

Bull Trout Working Group Meeting

January 14, 2020

YBFWRB Conference Room

Attendees: Emily Smith, Connor Parrish (MCFEG), Angus Brookes, Alex Conley (YBFWRB), Mitch Long (KCT), William Meyer, Scott Kline, Marc Divens (WDFW), Russ Byington, Todd Newsome, Zack Mays, Andrew Matala, Dave Fast (YN), Eric Merten, Gary Torretta (USFS), Craig Haskell, Jose Vazquez (USFWS), Clint Wertz, Pat Monk (USBOR)

On Phone: Sue Mecklenburg (Gold Creek), Sierra Franks, Gregg Kurz (USFWS), Wendy Scholl (Bumping Lake), Jan Lewis.

Morning Session Taneum Reintroduction Feasibility Study

Start 9:40 AM

Todd Newsome led a discussion of the Taneum Reintroduction Feasibility Assessment. The group viewed the document and provided comments and feedback. The document reviewed habitat conditions in Taneum Creek and described plans to collect Kachess River fish in 2020 to rear in the LASalle Hatchery and place in Taneum Creek in 2021. YN and BOR staff discussed permitting requirements and timelines with USFWS staff on the phone. The use of Kachess fish is due to their availability and late spawning times. The Working Group was hesitant about Chiwawa fish being used due to disease transfer issues. A calculation error was brought up on the end of the documents worksheet but would not affect the final outcome.

Stream temperature models were calculated using NorWeST stream modeling from older data. The group noted that it may be worth placing loggers into the stream this summer to get newer stream temp data. The group wanted to make sure there were no Brook Trout living in the Taneum. There are none in the South Fork and there could be more shocking efforts done in the North Fork, but the location is very remote – eDNA may be an option for testing. The group was concerned with the lack of macroinvertebrate data that has been collected, but with Taneum Creek's ability to sustain a population of other trout there should be ample food supply. There should not be a conflict with steelhead due to them not going above the forks. Genetics and monitoring were brought up in the conversation as well. When genetic samples are taken from relocated fish, they will register as Kachess fish, and if fish are also relocated from SF Tieton River, there will be a challenge in determining what fish came from where and if we are having successful spawning.

Andrew Matala with the Yakama Nation would like to receive all edits and concerns by January 24, 2020.

Adjourn 11:45 PM

Afternoon Session

Start 1:05 PM

Updates and Announcements:

Emily led a discussion of updates and introduced YBFWRBs newest staff person, Angus, to the group. She noted that the Forest Service's fish passage data is now on the WDFW fish passage database and

can be found using the following link: <https://geodataservices.wdfw.wa.gov/hp/fishpassage/index.html>. There will be a Bull Trout Symposium at the Western Division of AFS meeting the week of April 12th in 2020 and if you are interested in presenting, please get in contact with Judy Neibauer.

Redd Surveys:

Marc Divens ran the group through the 2019 redd survey report and highlighted the counts for each of the Yakima Basins populations. One of the most notable events were the dramatic drop to zero redds in Crow Creek this year; Marc added that eDNA may help us learn if fish are still present. Another notable event was that the Upper Kachess river had over 2/3 of the redds in the inundation zone of the reservoir, so an egg rescue effort may be done in the near future. Marc noted that this year the crews used iPads for improvement to lat / long redd location capture. They will be looking into smaller iPads or iPhones next year to reduce the bulk of carrying a full-sized one around.

Box Canyon / Peek-a-boo Falls:

Mitch Long spoke about the idea of relocating bull trout above Peak-a-Boo Falls. KCT placed large woody debris into the stream below the falls, which all shifted in a large flow event this fall. Below Peak-a-Boo falls it is a steep gradient stream, whereas the area above the falls has a much lower gradient and possible better spawning and rearing habitat. Mitch wants to get a feeling from the group as to whether relocation fish above the falls is of interest. There is possibility of carving out step pools into the falls to make passage feasible. Trapping and transporting adults past the falls could also be considered. If the group can find any literature that documents bull trout above the falls, it is encouraged to pass it along. The possibility of placing YN reared fish above the falls was mentioned as well. The group expressed interest in further developing the proposal.

Demographic Survey:

Scott Kline presented on his findings from the 2019 demographic surveys in the Upper Kachess River, Box Canyon Creek, and the SF Tieton River. The Upper Kachess River was surveyed the most out of all 3 streams and had similar findings to previous years. 3.5 miles of stream were surveyed and had fish rescue efforts done prior to dewatering. Crews relocated just over 1300 fish upstream of the Mineral Creek Trail Crossing. When surveys were conducted after relocation, 57 bull trout were observed in the relocation areas, with a higher percent of age 1, 2, and 3 fish being seen, which was noted as similar to years past. The group also made mention that during surveys, bull trout are aged based on size. When reintroduction efforts happen in spring and YN reared fish are placed back into the system, a new method of ageing will have to take place, like PIT tag reading or fin clips. Scott touched on Box Canyon Creek survey and how similar findings on bull trout location occurred this year as well. SF Tieton did not get surveyed enough to provide reliable data. Demographic surveys have been done over the past 3 years on these streams and one trend that was shown was that there seems to be a relation to increased number of bull trout and decreased Sculpin and Cutthroat sightings.

YBIP Budget Recommendations:

Alex Conley reminded the group of its efforts to develop 2017-2019, and 2019-2021 funding recommendations for the YBIP habitat subcommittee. He noted that it is time to start developing funding recommendations for 2021-2023. Please think of funding requests and bring them to the morning session of our March meeting so we can present them to the habitat subcommittee in early

May. Alex also made mention of the upcoming 5-year review that USFWS will be conducting in 2020. The lead for USFWS will be based out of Boise, Idaho. Updates on how the BTWG can participate in the 5 year review be given when we know more.

Clear Creek Dam Passage:

Clinton Wertz introduced himself to the group as the new Clear Creek Dam Fish Passage project manager. The scheduled start to the project would be June and the design process should take one year. They are hoping for funding in FY 2022 through ESA appropriation, Ecology, and other funds with construction happening in 2023-2024. He will update the group as the process moves along; it is still in the early stages.

Temperature Data Coordination Next Steps:

Emily Smith displayed her bull trout temperature logger map to the group once more and encouraged everyone who is putting loggers into stream to send the GPS points to her so they can be added to the list and the whole group can utilize the loggers and data that are in place.

Mid-Columbia Fisheries 2020 Field Planning:

Connor Parrish let the group know that MCFEG will have fewer interns compared to previous years due to change in funding and would appreciate knowing soon the tasks that are requested for them so he can get them scheduled and budgeted. In 2019 MFCEF interns assisted in over 900 hours of bull trout related work with 9 interns, next year they will be able to fund about 6 interns.

Future Meeting Dates:

With the start of 2020, we will be trying to place future meeting dates on the calendar for the rest of the year. A doodle poll will be sent out asking for everyone's availability. We are all looking forward to a very productive year as a group.

Adjourn 4:10 PM