



Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island HCP Tributary Committees Notes 9 September 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), Scott Hopkins (Chelan PUD alternate), and Hans Smith (YN alternate). Tara Gregg (MSRF) and Chris Johnson (MSRF) joined the meeting for the Sugar Project discussion. Dave Duvall (PRCC Habitat Subcommittee), Erin Harris (Grant PUD), Deanne Pavlik-Kunkel (Grant PUD), Mike Kaputa (CCNRD), Curt Soper (CCNRD), Erin McKay (CCNRD), Shaun Hamilton (Western Rivers Conservation) and Mik McGee (Western Rivers Conservation) joined the meeting for the Nason Ridge Acquisition discussion.

The Wells, Rocky Reach, and Rock Island Hydroelectric Projects Habitat Conservation Plans Tributary Committees held a conference call on Thursday, 9 September 2021 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.

I. Review and Adopt June Agenda

Tracy Hillman welcomed everyone to the meeting and the Committees adopted the proposed agenda with no additions.

II. Review and Approval of the May Meeting Minutes

The draft 12 August 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 they continue to work on the individual well easements as well as a few small clean-up details along the Barkley/MVID pipeline easement.
- Beaver Fever Project – The sponsor (TU) reported they continue to monitor beaver dam analogs (BDAs) on Potato and Roaring creeks.
- Chiwawa Nutrient Enhancement Project – The sponsor (Cascade Fisheries; CF) reported they are coordinating with the Washington Conservation Corps and plan to disperse analogs in October.
- Johnson Creek Habitat Restoration Project – The sponsor (TU) reported there was no new activity on this project.

- 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; YN) reported that this project was completed successfully even under the threat of wildfires. A final report will be available soon.
- Peshastin RM 3.4 Side Channel Project – The sponsor (Chelan County Natural Resources Department; CCNRD) did not provide an update this month.
- 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 that they started construction. They also finalized the seeding and planting plan.
- Restore Chiwaukum Creek Project – The sponsor (CF) did not provide an update this month.
- Beaver Creek Barrier #40016 Correction Project – The sponsor (CCNRD) did not provide an update this month.
- Goodwin Side Channel Assessment Project – The sponsor (CF) reported they continue to collect data. They started preparing a draft report for the Committee.
- Chumstick Baseflow and Riparian Enhancement Project – The sponsor (Cascadia Conservation District; CCD) did not provide an update this month.
- Upper Beaver Creek Final Design and Restoration Project – The sponsor (Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation; MSRF) reported they completed final designs.
- Nason Kahler Instream Complexity Project – The sponsor (CCNRD) did not provide an update this month.
- Big Meadow Creek Fish Passage Project – The sponsor (CF) reported there was no new activity on this project
- Lower Chiwawa River Floodplain Reconnection and Instream Enhancement Project – The sponsor (CCNRD) did not provide an update this month.
- Methow Thermal Refugia Restoration Assessment Project – The sponsor (MSRF) reported they continued GIS mapping and are refining field data.
- Alder Creek Floodplain Restoration Project – The sponsor (YN) reported the project has been put on hold by the land management agency (WDFW) due to late public comments about abandoned mine effects on Methow River sediments. They are continuing discussions with WDFW regarding the need for sediment testing.
- Chewuch RM 4.2 Fish Enhancement Project – The sponsor (YN) reported all instream work is complete. Because of fire activity, the contractor demobilized their equipment to avoid fire-related losses and will return later in the summer or fall to complete the project.
- Mission Wood Amendment Project – The sponsor (CF) did not provide an update this month.

IV. Sugar Project Discussion

Tara Gregg and Chris Johnson with MSRF joined the meeting to discuss the Eagle Rocks Project, which is part of the larger Sugar Project. Tara gave a presentation (see Attachment 1) in which she reviewed the project, identified next steps, and identified support needs. She reminded the Committees that the preferred alternative at this site is to develop groundwater-connected side channels and alcove and add

large wood in the mainstem. Tara noted that as they move toward 30% design, they need to complete a recreational risk analysis, evaluate lateral migration, identify groundwater yield, and demonstrate landowner support. She reminded the Committees that these elements were recommendations made by the Committees during their earlier review of the project. She focused the remainder of her presentation on the groundwater flow productivity test. Tara described the method to be used to evaluate groundwater yield, identified the time needed to complete the test, and provided an estimated cost for the productivity test (\$7,500). She indicated that they have identified the location for the test, completed the cultural survey, and have landowner support for the test. She added that the test will determine the viability of existing groundwater to sustain and support a groundwater-fed channel and/or alcove. This will inform side channel dimensions (i.e., length, width, and depth). She concluded the presentation by identifying some permitting considerations, including the presence of high-quality wetlands in the project area, permitting feasibility, and project development to achieve desired cost/benefit ratio. She asked if the Committees would be willing to fund the productivity test.

Chris Fisher asked if they have identified a productivity target that would determine whether the project should or should not be implemented. Tara and Chris Johnson responded that there is no target. The productivity results are used to determine the dimensions of the side channels. That is, productivity results will be used to inform the design of the side channels. Chris Fisher asked when the results from the productivity test would be available. Tara indicated results would be available by the end of October.

Given that the Committees recommended that MSRF conduct a groundwater productivity test at this site, the Committees asked MSRF to complete a Small Project application and submit it to the Committees as soon as possible.

Following the meeting, MSRF submitted a Small Project application titled, *Eagle Rocks Groundwater Flow Productivity Test*. The purpose of the project is to conduct a groundwater pump test to determine viability of existing groundwater to sustain and support side channels and an alcove at RM 42.75 and RM 43.00 on the Methow River. The total cost of the project was \$7,500. The sponsor requested \$4,500 from HCP Plan Species Account Funds. The *Wells Tributary Committee elected to contribute \$4,500 to the project*.

V. Nason Ridge Acquisition Discussion (with PRCC Habitat Subcommittee)

Representatives from CCNRD, Western Rivers Conservation, and the PRCC Habitat Subcommittee joined the Tributary Committees for a discussion on the Nason Ridge Acquisition Project. Mike Kaputa (CCNRD) indicated that they are actively looking for funding to secure the remaining \$250,000 needed to acquire the property (the total cost of the acquisition is \$5,400,000; Rock Island Tributary Committee agreed to contribute \$500,000 and PRCC Habitat Subcommittee agreed to contribute \$500,000 to the project). Mike said there are possible federal funds available, but they are on long time frames, and he is worried the timing to secure those funds would require a new appraisal. Given the rising value of property, Mike believes the cost of the property would increase and they would be left with a larger financial gap to fill. To avoid this delay and potential increase in property value, Mike indicated that they may be able to take \$250,000 from the Nason Ridge Management Fund, which is money set aside to manage the property once it is purchased, and apply it to the purchase of the property. For that to happen, the County Commissioners would need some assurance that funds would be available to support the management of the property. Mike asked whether the Committees would be willing to support up to \$250,000 worth of work on the property. The funds would be used to decommission and stormproof roads. Specifically, \$125,000 would be used for road decommissioning and \$125,000 would be used to stormproof the blow-out on the perimeter road. Mike indicated that they have about \$100,000 from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board to help with road decommissioning and stormproofing.

Members of the PRCC Habitat Subcommittee indicated that this is consistent with their decision to withhold \$250,000 from the \$750,000 that was requested from them to help purchase the property. That

is, the PRCC Habitat Subcommittee agreed to provide \$500,000 for the purchase of the property and the remainder of the request (\$250,000) could possibly be used to help restore habitat conditions on the property. However, the sponsor would need to submit applications (specification sheets to the PRCC Habitat Subcommittee) to acquire funds for restoration work on the project. The applications would need to demonstrate benefits to target fish species (e.g., reducing fine sediment recruitment to Nason Creek and its tributaries).

Chris Fisher asked whether CCNRD has considered how road issues will be addressed. Mike and Erin McKay (CCNRD) responded that it depends on the condition of the roads. Treatments would include decommissioning, removing structures (piping), recontouring, and addressing erosion issues. Efforts would focus first on areas where water (streams and gullies) and roads interact (Erin showed a map identifying those locations). Erin indicated that some roads are already vegetated, and they do not want to disturb the vegetation on those roads; however, they will remove any piping on those roads. She added that several roads are closed but will nevertheless need treatments to reduce erosion.

Chris asked whether the \$250,000 requested for restoration work would achieve a road density of 2 miles per square mile. Erin responded that she is not sure that amount would achieve the target density. They believe they can decommission 3-4 miles of road on the property and should be able to achieve the target density within the Salmon Area. Erin indicated she will provide a map of the project area showing the roads and the different types of actions proposed to treat roads.

Chris asked about the use of roads that will not be decommissioned. Mike responded that the property is a non-motorized area with the exception of roads needed for forest management. The perimeter road and loop road will be accessible for grooming (for cross-country skiing). Other roads will be used for fire response, forest management, and disease and health management.

Mike Kaputa asked whether the Tributary Committees and PRCC Habitat Subcommittee have a long-term interest in road decommissioning and treatments in the project area. The Committees indicated that they are generally interested in decommissioning roads and reducing fine sediment recruitment to Nason Creek and its tributaries. The groups would like CCNRD to engage the groups early in the development of actions. This will allow the groups to provide feedback on proposed actions on the property.

The Tributary Committees thanked CCNRD, Western Rivers Conservation, and the PRCC Habitat Subcommittee for joining the meeting and discussing the status and future of the Nason Ridge Acquisition project.

VI. Information Updates

The following information updates were provided during the meeting.

1. Approved Payment Requests from August and September:

Rock Island Plan Species Account:

- \$57.75 to Clifton Larson Allen for Rock Island financial administration in August 2021.
- \$1,139.68 to Cascade Fisheries for work on the Chiwawa Nutrient Enhancement Project.

Rocky Reach Plan Species Account:

- \$57.75 to Clifton Larson Allen for Rocky Reach financial administration in August 2021.
- \$1,432.87 to Chelan County Treasurer for work on the Beaver Creek Barrier Correction Project.

2. Tracy Hillman reported that Ken Muir will be leaving his position with Cascadia Conservation District and will be working for WDFW. As a result, it is unlikely he will respond to the Tributary Committees' request to submit an application for funding to conduct Level II surveys in the middle Entiat River and tributaries (Mud, Potato, Stormy, and Mills creeks). However, the assessment may be completed by a consultant with funding from Bonneville Power Administration. Tracy will keep the Committees posted on assessment work in the Entiat River basin.
3. Tracy Hillman reported that Greer Maier has accepted a position with Triangle Associates. She will leave the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board in November. Tracy noted that Greer has been a valuable asset and was instrumental in helping with the Upper Columbia habitat action prioritization process. Greer will remain within the Upper Columbia.

VII. Next Steps

The Tributary Committees will next meet on 7 October 2021.

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