

Yakima Bull Trout Work Group Meeting

August 27th, 2020

Morning session; Demographics and 5-year review

Start: 10:03 AM

Attendees: Emily Smith (MCFEG), Alex Conley (YBFWRB), Aimee Taylor, Jason Romine, Craig Haskell, Jose Vazquez, Cynthia Raekes (USFWS), Elizabeth Jackson (OSU), Melissa Speeg, Mitch Long (KCT), Michael Callahan (ECY), Steve Caromile, Marie Winkowski, William Meyer, Marc Divens (WDFW), Bob Mecklenburg (Gold Creek)

Erin Kuttel informed the group how this year's 5-year review process will work. We are going to focus on the 15 populations in the Yakima core area. Erin went over the demographic/ actions spreadsheet that needs to be completed prior to the threats assessment (December 8th, 2020). The spreadsheet goes over individual actions, parties involved, and the 2015-2019 status, the group needs to complete the current status and reporting documents. A doodle pool will be sent out to the group, so a core group of people can come together and complete the worksheet in October.

Erin also noted that in April when she asked for any resources documents that would be useful for the review there wasn't a large response, so please still send her any resources you have that would be helpful. Jason offered PTAGIS data from current monitoring.

The morning meeting concluded with the group agreeing on finishing the worksheet together with a small group of people on October and having our December 8th morning session be dedicated to the threat's analysis.

Afternoon Session

Start 1:05 PM

Updates and Announcements: During introductions Marie Winkowski introduced herself to the group, Marie is working with WDFW and will be helping Steve on the bull trout status review, Marie is a native fish and shellfish specialist. Alex recapped the morning session for the group and informed them of our supporting role in the 5-year review process.

USFWS updated on trap and haul efforts done so far this season; they have trapped at 2 times at Kachess with no bull trout, SF Tieton, Bumping with 1 Deep Creek bull trout, 5 times at Clear Creek Dam with 1 NF Tieton bull trout and 6 other bull trout, and 2 times at peek-a-boo with 2 fish tagged with acoustic tags and 4 with PIT tags.

Clint updated the group on Clear Creek Dam passage; in early October Geotech work below the dam will be happening and they should have 30% design in November.

Mitch updated on Gold and Kachess projects. For the Kachess project they have a contract with Wildlands and Interfluve for well installment after labor day for a 4-5 work day window. Gold Creek; NSD is working to model NEPA alternatives, and the hydro team has seen the initial groundwater results.

Rescue Update: Todd told the group how rescue efforts are going so far this season, they have almost 600 YOY from Kachess and about 60 YOY from Gold Creek at Lasalle hatchery. This year the fish are holding in circular tanks with eddy's until they are transported into the larger tanks. There have been zero mortalities. The last rescue effort will be tonight on Gold Creek. It was noted that a recapture from last year was found in a pool by the reservoir.

Redd Survey: Marc displayed his 2020 redd survey calendar to the group. There was good energy in signing up and most surveys are fully staffed, Marc will email out the calendar and you can fill in any dates you are available that still need support. Due to COVID, each surveyor is responsible for their own COVID protocols, we will be hiking more to avoid carpooling if needed. Data will be collected with iPads and Marc will have thermometers and flagging for teams. Usual meeting locations are the Naches Ranger Station for Yakima county surveys or the Ellensburg WDFW office for Kittitas County surveys.

Passage update: Josh informed the group that at Gold Creek there is a huge problem with people driving over the lakebed, there has been more signs and patrols out to try and minimize the issue, but it is getting used heavily. Box Canyon is still flowing very well, and it doesn't look like a flume is needed this year. Kachess River has had its usual dewatering and rescues. Indian Creek has had an increase in recreation and rock dams this season, Josh has built some rock diversions to help re-channel water. SF Tieton has fish seen under the 1030 bridge. Deep Creek is fully connected, there were no adults seen but a lot of otter and racoon sign. Overall, the revisors look pretty good this year.

Temperature: Emily updated the group that BTTF calibrated and placed 4 loggers in Big Creek and Russ will put 3 more at the mouth next week. The goal is to collect the loggers after redd season, download, analyses, and display the data this winter. It was also noted that Scott Willey produced older data from Big Creek, and it looks like quality habitat.

Bull Trout Task Force: Ahtziry and Kelsey informed the group about their season so far. They are not doing Campgroup presentation due to COVID, they have seen increased recreation but decreased rock dams. They have supported rescues and now will support redd surveys. They did note that there is increased fishing at the mouth of SF Tieton.

Brook trout eDNA: Jose explained the NFWF grant that USFWS applied for with help from MCFEG. The grant will retest the 1100 existing samples for brook trout and collect and sample additional samples. It is unknown if the funding will be granted, but if it is samples in Teanaway will be taken in 2021.

Website: Emily displayed Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board's updated website with updated BTWG page attached where past agenda and notes can be found.

Final topics: SF Tieton has seen increased poaching of bull trout this year, either more signs or enforcement needs to happen to try and reduce the impact.

The next BTWG meeting will be December 8th, the morning session will be a threats analysis for the 5-year review. The afternoon sessions topics include redd survey recap, BTTF end of season report, temperature results, budget updates, and Amy presenting on acoustic telemetry.

