

## **MINUTES of the February 22, 2018 Meeting of the Yakima Bull Trout Working Group**

### **AM Work Session:**

Participants: Jeff Thomas, Rob Randall, Jason Romine and Jose Vazquez (USFWS), Eric Anderson, Marc Divens, Cassandra Weekes, Scott Kline and Josh Rogala (WDFW), Mitch Long (KCT), Connor Parrish (MCFEG), Alex Conley (YBFWRB)

By phone: Eric Merten (USFS), Pat Monk (BOR)

The am work session focused on coordination of 2018 monitoring and field work.

Annual Redd Surveys: Eric introduced Marc Divens, who will take over Eric's role leading the annual redd surveys. Eric noted that over the years, we have moved from 3 to 2 passes on most streams in order to be more efficient. Marc noted he would solicit volunteers via email; Connor noted that they were hoping to hire 2 bull trout task force staff with availability through October, and that they would be available to assist with redd surveys. Jason noted that he, Rob and a seasonal employee would be available from USFWS. Josh can also participate when not focused on irrigation system shut down activities. Mitch noted that he could monitor Gold, Box and Kachess flows to help dial in survey timing, and may be available for some surveys. New surveyors will need to be paired up with partners that know the survey reaches. Pat Monk, Gary Torretta, Scott Nagel, Eric Merten, Alex Conley and others also noted their potential availability.

The group proposed developing more detailed maps and write-ups for each survey reach that would make it easier to share long-term knowledge (like the unmarked trail to Hellbender Creek on the NF Tieton ☺). Jason noted he would be willing to develop a web map and an ArcCollector field data collection app for surveys. Scott noted that GPSed redd data had been compiled by WDFW, but that the entries in the Spawning Ground Survey database need quality control. Judy noted that she is talking to Greg in Olympia re using the SGS to store redd data. The group noted that we should review online survey records for location specific data that should be redacted. The group agreed that we should spend a future am work session on compiling maps and descriptions for survey reaches that include route descriptions, vehicle and crew needs, access and parking, start times from the meeting point, emergency contacts, etc.

Passage Monitoring during Spawning: Josh noted he is the lead for the reservoir bed passage monitoring work that WDFW is contracted with BOR to complete. He noted that he sent weekly email updates on flow and passage conditions, with extensive photo-documentation. Group members noted that it might be valuable to compile those into a simple end of season report that can be included in the online bull trout library.

Salvage Efforts: Josh noted that the BOR contract with WDFW does not cover salvage efforts. Salvage has relied on \$s and volunteers from partner organizations. William, Josh and Richard Visser are working to develop plans for future work. Josh is coordinating with Connor and the Bull Trout Task Force, and Mitch noted that he may be able to solicit community volunteers to assist. Eric Merten noted that if funding was available, he could hire a summer tech to assist with salvage efforts.

Jeff noted that dewatering of Deep Creek between the 1800 Road and Copper Creek is becoming more common. Richard noted that the BOR is working with the Yakama Nation to fund a bull trout salvage and

reintroduction program. The group discussed the idea of creating a shared web calendar to coordinate salvage and other field work activities this summer, and Josh committed to sending Friday afternoon emails to coordinate upcoming activities.

Flow and Temperature Monitoring: Josh noted that he was taking flow, water temperature and depth measurements as part of his monitoring of dewatering areas. Scott noted that they are collecting flow data for Box Creek. The group briefly discussed the idea of establishing a long term flow and temperature record for each bull trout spawning tributary. Members noted that there are existing gages in Deep Creek, the American River and the Little Naches, and that flows in other areas could be estimated via reservoir inflow apportionment. The group noted the need to continue the temperature monitoring coordination begun in previous meetings.

eDNA Monitoring: Jose noted that the USFWS will be able to complete a moderate amount of eDNA sampling in the Yakima Basin in 2018 in the early part of the field season (early July). The group considered possible locations, and mentioned Wenas Creek, the Little Naches, Upper Naneum, South Fork Cowiche, Nile Creek and Fowler Creek above Cle Elum as areas of interest. The group discussed whether or not more in depth sampling in the Teanaway would have value. Eric Merten recommended resampling, and Jose noted that a sample spacing of 250 m would be needed to prove absence. Eric also recommended sampling the Middle and the West Fork of the Teanaway.

Brook and Bull Trout Distribution Datasets: Eric Anderson noted that he had maintained a bull trout sighting table that had been started by Fred Getz from USFS, and that there would be value to having the BTWG do an annual review and update of the table. The group noted that it will be valuable to link eDNA sampling plans and results with the table, and that StreamNet also has lots of older distribution data.

The group briefly discussed the brook trout distribution information compiled by Ashton Bunce, and agreed that it should be made broadly available, but did not warrant an annual update. Alex agreed to post it to the online Bull Trout Library.

Genetic Samples: Jeff Thomas noted that collecting genetic clips from juvenile bull trout in the North Fork Tieton would allow them to do parentage analysis to identify if there are offspring from the fish transported from below Clear Creek Dam. This year there should be 1+ offspring from the 2016 transplanted adults. Jason Romine will be the lead for this sampling, with Connor and the Bull Trout Task Force providing support for the juvenile sampling.

Josh noted the value of genetic samples and saving any mortalities encountered during field work. Josh volunteered to serve as the coordinator for getting miscellaneous genetic samples to Mo at the WDFW genetics lab; he also agreed to check in with Mo to know if there are un-run samples already at the lab, and what it would cost to process them, and if past samples (Todd Newsome's from Quartz Ck and Yuki's Nile samples) had already been run.

Snorkel Index/Reference Reaches: Scott Kline noted that he hoped to maintain selected long-term index/reference reaches with annual snorkel surveys in Box Canyon Creek and the Kachess River, and that he is looking for other areas where baseline demographic data would have value. Ahtanum Creek and Taneum Creek were mentioned as candidates.

Taneum Assessment: Scott noted that it may be possible for him to begin baseline snorkel surveys in Taneum Creek. Todd Newsome noted that he was planning 4 weeks of habitat surveys in Taneum Creek this summer, and that Jeff Krupka would be available to help with permitting of future reintroductions this fall. Richard Visser and Judy are coordinating to identify permit needs.

Nutrients: The group noted that while there is currently no funding for a larger scale evaluation of nutrient supplementation, it would be worth working with Alex Alexiades this summer to place NDS plates in selected streams to evaluate nutrient limitations to primary productivity.

### **1 PM Work Group Meeting:**

Participants: Jeff Thomas, Rob Randall, Jason Romine and Jose Vazquez (USFWS), Eric Anderson, Marc Divens, Cassandra Weekes, Scott Kline, Gabe Temple and Josh Rogala (WDFW), Mitch Long (KCT), Connor Parrish (MCFEG), Tom Matthews, Gary Torretta (USFS), Michael Callahan (DOE), Todd Newsome (YN), Richard Visser (BOR), Alex Conley (YBFWRB)

By phone: Eric Merten (USFS), Pat Monk (BOR), Judy Neibauer (USFWS)

The meeting began with a welcome and introductions. It was noted with regret that this would be the last meeting for Eric Anderson, who is retiring from WDFW. Eric introduced his replacement, Marc Divens.

Taneum Creek Reintroduction: Todd Newsome and Gabe Temple presented their updated draft Feasibility Assessment for Bull trout Reintroduction in Taneum Creek. The group asked about the presence of brook trout in Taneum Creek, and Gabe noted that while present, Taneum was the only watershed where long-term Species Interaction monitoring sites showed a consistent decrease in brook trout over time in response to manual removal during sampling. The group also briefly discussed temperature criteria, and suggested that Todd and Gabe check in with Jason Dunham and Joe Benjamin to get their recommendations for the best temperature criteria to use for successful bull trout spawning and rearing sites. Judy noted that she had asked Bill Brignon to model a reintroduction of 600 parr in his life cycle model, and that the model estimated that would result in 3 returning adults; Gabe noted that he would touch base with Bill regarding the model. Tom Matthews and Eric Merten noted that they have habitat data that they can provide. Todd asked that the draft assessment be provided to Bull Trout Work Group members by email to allow for further comment.

### Bureau of Reclamation Project Updates:

Pat Monk and Richard Visser updated the group on BOR projects.

Bruce Heiner of WDFW has completed a 30% design for the Box Canyon Passage Structure, which will be passed to Benjamin Taylor of BOR to complete. There will be a handoff meeting.

Work to design the passage structure for Clear Lake Dam is underway, and Pat Monk is the project lead. Funding has been secured to initiate design work, and FY 2019 funds are being requested to complete design and permitting.

There were no updates on the status of the Yakima Project Operations ESA consultation; the group recommended that Scott Wiley be approached about giving an update at the next work group meeting.

Richard noted that the release date for the Supplemental EIS for the Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant has not been set.

Yakima Basin Integrated Plan (YBIP) State Funding: Richard Visser gave an update and provided a handout detailing the recommended allocation of \$1.7 million in 2017-19 Department of Ecology funding for bull trout actions included in the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan. The BTWG expressed support for these recommendations, which will be considered at the 2/27/2018 YBIP Habitat Subcommittee meeting.

Review of 2015 BTWG Implementation Priorities: The group briefly reviewed the 2016 Bull Trout Priorities document that the BTWG provided to the YBIP Habitat Subcommittee to inform their 2017-19 project funding decisions. The group noted that significant progress has been made on many of the identified priorities, and agreed to revisit the list of priorities at its next meeting so that an updated version can be provided to the Habitat Subcommittee as it develops its 2019-21 funding recommendations.

Approval of Proposed Edits to Kachess Lake Population Actions: The group briefly reviewed the updates to the Kachess Lake populations' actions and next steps that were made based on input at the last BTWG meeting. The group approved the updated version by consent of all present.

Review of Upper Yakima, Cle Elum and Teanaway Actions and Next Steps: The group discussed the actions and next steps for the Upper Yakima, Cle Elum and Teanaway populations, and proposed changes and updates. These will be compiled and presented to the BTWG for approval at the next BTWG meeting. The group also agreed to review the three Rimrock populations at the next meeting. Members noted that once updates have been completed for all populations, we may want to consider whether to use a one year or two year review cycle in the future.

Gold Creek Projects: Mitch Long gave an update on the Kittitas Conservation Trust's work in the Gold Creek watershed. Design work is being completed for the instream habitat project, and alternatives analysis is beginning for Gold Creek Pond modifications. The Cle Elum District of the US Forest Service now has management authorities over the Gold Creek watershed, which eliminates the need to work with two different Forests.

2018 eDNA Samples: Jason Romine briefly reviewed the morning work session recommendations for priority locations for USFWS's 2018 eDNA sampling efforts.

USFS Large Wood Surveys: Eric Merten explained the woody debris surveys and modelling work that he is proposing to do in the upper Yakima, and solicited input on locations for future surveys.

The meeting concluded at 4:20 pm.