



Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island HCP Tributary Committees Notes 1 March 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) and Hans Smith (Yakama Nation alternate).

The Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island Hydroelectric Projects Habitat Conservation Plans Tributary Committees held a conference call on Monday, 1 March 2021 from 2:00 pm to 3:20 pm.

I. Review and Adopt March Agenda

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

II. Sugar Project Current Concepts Review

At the request of the project sponsor (Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation; MSRF), the Committees convened this conference call to discuss their support or lack of support for each component of the Sugar Project. Tracy Hillman reminded the Committees that the Sugar Project consists of five components or sites: Sugar Levee, Sugar Left, WDFW Adaptive, Eagle Rocks, and Twisp Confluence sites. The Committees reviewed current concepts for each site and indicated their decision on whether the projects should move to the 30% design stage.

1. Sugar Levee Site

Project Summary: 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. Importantly, the maximum levee setback is not possible given landowner constraints. In addition, constructing side channels that intercept groundwater is not currently feasible at this site; however, it may be possible in the future.

Committees' Decision: The Committees do not support moving to a 30% design on the Sugar Levee project. Some members of the Committees believe the benefits of the levee setback will not justify the cost. Although the Committees understand the exact location of the levee remains uncertain (more modeling is needed to determine the location of the levee), it is unlikely this project will be cost effective.

2. Sugar Left Site

Project Summary: 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. Additional modeling work is needed to determine whether the side channel will be perennial or seasonal.

Committees' Decision: The Committees support moving to a 30% design on the Sugar Left project. There remains some uncertainty, however, about the effects of the split-flow concept and whether it will be cost effective. Activating a perennial side channel is a priority at this site. MSRF needs to address all the comments provided earlier by the Yakama Nation and others.

3. WDFW Adaptive Site

Project Summary: 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 irrigation diversion. The current enhancement concept at this site includes removal of floodplain culverts, maintaining split flow, large wood placement, and alcove connection.

Committees' Decision: The Committees support moving to a 30% design on the WDFW Adaptive project. One member believes the flow split is a response to an earlier project that was not completely successful. They want to make sure the proposed action will not need additional work in the future. In addition, there are concerns that actions along river right may strand fish. Actions there need to make sure fish stranding will not occur. MSRF needs to address all the comments provided earlier by the Yakama Nation and others.

4. Eagle Rocks Site

Project Summary: 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.

Committees' Decision: The Committees support moving to a 30% design on the Eagle Rocks project. MSRF needs to address all the comments provided earlier by the Yakama Nation and others.

5. Twisp Confluence Site

Project Summary: 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.

Committees' Decision: The Committees do not support moving to a 30% design on the Confluence project. Although the proposed wood placements may provide some biological benefit, the Committees are not interested in supporting a bank stabilization project at this site.

Tracy will share this information with Chris Johnson and Tara Gregg as soon as possible.

III. Small Projects Application

Methow Thermal Refugia Restoration Assessment

The Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation is the sponsor of the Methow Thermal Refugia Restoration Assessment. The purpose of the project is to identify thermal refugia along ~160 miles of stream within the anadromous zone of the Methow Subbasin (RM 0-76 on the Methow River; RM 0-33 on the Twisp River; and RM 0-49 on the Chewuch River). This information will be used to develop a catalogue of potential restoration projects located at cold-water sites. The total cost of the project was \$40,466.94. The sponsor requested the full amount from HCP Plan Species Account Funds. The *Wells Tributary Committee elected to contribute \$40,466.94 to the project.*

The Committee sees value in the assessment; however, they are concerned with the quality of the FLIR data that will be used in part to identify locations and sources of cold water. Not only are the FLIR data somewhat outdated (they were collected in 2009), but they were also collected during warmer months when cold-water seeps are difficult to identify (i.e., the colder, denser water remains below the water surface and is therefore more difficult to detect with FLIR techniques). Therefore, following the initial evaluation of existing data, the Committee will ask the sponsor to present their findings to the Committee before the sponsor proceeds to field work. At that time, the Committee will review results and provide feedback on how to proceed.

IV. General Salmon Habitat Program Application

Derby Creek Habitat and Water Quantity Restoration Project

Cascade Fisheries is the sponsor of the Derby Creek Habitat and Water Quantity Restoration Project. The purpose of the project is to increase floodplain connectivity, summer baseflows, instream habitat diversity and complexity, and riparian habitat structure and cover in portions of Derby Creek, a tributary to the Lower Wenatchee River. This will be accomplished by installing 40 beaver dam analogs and 10 post-assisted log structures, and planting 0.5 acres of riparian vegetation. The total cost of the project was \$109,788.27. The sponsor requested \$86,138.27 from HCP Plan Species Account Funds. The Committees declined the opportunity to fund this project.

Several members of the Committees believe the project is out of sequence. The withdrawal of water from Derby Creek for irrigation and other purposes should be one of the first threats addressed in this watershed. In addition, it is unknown if the increase in baseflow generated from the proposed project would remain in the stream or be used to support irrigation or other landowner needs. Currently, portions of the channel are dewatered during the summer. A water budget for Derby Creek would be useful. In addition, there are issues with fish passage near the mouth of the stream and extensive sediment recruitment from roads in the watershed that should be addressed before implementing the proposed project.

V. Review of Tributary Committees' Policies and Procedures

Policies and Procedures for Funding Projects

The Committees reviewed and approved the edits made to their Policies and Procedures document. The edits improved clarity, identified the Committees' desire to have project sponsors engage the Committees early in the design of enhancement projects, and clarified the role of Committees' members who participate on design teams.

VI. 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).