

May 9, 2019 Yakima Bull Trout Working Group Notes

Morning Session on Gold Creek Communications Planning

Participants: Eric Merten, Deborah Kelly, & Kathryn Furr (USFS), Mitch Long & Melissa Speeg (Kittitas Conservation Trust), Michael Callahan (Ecology), Stu Watson (Forterra), Nicky Pasi (Mountains to Sound Greenway), Kelsey Green (American Rivers), Bob and Sue Mecklenburg (Gold Creek landowners), Alex Conley & Tricia Snyder (YBFWRB), John Reeves (Friends of Lake Kachess), Emily Smith & Connor Parrish (MCFEG), Dave Fast (Yakama Nation), and William Meyer & Scott Kline (WDFW)

The meeting began at 9:40 AM. After introductions, Melissa reviewed the agenda and meeting goals. Tricia and Melissa then led the group through a presentation aimed at identifying key audiences, their values regarding Gold Creek, and key messages project partners would like to convey to those audiences. Tricia led the discussion on messaging. The group discussed how to combine messages focused on bull trout recovery, the future restoration of salmon and steelhead in the watershed, and management for all types of wildlife that used the I-90 corridors.

The group discussed the breadth of interests in the Gold Creek watershed and noted the need to engage in early and frequent two-way communication. Deb highlighted how the USFS builds email lists and other outreach tools for outreach campaigns. The group brainstormed ways to utilize existing platforms to reach out to other audiences including Instagram, Mountains to Sound survey format, translating materials into Spanish and other languages, and talking to REI.

Melissa Speeg with KCT collected the lists of messages and audiences discussed during the meeting, and will work them into a draft communication plan.

Afternoon Work Group Meeting

Participants: Eric Merten, Deborah Kelly, Gary Torretta & Kathryn Furr (USFS), Mitch Long & Melissa Speeg (Kittitas Conservation Trust), Michael Callahan (Ecology), Stu Watson (Foreterra), Kelsey Green (American Rivers), Paul James (CWU), Bob and Sue Mecklenburg (Gold Creek landowners), Alex Conley (YBFWRB), John Reeves (Friends of Lake Kachess), Scott Willey (BOR), Emily Smith & Connor Parrish (MCFEG), Dave Fast and Russ Byington (Yakama Nation), and William Meyer, Scott Kline, Jeff Tayer, Cassandra Weekes & Marc Divens (WDFW)

On Phone: Todd Newsome (Yakama Nation), Jose Vazquez (USFWS)

1. Introductions and Updates

After introductions, the group reviewed announcements and updates. Connor informed the group that USFWS will do eDNA in remaining LN tributaries; if time remains after samples are collected that they will move into SF Cowiche. Paul James noted that WSDOT wants to incorporate eDNA into the bull trout monitoring that he does with them in the I-90 Corridor. Emily reminded the group that annual ScCS Confernece will he held August 27-29. Emily also informed the group about the new MCFEG BTTF crew leads, Kelsey and Aimee who will assist with rescue and redd surveys. MCFEG also hired 9 summer interns who will assist on fish rescues as well. Scott updated the group on his request for recovery funds;

he will not know if he received funding until a later date. Marc Divens mentioned that section 6 funds that once supported 1/3 of his position are now freed up as he has full state funding. The money is going to the WDFW Science Program (Murdock et al) to develop WDFW standard direction/coordination for redd counts.

2. Reclamation and YBIP Updates

Jeff Tayer updated the group on state funding for the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan. The original request of \$42 million was proposed for only \$31 million in the governor's budget, but was restored to a total of \$40 million by the legislature. The bull trout request, originally targeted for 1.7 million, may need to be reduced by ~5%. Input from the BTWG on how to adjust the existing funding request to reflect this cut would be useful to the YBIP Habitat Subcommittee.

Jeff noted that up to 1.5 million in continued funding for Clear Creek Dam fish passage is included in the fish passage element, pending review of design costs. Yakima County is using current biennium funding for the South Fork Tieton Bridge Project to complete surveys of the right of way and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Reclamation regarding NEPA analysis and project development.

Finally Jeff noted that the USFWS Deputy Regional Director would be in the basin for a two day tour of YBIP projects organized by Reclamation the next week.

Scott Willey then gave an update on Reclamation Bull Trout activities. He noted that Reclamation is hiring a project manager in Boise who will be the lead for the Clear Creek Dam project, and that funding is being secured for the design of a splitter wall and construction of the adult passage facility in 2020, with applications in for \$2 to 5 million of Reclamation Additional Capacity funds.

Scott noted that he has been working with USFWS on Section 10 permitting for the Yakama Nation Bull Trout Project, which should be completed by mid-June. He also noted that interim trap and haul at all reservoirs has been included in the proposed action for Yakima Project Operations, and that USFWS has been contracted to complete pilot work and develop a protocol for handling and release locations for fish captured below Reclamation dams. Reclamation is also working with WDFW to review and potentially expand the reservoir bed passage monitoring and response project.

Scott reviewed the use of shapeable YRBWEP conservation water to create pulse flows to support smolt outmigration in March, April and May. Following completion of the 3' raise at Cle Elum, there will be up to 65kaf available for future management to benefit fish.

Scott gave an update on the Yakima Project Operations and Maintenance Project ESA consultation. He noted that the 2015 Proposed Action has been updated based on feedback from NOAA and USFWS, which are now reviewing the revised version. USFWS anticipated issuing a combined Biop for the O&M work and the Kaches Reservoir Drought Pumping Plant in the fall. Many of the actions identified by the BTWG are included in the proposed action and anticipated conservation measures identified by USFWS.

Finally, Scott noted that the Record of Decision for the Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant had been released, and called for an additional EIS focused on the preferred pumping plant alternatives (the floating pumping plant in the previous EIS and a new shoreside pump proposed by Roza). Reclamation is gathering information in preparation for releasing its Notice of Intent; it will have one year after that (till

fall of 2020) to complete the new EIS. Scott and Jeff Tayer noted that one of the goals was to work with NOAA and USFWS during the EIS development to identify and analyze any bull trout conservation actions that would be required via ESA consultation.

3. Yakama Nation Project and Fish Rescue Updates:

Russ Byington let the group know that permitting for hatchery rearing of bull trout is going well. The monthly MIPT group is planning out pit tag antenna locations; they will be placed in Gold Creek, Kachess River and Box Canyon Creek. The group has also been planning the rescue logistics, completing pit tag training, and narrowing down the best modified minnow trap. Traps have been tested using coho fry roughly the same size as the bull trout fry that will be rescued. Scott noted that it is great to have YN capacity to help with WDFW rescue work and noted that the rescue is a basin wide effort and only possible with stakeholders like WDFW, KCT, MCFEG, USFS, and USFWS.

William Meyers mentioned the discussions about the proportion of fry that will be taken to the hatchery verses the fry that will be relocated in the stream. The typical density of bull trout in the Kachess River is high compared to other bull trout streams, and the permit states that 2,500 fry per year can be reared in a hatchery. Todd Newsome noted that at the hatchery there will be tanks specific to tributary, so fish from Gold Creek will not be mixed with fish from the Upper Kachess River. All yearling fish will be pit tagged before returning to the mouth of the stream and the fish that are returned to the stream the same night will be fin clipped. Scott Kline has a calendar of proposed rescue dates that is almost ready to be sent out to the group.

4. Kachess Habitat Project Update

Melissa Speeg led a presentation on the Upper Kachess River habitat project. She reviewed the different reaches identified and the conceptual design proposals for each reach. She mentioned that they could phase implementation, with a focus on wood installation and groundwater wells first, followed by pilot gallery channels, and full implementation of gallery channels as needed. KCT plans on gathering pressure, well, and low spot data this year. The USFS is the decision maker on the project, Eric Merten is taking on the role of reviewing the conceptual proposal. The group provide feedback on the proposed conceptual designs and expressed interest in future field visits.

5. BTAP and BTWG planning

Alex led a discussion about the Yakima Bull Trout Working Group's goals and future plans. For many years the working group has focused on drafting and updating the Yakima Bull Trout Action Plan. It is proposed that we update the BTAP every 3-4 years and next year we will focus on updating the threats. The group also highlighted the need to identify and coordination grant applications and other funding sources, and engage in statewide and regional coordination regarding bull trout recovery. Cassandra mentioned that it would be good to revisit past discussions about nutrient enhancement needs and genetic sampling. Alex committed to using the feedback given to draft a work plan for the BTWG for the next biennium.

6. Temperature Data Collection

Emily shared an excel spreadsheet of past, present, and future temperature data loggers in bull trout streams. The goal is to gather all the temperature data that we have in once place so that way when new data is collected and added, everyone will be able to benefit from it. It was mentioned that KCT has past and current data from Gold Creek and Upper Kachess River. The YN will have loggers where the antennas are, Paul James has a student with loggers in Gold Creek, and Paul also has 1990s Rimrock data. Mollie with the USFS may have some temperature data, and the USFS Wenatchee has a crew of hydrotechs that manage project-specific temperature loggers for forest that will include data from Little

Naches. Scott is interested in new data from Bumping above the falls. Scott Willey noted that he collected a lot of temp data in 2005. The group noted that the NORWEST database holds past temp data for the Yakima, and it would be ideal if we add new data over time and compare it to the NORWEST future temperature predictions.

7. Future meeting dates and topics

The next bull trout working group meeting will be June 4th and the morning session will consist of redd data collection for 2019. The afternoon session will include YBIP funding review, statewide data coordination, BTWG work plan proposal, and rescue/monitoring calendar sharing.

Paul James informed the group that he has detected cutthroat and bull trout moving back into previously blocked areas as part of the I-90 project. The group also noted that WSDOT is proposing using 107' historic trestle bridge from the Teanaway as a bridge for the John Wayne Trail over Gold Creek, which would open up the blocked habitat there.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 PM