

Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island HCP Tributary Committees Notes 12 January 2017

Members Present: Lee Carlson (Yakama Nation), Jeremy Cram (WDFW), Steve Hays (Chelan PUD), Tom Kahler (Douglas PUD; on phone), Kate Terrell (USFWS), Justin Yeager (NOAA Fisheries), and Tracy Hillman (Committees Chair).

Members Absent: Chris Fisher (Colville Tribes)

Others Present: Becky Gallaher (Tributary Project Coordinator), Chas Kyger (Douglas PUD), and Jason Schilling (Douglas PUD). Cody Gillin (Trout Unlimited), Robes Parrish (USFWS), and Jennifer Hadersberger (Chelan County Natural Resources Department) attended the meeting for the presentations.

The Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island Hydroelectric Projects Habitat Conservation Plans Tributary Committees met at Grant PUD in Wenatchee, Washington, on Thursday, 12 January 2017 from 9:30 am to 12:45 pm.

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 8 December 2016 meeting notes.

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.

- MVID Instream Flow Improvement Project – The project sponsor (Trout Unlimited; TU) reported that the project is almost complete. There are five wells that need to be decommissioned and one well that may need to be re-drilled. This work will be completed during the spring.
- Twisp-to-Carlton Reach Assessment Project – This project is complete. The sponsor (Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group; CCFEG) will submit a final report soon.
- Entiat Stillwaters Gray Reach Acquisition – The sponsor (Chelan-Douglas Land Trust; CDLT) did not provide an update on this project.
- Clear Creek Fish Passage and Instream Flow Project – The sponsor (TU) has been working on administrative and permitting tasks associated with the water-right change process and the Washington Department of Health New Source Approval process. The landowner finalized easement documents for Chelan PUD, who will pull cables and install a new transformer. The sponsor plans to submit the Ecology Report of Examination at the Chelan County Water Conservancy Board meeting in January.

- Barkley Irrigation – Under Pressure Project – The sponsor (TU) reported that they met with Barkley on several occasions to discuss various pump alternatives. Each option was evaluated based on construction opinions, estimated pipe alignment and sizes, pump configuration, O&M, and replacement scheduling. They will meet again on 10 January to discuss options.
- Methow Watershed Beaver Reintroduction Project – The sponsor (Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation; MSRF) reported that there was no new activity on this project. Trapping in 2016 is complete with a total of 36 beavers captured in 2016. The final report will be submitted in March 2017.
- Similkameen RM 3.8 Project – The project sponsor (Okanogan Conservation District) reported that Cardno is refining the preferred design.
- White River Floodplain (RM 3.4) Connection Project – The sponsor (CCFEG) reported that there is no new activity on this project.
- Icicle Boulder Field Project – The sponsor (TU) reported that they have completed the design phase of the project and have started permitting discussions.
- Peshastin Creek RM 10.5 PIT-Tag Detection Site Project – The sponsor (WDFW) reported that the project is complete. The sponsor submitted their annual monitoring report, which was uploaded to the Extranet site.
- Permitting Nutrient Enhancement Project – The sponsor (CCFEG) reported that they are writing a summary of findings and recommendations for nutrient enhancement monitoring in the Chiwawa River and will present their findings to the Forest Service later in January.
- Burns-Garrity Design Project – The sponsor (CCFEG) reported that Rio Applied Science and Engineering (the contractor for the project) visited the site in November and performed an initial geomorphic assessment. Rio developed a document describing their initial findings and identified several alternative restoration actions. Rio will further flesh out the alternatives once they receive the hydraulic model from the Bureau of Reclamation.
- Beaver Fever Project – The sponsor (TU) reported that they have been working on landowner outreach. They are researching landownership within the Colockum drainage because there are several reaches within this drainage that show promise for beaver dam analog (BDA) implementation. The sponsor has also reached out to Weyerhaeuser hoping to implement structures on their properties.

IV. ORRI Phase II Side Channel Reconnection Project

Although Chris Fisher was unable to attend the meeting, he sent an email to the Committees asking them to consider techniques or alternatives for the ORRI Phase II project. The project, which was implemented in 2013, reconnected a side channel to the mainstem Okanogan River. The side channel was to remain connected with the mainstem at all flows. Over the past few years, monitoring has indicated that there is a blockage issue within the approach channel and flows in the side channel are too low to provide rearing habitat for native fish during low flow conditions. The information provided by Chris not only indicated a sediment blockage issue in the approach channel, but also a breach of the approach channel in 2016.

After considering the information Chris provided, the Committees agreed that measures should be implemented that maintain the side-channel reconnection at all flows. To that end, they offered the following suggestions: (1) add another riffle or expand the existing riffle in the main channel; (2) excavate to design grade; (3) widen the approach channel; and (4) add a high-flow return.

V. Beaver Fever Project Presentation

In 2016, Trout Unlimited submitted a proposal to the Committees titled, “Beaver Fever: Restoring Ecosystem Function.” The purpose of the project was to reestablish beavers and install BDAs in tributaries of the Wenatchee or Entiat basins. The reintroduction of beavers and installation of BDAs should enhance salmonid habitat by increasing habitat complexity, moderating water temperatures, augmenting stream flows, trapping fine sediments, and improving riparian and off-channel connectivity. The Rock Island Tributary Committee agreed to fund the installation of BDAs in tributaries. Last month, the sponsor asked to share with the Committees some of the results from running the BRAT (Beaver Restoration Assessment Tool) model and their findings during site visits.

Cody Gillin (TU) and Robes Parrish (USFWS) provided a short presentation to the Committees on their work (see Attachment 1). So far, they have evaluated 10 drainages and found some potential areas for implementation of BDAs. In the Entiat, areas in Mud, Potato, and Roaring creeks are good candidates for BDA enhancement. They asked the Committees what should be their primary objective (e.g., water yield/storage, temperature amelioration, vegetation enhancement, habitat complexity, etc.), what is an appropriate spatial scale for implementing BDAs (e.g., focus efforts in a single watershed or disperse efforts across several watersheds), what should be monitored, and should they explore partnerships.

The Committees indicated that they would like to see enhancement work focused in one watershed. They suggested working in Mission, Peshastin, or Roaring creeks. The Committees also noted that they want TU to evaluate the effects of BDAs on water temperature, stream flows, and salmonid abundance (this is consistent with the recommendations outlined in the letter sent from the Rock Island Tributary Committee to TU in September 2016 asking the sponsor to submit a monitoring proposal to the Committees). Finally, the Committees recommended that the sponsor establish partnerships with other interested entities. They have already established a partnership with the USFWS. Establishing a partnership with WDFW and perhaps a contractor to help with monitoring would be appropriate.

VI. Nason Creek RM 4.6 Channel Reconnection Project Presentation

In 2013, the Rock Island Tributary Committee agreed to partially fund the Nason Creek RM 4.6 Side Channel Reconnection Construction Project, which was submitted by Chelan County Natural Resources Department (CCNRD). The purpose of this project was to provide high-flow refugia and rearing habitat for adult and juvenile salmonids in Nason Creek. The project would reconnect a 4.6-acre, high-flow channel to the mainstem near RM 4.6. Because the County was unable to secure a cost share (the Committee agreed to fund \$88,000 of the \$525,030 project), the sponsor has been unsuccessful in implementing the project. The sponsor requested a meeting with the Committee to discuss the status of the project.

Jennifer Hadersberger (CCNRD) gave a short presentation on the status of the project (see Attachment 2). She provided a brief history of the project and then described the benefits of reconnection projects in Nason Creek and elsewhere. She stated that their approach at this time is only to reconnect the downstream end of the side channel. The reason for this is because the Forest Service is unwilling to approve reconnecting the upstream end of the side channel. The Forest Service is concerned that if the upstream end is reconnected, water will be on both sides of the road and that will increase the likelihood of the road prism being eroded during high flows. Jennifer said Washington Department of Transportation has not voiced this concern. Jennifer stated that with only a downstream connection, the project will still benefit rearing salmonids.

Jennifer asked the Rock Island Tributary Committee if they would support a downstream-only connection. The Committee indicated that this is a significant departure from the original project; therefore, the County would need to submit a new proposal. The Committee recommended that the County try to secure funding for the downstream connection through the BPA targeted solicitation process. They also recommended that the County continue to seek approval from the Forest Service to

reconnect the upstream end. Once the Forest Service approves the upstream connection, funds from the Rock Island Plan Species Account can be used to reconnect the upstream end of the channel. Jennifer said the County does not want to push the Forest Service on this issue at this time.

VII. Silver Side-Channel Rehabilitation Project Presentation

Robes Parrish (USFWS) gave a presentation on the enhancement work implemented in the lower portion of the Silver Side Channel in the Methow River basin (see Attachment 3). The purpose of the project was to increase habitat quality and quantity for salmonids within the side channel and floodplain corridor. This would be accomplished by increasing sinuosity and groundwater input, improving channel geometry, adding structure and complexity appropriate to the flow regime, developing groundwater-fed alcoves, improving fish passage, adding wood cover throughout the channel, and re-vegetating the riparian zone and floodplain. The Rocky Reach Plan Species Account contributed funds for the design of the enhancement project.

Robes described the history of the project and showed aerial photos of the project site from the 1940s, 1950s, and more recently. He identified land uses and threats, and described the enhancement approach. He showed a series of photos depicting the enhancement process and panoramic views of the enhanced channel. He concluded by showing before and after pictures throughout the enhancement reach. He noted that some of the vegetation may remain dormant for a year or two. They will continue to monitor the success of the project.

VIII. Information Updates

The following information updates were provided during the meeting.

1. Approved Payment Requests in December and January:

Rock Island Plan Species Account:

- \$136.00 to Clifton Larson Allen for Rock Island financial administration in December 2016.
- \$839.19 to Chelan County PUD for project coordination and administration during the fourth quarter of 2016.

Rocky Reach Plan Species Account:

- \$136.00 to Clifton Larson Allen for Rocky Reach financial administration in December 2016.
- \$791.62 to Chelan County PUD for project coordination and administration during the fourth quarter of 2016.
- \$11,144.68 to Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group for the Burns-Garrity Restoration Design Project.

Wells Plan Species Account:

- \$446.75 to Chelan County PUD for project coordination and administration during the fourth quarter of 2016.
- \$23,444.46 to Trout Unlimited for the MVID Instream Flow Improvement Project.

2. The Committees discussed the need to add language in the Policies and Procedures document indicating that approved projects must have a signed contract within a certain time period (e.g., five years) or the Committees will cancel funding for the project. The Committees noted that there are a few projects that were approved several years ago, but the sponsors have not been able

to move the projects forward because of a lack of additional funds (cost share) and/or a lack of landowner support. As such, the sponsors have not signed contracts with the Tributary Committees. The Committees directed Tracy Hillman to include draft language in the Policies and Procedures document for review during the next meeting.

3. During the September meeting, members of the Committees identified possible funded projects they would like to visit in 2017 (see Item #2 on page 4 of the September 2016 meeting notes). Given the long list of possible projects, Tracy Hillman asked the Committees if they would like to refine the list so the tour would take no more than two days (one day for Okanogan/Methow projects and one day for Entiat/Wenatchee projects). In November, Chris Fisher recommended each member identify five projects they would like to visit. During the March meeting, members will combine their lists and identify which projects will be selected for a field visit in 2017.
4. Tracy Hillman said the Tributary Committees will continue to meet on the second Thursday of each month in 2017. Those meeting dates are as follows:
 - Jan 12
 - Feb 9
 - Mar 9
 - Apr 13
 - May 11
 - Jun 8
 - Jul 13
 - Aug 10
 - Sep 14
 - Oct 12
 - Nov 9
 - Dec 14
5. Tracy Hillman stated that John Ferguson (Chair of the HCP Coordinating Committees) sent letters to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and American Rivers inquiring about their interest in participating in a meeting with members of the HCP Coordination, Hatchery, and Tributary Committees. These parties were involved in negotiating the HCPs, but elected not to sign the HCPs. This is an opportunity for the Committees to provide the two parties with a progress report on implementation, as well as give them an opportunity to ask questions of the Committees members. The two entities are to provide a formal response to the invitation by 14 April 2017.

IX. Next Steps

The next meeting of the Tributary Committees will be on Thursday, 9 March 2017 at Grant PUD in Wenatchee.

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