace any potential lost water from another source. After consideration, **the Rock Island Tributary Committee denied the budget amendment**. The Committee believed the landowner should be working with an expert in water law to inform the decision. The Committee was also concerned that the purpose of further investigation is to avoid the water owner from relinquishing any portion of his existing water right. One of the reasons the Committee funds conversion from inefficient gravity systems to more efficient well systems is to free up water to benefit fish. In this case, it appeared the landowner intended to retain ownership of water previously lost to conveyance.

*Methow/Chewuch Groundwater Monitoring Scope Change and Budget Amendment*

In November, the Wells Tributary Committee received a scope change and budget amendment request from the Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group on the *Methow/Chewuch Shallow Groundwater Monitoring Project*. The sponsor would like to conduct a pump-drawdown test in two or three locations to measure groundwater quantity and recharge on the Burns-Garrity property. Because excavation of the test pits will require the presence of an archeologist, the sponsor would like to move \$1,000 from contract labor to professional services. In November, the Committee was unable to approve the scope change and budget amendment because the Committee needed more information on the pump rate (gpm). After the sponsor provided additional information, **the Wells Tributary Committee approved the scope change and budget modification**.

*Silver Protection Project Time Extension*

In December, the Rocky Reach and Wells Tributary Committees received a contract extension request from WDFW on the *Silver Protection Project*. The contracts are scheduled to end on 31 December 2013. The sponsor requested that the contracts be extended to 31 December 2014. The sponsor would like additional time to explore opportunities related to ensuring the permanent preservation and enhancement of salmonid habitat on the properties. **The Rocky Reach and Wells Tributary Committees approved the contract extensions**.

*Nason Creek UWP Floodplain Reconnection - PUD Powerline Reconnection Alternatives Analysis Time Extension and Scope Change*

In December, the Rock Island Tributary Committee received a contract extension and scope change request from Chelan County NRD on the *Nason Creek UWP Floodplain Reconnection - PUD Powerline Reconnection Alternatives Analysis Project*. They would like to add additional tasks given that Chelan PUD supports moving the powerlines. Specifically, the sponsor would like the consultant to identify pole locations and heights of structures, provide drawings detailing typical structure geometry, provide preliminary drawings detailing expected clearing requirements, and provide preliminary plans and drawings. In addition, because the current contract will expire on 31 December 2013, they would like to extend the contract to 31 April 2014. **The Rock Island Tributary Committee approved the contract extension and scope change**.

*Chewuch River Permanent Instream Flow Project Budget Amendment*

In December, the Rocky Reach Tributary Committee received a budget amendment request from Trout Unlimited for the *Chewuch River Permanent Instream Flow Project*. The sponsor asked to move

\$1,838.71 from “Indirect/Overhead/Administration” to “Contract Labor” because of an accounting error. **The Rocky Reach Tributary Committee approved the budget amendment.**

***Mission Creek Fish Passage Project Time Extension***

In December, the Rock Island Tributary Committee received a time extension request from Cascade Conservation District on the *Mission Creek Fish Passage Project*. This project was originally scheduled to be completed in 2012. However, because of fires in the Mission Creek watershed during 2012, the sponsor asked for an extension. The Committee agreed to extend the contract to 31 December 2013. Since then, the sponsor has been unable to secure the necessary permits for the project. Therefore, they requested that the contract be extended to 31 December 2014, which will give them additional time to secure the permits and complete the project. **The Rock Island Tributary Committee approved the contract extension.**

**VI. Wells HCP Action Plan for 2014**

Tom Kahler provided the Committees with the Draft Wells HCP Tributary Committee Action Plan for 2014. The 2014 Draft Action Plan for the Wells Tributary Committee is as follows:

**Plan Species Account Annual Contribution**

- \$176,178 in 1998 dollars: January 2014

**Annual Report – Plan Species Account Status**

- Draft to Tributary Committee (TC): January 2014
- Approval Deadline: February 2014
- Period Covered: January to December 2013

**2014 Funding-Round: General Salmon Habitat Program**

- Request for Project Pre-proposals *To be determined* (March)
- Pre-proposal to TC *To be determined* (early May)
- Tours of Proposed Projects *To be determined* (late May)
- Project Sponsor Presentations to TC *To be determined* (early June)
- Final Project Proposals to TC *To be determined* (late June)
- RTT Project Rating Decision *To be determined* (early July)
- Supplemental Sponsor Presentations *To be determined*
- TC Final Funding Decisions *To be determined* (before Dec.)

**Small Projects Program**

- Project Review and Funding Decision January – December 2014

***The Wells Tributary Committee approved the Wells Action Plan for 2014.*** The Committees will review the Rocky Reach and Rock Island 2014 Draft Action Plans in February.

**VII. Information Updates**

The following information updates were provided during the meeting.

1. Approved Payment Requests in December and January:

Rock Island Plan Species Account:

- \$600.40 to Chelan PUD for Rock Island Tributary Committee administration and coordination during the fourth quarter of 2013.
- \$72.50 to Clifton Larson Allen for financial management of the Rock Island Account.
- \$653.20 to Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group for the Wenatchee Nutrient Assessment Project.
- \$2,267.83 to Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group for the Twisp to Carlton Reach Assessment Project.

Rocky Reach Plan Species Account:

- \$439.51 to Chelan PUD for Rocky Reach Tributary Committee administration and coordination during the fourth quarter of 2013.
- \$72.50 to Clifton Larson Allen for financial management of the Rocky Reach Account.
- \$57,240.11 to Trout Unlimited – Washington Water Project for the Chewuch River Instream Flow Project.
- \$79,313.01 to Trout Unlimited – Washington Water Project for the Chewuch River Instream Flow Project.
- \$5,185.53 to Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group for the Silver Side Channel Design Project.
- \$2,221.37 to the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust for the Nason Creek Lower White Pine Alcover Acquisition.

Wells Plan Species Account:

- \$623.46 to Chelan PUD for Wells Tributary Committee administration and coordination during the fourth quarter of 2013.
- \$15,396.39 to Trout Unlimited – Washington Water Project for the Twisp River Well Conversion Project.
- \$621.71 to the Methow Conservancy for the Chewuch Beaver Restoration Project.
- \$190.49 to the Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation for the Twisp River-Poorman Creek Wetland Habitat Acquisition Project.
- \$132.14 to Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group for the Methow/Chewuch Shallow Groundwater Project.

2. Tracy Hillman reported that he and Becky Gallaher completed Section 2.6 (Tributary Committees and Plan Species Accounts) for the Annual Report of Activities under the Anadromous Fish Agreement and Habitat Conservation Plan for each hydroelectric project. Members of the Committees should soon receive the draft reports for their review. The final reports will be submitted to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in April.
3. Tracy Hillman said that the Tributary Committees will continue to meet on the second Thursday of each month in 2014. Those meeting dates are as follows:
  - Jan. 9
  - Feb 13
  - Mar 13
  - Jul 10
  - Aug 14
  - Sep 11

- Apr 10
- May 8
- Jun 12
- Oct 9
- Nov 13
- Dec 11

4. Tracy Hillman reported that funds will be deposited into each of the Plan Species Accounts at the end of January. The amounts deposited will be about \$680,000 into the Rock Island Account, about \$330,000 into the Rocky Reach Account, and about \$255,000 into the Wells. Exact amounts deposited into each account will be provided during the February meeting.
5. The Committees discussed the outcome from the recent meeting of the Okanogan County Commissioners with project sponsors. The Commissioners asked sponsors to address three questions: (1) When is enough, enough? (2) How do you measure success? and (3) What data are being used for restoration, what baseline is being used to get the rivers back to what state? Committee members who attended the meeting indicated that the meeting was useful, but there were some shortcomings. Overall, they agreed that the meeting was a step in the right direction and that the Commissioners should better understand the importance of habitat restoration to fish and to the local economies.

### **VIII. Next Steps**

The next meeting of the Tributary Committees will be on Thursday, 13 February 2014 at Chelan PUD in Wenatchee.

Meeting notes submitted by Tracy Hillman ([tracy.hillman@bioanalysts.net](mailto:tracy.hillman@bioanalysts.net)).