

MINUTES of the May 18, 2018 Meeting of the Yakima Bull Trout Working Group

Participants: Jeff Thomas and Jason Romine (USFWS), Marc Divens, William Meyer, Cassandra Weekes, Scott Kline and Jeff Tayer (WDFW), Todd Newsome (Yakama Nation), Richard Visser (BOR), Gary Toretta (US Forest Service), Michael Callahan (Ecology), Mitch Long and Melissa Speeg (KCT), Becca Wassell and Connor Parrish (MCFEG), Alex Conley (YBFWRB)

AM WORK SESSION:

The am work session focused on developing funding recommendations for consideration by the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan (YBIP) Habitat Subcommittee. The Subcommittee had requested the group recommend how to allocate up to \$1.7 million for bull trout projects to be included in the Department of Ecology's YBIP budget request for FY 2020-2021.

The group reviewed the existing YBIP Department of Ecology contracts for bull trout work, and reviewed proposals to adjust or add to existing contracts using remaining 2017-2019 funding. The group then reviewed proposals received for work to be completed in the next biennium (July 1, 2019 to June 30 2021), and made:

- a) Recommendations for Adjustments to 2017-2019 Funding
- b) Recommendations for Next Biennium funding by Ecology via the Habitat Subcommittee (totaling \$1,775,000)
- c) Recommendations for Projects to be Funded by Reclamation and Ecology via other Integrated Plan funding elements;
- d) Recommendations for Priorities to be Addressed by the US Forest Service as part of YBIP.

These recommendations were summarized in a working document that was circulated after the meeting.

1 PM Work Group Meeting:

The meeting began with a welcome and introductions. It was noted with regret that this would be the last meeting for Jeff Thomas, who is retiring from the USFWS.

2017 eDNA Results and Followup

Connor Parrish gave a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the results of the 2017 eDNA project, in which 313 samples were collected and analyzed from throughout the Upper Yakima Basin. He highlighted potential bull trout detections in three areas where bull trout presence has not been confirmed recently; in Log Creek a in the Cabin Creek watershed (fairly weak signal), in the Cooper River (weak signal with possible contamination from swimming hole above) and in the Waptus River below Waptus Lake and Spinola Creek (relatively strong signal). He noted that there were no detections in the Teanaway, and Swauk drainages, likely confirming their extirpation in those areas. The group discussed possible future work to evaluate these initial findings, including more detailed followup eDNA surveys and snorkel surveys. The group encouraged Connor to work with others to develop a proposal and budget for 2018 followup sampling, and to approach the YBIP habitat subcommittee about the availability of funding. The group also reviewed USFWS proposals for summer of 2018 eDNA sampling, and supported their plans to focus the Little Naches watershed. The group also discussed, but came to

no conclusion on, the possibility of future reruns of eDNA samples to determine brook and brown trout distributions and potential funding sources for 2019 eDNA work in the Naches Basin.

Bureau of Reclamation Project Updates:

Richard Visser updated the group on BOR projects. The Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant Project Supplemental EIS has been released and Reclamation is accepting comments.

Bruce Heiner of WDFW has completed a 30% design for the Box Canyon Passage Structure, and additional field work is planned for the fall. Reclamation is planning to have final designs complete by mid to late 2019.

Work to design the passage structure for Clear Lake Dam is underway, and Pat Monk is the project lead. Reclamation intends to have a 60% design by the end of 2019, and has \$1.5 million budgeted. The current proposal is for a ladder by the dam rather than on the spillway side. Options include a temperature control device and a pump system; Noxon Dam on the Clark Fork was noted as an example.

There were no updates on the status of the Yakima Project Operations ESA consultation; Judy Neibauer offered to give an update at the next work group meeting.

The Reclamation/WDFW contract for reservoir bed passage monitoring and drought response is in the process of being renewed.

Yakima Nation Bull Trout Restoration and Monitoring Project Update: Todd Newsome gave a brief update on the new Yakama Nation Bull Trout Project, noting that they were in the process of contracting with Reclamation and Ecology for the funds and hoped to hire a bull trout biologist in the fall. They also noted that permit applications for proposed salvage and hatchery work were in progress in conjunction with USFWS.

YBIP Funding Recommendations: Participants in the morning work session briefly reviewed the morning discussions and recommendations with the full group. The group agreed by consensus to forward the recommendations to the YBIP Habitat Subcommittee, following email review of the write up.

WDFW Demographic Monitoring: Scott Kline updated the group on the development of index reaches and demographic monitoring in Box Canyon and Kachess. Members notes that the variability in distribution was great enough to make getting consistent trend data from snorkel index reaches difficult at best and impossible at worst. The recommendation from several was to try to continue complete surveys until/if patterns develop. The group expressed support for continuing the demographic surveys to document trends in the Box Canyon and Kachess bull trout and to act as pre-monitoring for restoration projects.

Approval of Proposed Edits to Upper Yakima, Cle Elum and Teanaway Actions and Next Steps: The group briefly reviewed the updates to the Upper Yakima, Cle Elum and Teanaway populations' actions and next steps that were made based on input at the last BTWG meeting. The group proposed changes to the Point Person for several actions and approved the updated version as amended by consent of all present.

Review of Rimrock Populations Actions and Next Steps: The group discussed the actions and next steps for the SF Tieton, NF Tieton and Indian Creek populations and shared Rimrock FMO habitat, 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 Deep Creek population at the next meeting.

Next Meeting: The Ahtanum, snorkel/demographic survey and redd survey form agenda items were deferred until the next meeting. It was requested that Mondays and Fridays be left off the doodle polls for future meetings. The Group agreed that the next am work session should focus on redd survey logistics, methods and objectives.

The meeting concluded at 4:40 pm.