

June 4, 2019 Yakima Bull Trout Working Group Notes

Morning session on Redd Surveys

Attendees: Connor Parrish & Emily Smith (MCFEG), Alex Conley (YBFWRB), Todd Newsome & Russ Byington (YN), Marc Divens, William Meyers & Scott Kline (WDFW), Bob & Sue Mecklenburg (Gold Creek home owners), Mitch Long (KCT), and Pat Monk (BOR)

The meeting began at 9:40 AM. After introductions, Marc reviewed the agenda and meeting goals. Marc led a conversation reviewing the 2018 redd survey efforts. It was Marc's first year doing redd surveys in the basin, and he introduced a new data sheet and iPad form to use, which received positive field reviews. Marc noted that the September to November redd surveys are used to measure bull trout abundance. The 2018 redd survey year required 18 staff members from 8 organization and 27 days from Labor Day- Mid-November. Marc has a list of people who participated in last year's redd surveys and hopes that people familiar with the protocol will be able to assist in the 2019 redd survey season. Redd data is stored in a spreadsheet, but it was brought up that the GPS locations of bull trout redds in the Yakima basin should be mapped. The current redd GPS data set is in the hands of Greg Lippert with WDFW in Olympia.

Marc led a conversation about data collection. As of 2018, the following data is collected for each redd: GPS location, spawning index, how confident the surveyor is in the redd, time of start and end of survey, start and end temperature of stream, and weather. An observation form was added to include any notes that would be important including the presence of barriers, live or dead fish, and dry or braided stream reaches. 2018 was the trial for the iPad, and in 2019 every crew will have an iPad to take our redd notes. iPad notes are ideal as the iPad will automatically keep the GPS coordinates attached to pictures taken in the field. In all streams the options of a 'habitat type' line on the data sheet could be added ie. Wood present, riffle, temperature above redd, ect. It was also mentioned to the group that when marking the live fish observed, the estimated sizes of the fish and the redd should be noted on the data sheet to provide data for a future redd size to fish size ratio that can be used to estimate fish size and fecundity from future redd survey data.

Todd Newsome noted that he has been looking for egg to fry survival estimates to use in bull trout population models, but that he has not found any data. Scott sent the group a paper by Ratliff about bull trout egg to fry survival in the Methow; participants also noted the ODFW dataset for the Metolius.

A calendar displaying the dates for the 2019 redd surveys was passed around. Each stream will be surveyed 3 times during the spawning season to ensure that an accurate count is collected. Deep Creek had a large dewatered section during the first pass in 2018. In 2019 there will be earlier temperature and flow monitoring done by the Bull Trout Task Force. Marc is open to suggestions for an online calendar template where people can sign up for dates (if you have any examples, let him know). Looking forward to 2020, it was mentioned that MCFEG can hire a 'tech' intern who could compile and organize all of the data and GIS information collected to make maps and better display the past and current data. Mapping out what is going on will be important in the 2019 season due to the low snowpack, stream flows and reservoir levels.

Safety and Communication was the next topic. Communication between crews with radios and using SPOT locators was the 2018 safety plan. Newer SPOTS are on the market and can text each other

individual messages and not just a preprogramed message to a cell phone. WDFW is thinking about getting the new SPOTS for the habitat crew, and it may be a good time to test them out during spawning surveys.

Following the conversation about data, the group transitioned into a discussion about what Andrew Murdoch and the WDFW Science program out of Wenatchee are doing. The Section 6 funds funds from USFWS that previously helped support the district biologist position have now been made available to the WDFW Science Program to develop a standardized exploratory survey and index redd survey protocol and database. After they develop the standard protocol in the Wenatchee, they would work to apply it in the Methow and then the Yakima. The BTWG expressed interest in working with WDFW to get a presentation on this work and how it would fit in with existing survey protocols and data management in the Yakima Basin.

The morning session concluded with discussion about creating a 10 year plan by asking, 'what data would we want 10 years from now' and then developing plans to start collecting that data now. The basin has a good amount of data, but not a lot of current maps, and it may be time to develop a 10 year plan for how we collect, manage and use our bull trout data.

The meeting adjourned at 12:07 PM

Afternoon session Yakima Bull Trout Working Group

Meeting started at 1:07 PM

Attendees: Alex Conley (YBFWRB), Connor Parrish and Emily Smith (MCFEG), Pat Monk (BOR), Scott Kilne, William Meyers, Marc Divens, Cassandra Weekes and Josh Rogala (WDFW), Stu Watson (Fortera), Mitch Long (KCT), Russ Byington, Todd Newsome and Dave Fast (YN), Bob and Sue Mecklenburg (Gold Creek Home Owners), Michael Callahan (Ecology) and Joel Freudenthal (Yakima County),

On phone: Emily Johnson (USFS), Richard Visser (BOR).

1. Update and announcements

After introductions, the group was reminded that the Yakima Basin Science and Management Conference will be held June 12-13 at Central Washington University. Mitch noted that he had discussed the possible use of a historic Teanaway Highway bridge to replace the John Wayne Trail fish passage barrier on Cold Creek with Mark Reynold of WSDOT.

2. YBIP Funding Recommendations:

Alex led the group in a review and update of the 2018 funding recommendations for YBIP Bull Trout funding. This discussion and the resulting recommendations are included in the attached 2019 BTWG Funding Recommendations document.

3. BOR Update

Pat Monk noted that design work for Clear Creek dam fish passage is on hold at this time. Reclamation projects require a designated project manager, and no one with the required training is available to do that. The group discussed the idea of writing a letter of support from the BTWG that encourages Reclamation to complete the Clear Creek Fish Passage Project.

4. Bull Trout Siting Table

William shared a table of bull trout sightings that goes back to when redd data was first getting collected. It is a good tool to document when we find bull trout in unexpected places; it tracks the location and age of fish sighted and any notes. Scott Kline has the latest version. We should look at regular updates of the table and ways to share the data. Alex quickly reviewed other data sets that exist that we should look at updating in a consistent manner.

5. BWTG Work Plan

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. Next year we will focus on updating the threats, but not the actions. The group also highlighted the need to identify and coordinate 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. The group agreed to keep talking about climate issues and move towards incorporating more climate data and projections into projects and meeting discussions.

6. Future Dates:

Emily reminded the group that the next meetings will be held on July 25th, October 29th, and December 10th.

The meeting ended at 4:10 PM