Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island HCP Tributary Committees Notes 11 February 2021

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

Others Present: Becky Gallaher (Tributary Project Coordinator), Hans Smith (Yakama Nation alternate), Chris Butler (YN), and Scott Hopkins (Chelan PUD alternate). Chris Johnson (MSRF), Jessica Goldberg (MSRF), Brian Fisher (MSRF), Emily Alcott (Inter-Fluve), Jennifer Bountry (BOR), Luke Swan (Inter-Fluve), Mike McAllister (Inter-Fluve), Chris Nygarrd (BPA), Steve Kolk (BOR), Tara Gregg (MSRF) and MacKenzie Butler (Inter-Fluve) joined the call for the Sugar Project discussion. Chris Johnson (MSRF), Jessica Goldberg (MSRF), Brian Fisher (MSRF), and Nick Legg (Wolf Water Resources) joined the call for the Upper Beaver Creek Project discussion.

The Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island Hydroelectric Projects Habitat Conservation Plans Tributary Committees held a conference call on Thursday, 11 February 2021 from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm.

I. Review and Adopt February Agenda

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

II. Review and Approval of January Meeting Minutes

The draft 14 January 2021 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 there was no new activity on this project.
- Icicle Boulder Field Project – The sponsor (TU) did not provide an update this month.
- Peshastin Creek RM 10.5 PIT-Tag Detection Site Project – This project is complete. The sponsor (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; WDFW) provided the 2020 annual report (Year-5 Report), which was uploaded to the Extranet site.
- Beaver Fever Project – The sponsor (TU) reported they coordinated with WDFW in January on HPA permitting and plan to visit Rock Island Creek in February. [*The Rock Island Committee was unaware that TU was planning to work in Rock Island Creek and directed Tracy Hillman to*

contact TU and determine why they selected Rock Island Creek as a candidate for BDA restoration work. The Committee needs to approve which streams will be treated with BDAs.]

- Derby Creek Fish Passage Project – The sponsor (Cascade Fisheries; CF) reported there was no new activity on this project.
- Chiwawa Nutrient Enhancement Project – The sponsor (CF) reported there was no new activity on this project.
- Johnson Creek Habitat Restoration Project – The sponsor (TU) reported they are working on the 60% design, which should be completed late February.
- Lower Wenatchee Instream Flow Enhancement Project – The sponsor (TU) did not provide an update this month.
- Upper Burns and Angle Point Project – The sponsor (Yakama Nation) reported there was no activity on the project.
- Peshastin RM 3.4 Side Channel Project – The sponsor (Chelan County Natural Resources Department; CCNRD) reported they continue to collect groundwater data.
- Napeequa Side Channel Connection Project – The sponsor (CF) reported there was no new activity on this project.
- Monitor Side Channel Project – The sponsor (CCNRD) reported they continue preparing permit documents and are working with Natural Systems Design on draft designs.
- Restore Chiwaukum Creek Project – The sponsor (CF) reported they met with US Forest Service staff and the Forest Service supports moving forward with the preferred alternative. Rio ASE will proceed with developing the preliminary design.
- City of Leavenworth Fish Screen Project – The sponsor (TU) reported that commissioning is scheduled for the first week of February. Additional work in February will include interior trimming and light fixture installation.
- Goodwin Side Channel Assessment Project – The sponsor (CF) reported there was no new activity on this project. However, they continue to make monthly site visits to collect data.
- Sugar Reach Habitat Enhancement Early Implementation Project – This project is complete. The sponsor (Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation; MSRF) provided the final report, which was uploaded to the Extranet site.
- Enloe Dam Removal Concept Plan Project – The contractor (Inter-Fluve) is working on the conceptual plan, which is due on 31 March 2021. See the discussion below regarding a time extension on this project.
- Upper Beaver Creek Final Design and Restoration Project – The sponsor (MSRF) reported they are working on the final design. See discussion below regarding the addition of the eastern floodplain to the project.
- Big Meadow Creek Fish Passage Project – The sponsor (CF) reported there was no new activity on this project. They are waiting for the issuance of the Special Use Permit.

IV. Time Extension Request

Enloe Dam Removal Concept Plan Project

The Wells Tributary Committee received a time extension request from Chris Fisher (on behalf of Inter-Fluve) on the Enloe Dam Removal Concept Plan Project. Chris reported that Inter-Fluve is having

difficulty securing all the necessary sediment data and analyses from USGS. Given this delay, which appears to be related to the pandemic, the Wells Tributary Committee agreed to extend the contract from 31 March 2021 to 31 May 2021. The Committee would like to receive the draft report by 31 March. In addition, if possible, the Committee would like Inter-Fluve to present the results from their work during the 8 April meeting. Tracy Hillman and Chris Fisher will coordinate with Inter-Fluve on the presentation.

V. Scope Change Request

Lower Chiwawa Floodplain Reconnection and Instream Enhancement Project

The Rock Island Tributary Committee received a scope change request from Chelan County Natural Resources Department on the Lower Chiwawa Floodplain Reconnection and Instream Enhancement Project. The sponsor asked to change the spatial scale of the project from RM 1.00-4.25 to RM 1.00-13.25 on the Chiwawa River. There will be no change in the cost share from the Committee. That is, the cost of the project will remain at $24,960. After discussion, the Rock Island Tributary Committee approved the scope change. The Committee pointed out, however, that they do not want the scope change to delay the development and implementation of enhancement projects on the lower Chiwawa River.

VI. Sugar Project Discussion

Chris Johnson (MSRF), Tara Gregg (MSRF), and their consultant (Inter-Fluve) described the status of the Sugar Project. Specifically, they responded to questions and comments provided by the Committees and presented updated concepts for consideration by the Committees (see Attachment 1). The purpose of the presentation was to update the Committees on the proposed concepts and secure support or modifications from the Committees on the proposed conceptual designs.

Tara began the presentation by showing the locations of each of the project sites on the Methow River. As a reminder, she said the Sugar Project consists of five enhancement sites: Sugar Levee, Sugar Left, WDFW Adaptive, Eagle Rocks, and Twisp Confluence sites.

1. **Sugar Levee Site**

   The purpose of restoration at the Sugar Levee site is to increase the width of the river corridor and thereby reclaim local sediment processes, increase lateral migration, and activate the floodplain and side channels. Constraints include protecting landowner interests and risks to channel migration, flooding, and recreation. The current enhancement concept at this site includes a levee setback and placement of large wood. Tara added that maximum levee setback is not possible given landowner constraints. She also noted that constructing side channels that intercept groundwater is not feasible at this site.

2. **Sugar Left Site**

   The purpose of restoration at the Sugar Left site is to increase floodplain and side channel activation. Constraints include risks associated with channel migration, flooding, and recreation. In addition, the project must not negatively affect the outlet to the 1890s side channel. The current enhancement concept at this site includes constructing a side channel, creating split flow, and large wood placement. Tara indicated that they need to do additional modeling work to determine whether the side channel will be perennial or seasonal.

3. **WDFW Adaptive Site**

   The intent of restoration at this site is to maintain a perennial flow split, increase instream habitat complexity, remove floodplain barriers, and improve alcove habitat. Constraints include risks associated with channel migration, flooding, and recreation. In addition, the project cannot negatively affect the MVID/BIC irritation diversion. The current enhancement concept at this site

includes removal of floodplain culverts, maintaining split flow, large wood placement, and alcove connection.

4. **Eagle Rocks Site**

   The goal of restoration at this site is to increase mainstem channel margin complexity and increase side channel habitat. Constraints include risks associated with channel migration, flooding, and recreation. In addition, the project must not negatively affect the 1890s infiltration gallery. The current enhancement concept at this site includes creating a groundwater-fed side channel/alcove and large wood placement. Interestingly, it was pointed out that the projected cost for the side channel/alcove is "medium," while the estimated benefit is "low." This needs to be reevaluated as there is evidence that groundwater-fed channels provide a large benefit to rearing salmonids.

5. **Twisp Confluence Site**

   The intent of restoration at this site is to increase mainstem channel margin complexity. Constraints include reducing risks associated with channel migration, flooding, icing, and recreation. The current enhancement concept at this site includes large wood placement in the Methow River and in the Twisp River. Recreational use has a large effect on concepts at this site.

Following the presentation, Tara indicated they would like to know whether the Committees support the proposed concepts or whether additional modifications are needed to attain support. Chris Johnson noted they currently have landowner support for proposed concepts at each enhancement site. The Committees indicated they are not yet ready to make a decision on moving forward with the proposed concepts. They would like a closed meeting to discuss concepts proposed at each site. Given the short timeline on this project, the Committees agreed to hold a conference call on Monday, 1 March 2021 from 2:00-4:00 pm. At that time, the Committees will decide which concepts they support, which concepts they do not support, and which ones need modifications.

The Committees thanked MSRF and Inter-Fluve for the presentation and discussion.

VII. Upper Beaver Creek Project Discussion

Brian Fisher (MSRF), Chris Johnson (MSRF), and Nick Legg (Wolf Water Resources) described the status of the Upper Beaver Creek Project. The purpose of the discussion is to update the Committees on the status of the eastern floodplain component of the project.

Nick gave a presentation on the status of reconnecting the east floodplain as part of the Upper Beaver Creek Project (see Attachment 2). He indicated that the design team and some members of the Tributary Committees (Chris Fisher and Kate Terrell) met in January to discuss options for reconnecting the east floodplain. The objectives of the project are to improve fish access at the lower culvert and improve flow to the floodplain. Fish access would require installing a larger culvert at the downstream end of the floodplain. Nick reminded the Committees that the downstream culvert is undersized (12 inches) and has a steep gradient (3.5%). He added that input from the Committees on the downstream culvert is welcomed; however, input is not required at this time.

Regarding flow improvement options, Nick said the design team identified several options for improving flows to the eastern floodplain. Those include (1) surface water from Beaver Creek, (2) groundwater path to east floodplain, (3) re-route fish return from Batie diversion, (4) groundwater path to remnant channel/roadside ditch, or (5) a combination of 2 and 3. He said the design team removed from further consideration options 1 and 4 because of risks, costs, and level of engineering required. The groundwater path to east floodplain will intercept hyporheic flow and bring it to the surface. This approach has lower risk and cost ($20,000-$30,000 to implement) than a surface-water connection. A pump test will be needed to determine water yield. He said the re-route fish return from Batie diversion option may have the

greatest potential but could reduce the groundwater signature in the east floodplain during the irrigation season. This approach uses the existing infrastructure, and the surface-water connection is likely to provide sufficient flow to support fish and their passage to the east floodplain. The benefit, however, would be seasonal and would cost $30,000-$60,000 to implement. Combining these two options (groundwater path and re-route fish return) would cost about $50,000-$90,000 to implement.

The Committees tended to support the groundwater path to east floodplain as the preferred option. It is less expensive and should provide a relatively large biological benefit. Brian noted that he observed *O. mykiss* (including age-1+ fish) using the east floodplain channel. The Committees would like to see more information on the groundwater path to east floodplain option and alternatives for upsizing the downstream culvert.

The Committees thanked MSRF and Nick for the presentation and discussion.

VIII. Chewuch RM 4.2 Enhancement Project

In June 2020, the Tributary Committees received a General Salmon Habitat Program application from the Yakama Nation (YN) titled, *Chewuch River Mile 4.2 Fish Enhancement Project*. The purpose of the project was to restore side channel and floodplain connectivity, increase instream complexity, and restore habitat forming processes that will benefit salmonids at RM 4.2-4.6 on the Chewuch River, a tributary to the Methow River. The total cost of the project was $659,351. The sponsor requested $137,866 from HCP Plan Species Account Funds. In June, the Committees declined the opportunity to fund this project but indicated they were open to discussing the project further with YN. Since then, the Committees have had extensive discussions with YN and the Washington Department of Ecology. Following those discussions and after reviewing all the supplemental materials provided by YN, including the recent letter from Hans Smith, and discussions with the consultant, the Wells Tributary Committee chose to contribute $137,866 to the project.

Although the Committee supported the project, they did have some concerns with it. Specifically, they believe the proposed project falls short of achieving the full potential of the site. Indeed, a project that elevates the bed of the main channel could activate the entire floodplain and may therefore provide a larger benefit than constructing a perennial side channel across the floodplain. Second, the Committee would have appreciated seeing an evaluation of constructing a seasonal side channel rather than focusing solely on constructing a perennial channel. Finally, they were disappointed that YN did not go back to Ecology following the December meeting to discuss reconnecting floodplain features. That said, they do understand the various landowner and regulatory constraints at the site and believe the project as proposed will provide a benefit to Plan Species in a reach of the Chewuch River that is mostly devoid of suitable rearing habitat. They do question, however, the longevity of the perennial channel. As the Committees have communicated to YN and other project sponsors, the Committees prefer projects that enhance or encourage natural processes and request that sponsors engage the Committees early in the design process. This will reduce uncertainty and hopefully eliminate long discussions following the submittal of applications seeking implementation funding.

IX. Review of Draft Rock Island and Rocky Reach HCP Tributary Committees Action Plans

In January, Chelan PUD provided the Rocky Reach and Rock Island Committees with the Draft Rocky Reach and Rock Island HCP Tributary Committees Action Plans for 2021 (see Attachment 3). Members reviewed the plans and had no comments or edits.

X. Review of Draft Wells HCP Tributary Committee Action Plan

In January, Douglas PUD provided the Wells Committees with the Draft Wells HCP Tributary Committee Action Plan for 2021 (see Attachment 4). Members reviewed the plan and had no comments or edits.

XI. Review of Tributary Committees' Policies and Procedures

Policies and Procedures for Funding Projects

The Committees began reviewing their Policies and Procedures document and identified a few sections that need additional clarification. Tracy Hillman and Tom Kahler will provide proposed edits and share those with the Committees for review during the April meeting.

Tributary Committee Operating Procedures

The Committees reviewed their operating procedures and made no changes to the document.

XII. Information Updates

The following information updates were provided during the meeting.

1. Approved Payment Requests from January and February:

   Rock Island Plan Species Account:

   - $157.50 to Clifton Larson Allen for Rock Island financial administration in January 2021.
   - $88,605.03 to Cascade Fisheries for the Derby Creek Fish Passage Project.
   - $4,818.22 to Cascade Fisheries for the Restore Lower Chiwaukum Creek – Phase I Project.
   - $279.13 to Cascade Fisheries for the Goodwin Side Channel Project.
   - $273,976.93 to Trout Unlimited for the City of Leavenworth Fish Screen Project.

   Rocky Reach Plan Species Account:

   - $157.50 to Clifton Larson Allen for Rocky Reach financial administration in January 2021.

   Wells Plan Species Account:

   - $2,128.00 to Douglas PUD for Wells project administration in 2020.
   - $14,405.43 to the Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation for the Sugar Reach Early Implementation Project.
   - $3,391.36 to the Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation for the Twisp River Floodplain Restoration Project.
   - $14,174.25 to Inter-Fluve for the Enloe Dam Removal Concept Plan Project.

2. Tracy Hillman reported that both Chelan PUD and Douglas PUD deposited funds into the Plan Species Accounts at the end of January 2021. Chelan PUD deposited $817,905 into the Rock Island Plan Species Account and $387,375 into the Rocky Reach Account. Douglas PUD deposited $296,984.42 into the Wells Account. Tracy also provided the unallocated balance within each account: $6,125,201 within the Rock Island Plan Species Account, $3,006,022 within the Rocky Reach Account, and $2,502,764 within the Wells Plan Species Account. Thus, the

unallocated balance summed across accounts is $11,633,987. Tracy then provided the Committees with a listing of all projects funded under each Plan Species Account (see Attachment 5) and showed the fraction of habitat action types funded by the Committees.

3. Tracy Hillman reviewed the Salmon Recovery Funding Board/Tributary Committees proposed schedule for 2021 (see Attachment 6). Important dates are noted below:

    - Pre-Applications Due: 1 March 2021
    - Presentations by Project Sponsors: 10-11 March 2021
    - Committees Review Pre-Applications: 8 April 2021
    - Completed Draft Applications Due: 21 April 2021
    - Virtual Site Visits: 10-12 May 2021
    - Committees Review Draft Applications: 13 May 2021
    - Final Application Due: 28 May 2021
    - Committees Review Final Applications: 10 June 2021

    Tracy noted that because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, presentations and site visits will be virtual.

XIII. Next Steps

The Tributary Committees will convene with the Upper Columbia Regional Technical Team on 10-11 March 2021 to listen to project sponsors present their proposed projects.

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