

Yakima Bull Trout Work Group Meeting Minutes

December 8th, 2020

GoTo Meeting

Attendees:

Aimee Taylor (CWU/USFWS), Jose Vazquez, Robed Parrish, Jason Romine, Erin Kuttel, Marie Winkowski, Elizabeth Jackson, Steve Caromile, Cynthia Raekes, Abby Sage (USFWS), Kelsey Martin, Ahtziry Salazar, Emily Smith, Connor Parrish (MCFEG), Scott Kline, Marc Divens, Josh Rogala (WDFW), Pat Monk (BOR), Mitch Long, Melissa Speeg (KCT), Gary Torretta, Eric Merten, Chris Trinies (USFS), Alex Conley (YBFWRB), Michael Callahan (Ecy), Shawna Warehime, Russ Byington, Todd Newsome (YN), Sue Mecklenburg (home owner)

Morning Session 9:00 AM - Noon

Erin Kuttel with USFWS led the group through the threat matrix worksheet. Please have your completed threats worksheet for your agency to Erin by Mid- January.

Afternoon Session: 1:00 PM

Updates and Announcements:

NorWeST is calling for all recent raw temperature data to be sent to them by April 15th so they can update their database and predictions. 2021 working group meeting dates have been sent out, they will be every other month on the first Thursday, our next meeting in February 4th.

BOR updates- They are currently accepting comments on Clear Creek Dam Passage, they are at about 30% design.

Gold Creek update: Ground water team is working on groundwater analysis and KCT is working with Forterra to create restoration plan for Heli's pond.

Review of Redd Surveys

Marc Divens displayed the 2020 redd count data, over all there were lower counts this year than previous years. Each stream was surveyed three times, only twice at Rattle Snake, and no survey was done on Crow Creek. Upper Kachess River had strong flow events effecting the visibility of redds. The poaching on SF Tieton needs to be assessed, we know that it is a problem, but we don't know how big of a problem.

Review of 2020 field season

BTF- COVID restricted education but the crew was still able to post 47 signs, educate 53 people, remove 120 rock dams, recure over 1000 bull trout, assist on 21 redd surveys, and install 4 temperature loggers.

Trap and Haul- Trapping efforted happened at Clear Creek Dam where they tagged 12 fish, 3 of them NF Tieton fish and average size was 3-4 Y/O fish. Efforts on Tieton happened 3 times trapping 2 bull trout, Bumping tapped 1 fish, Kachess had 3 attempts and 0 fish, and Keechelus had 3 efforts and only 1 bull trout detected.

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YN Rescue- this season they were able to collect 72 YOY from Gold Creek, and 600 from Kachess River. At the hatchery the Kachess fish are separated in two tanks of 300 and Gold Creek fish are in their own tank. Fish are growing larger than last year. The BA should be done for Taneum introduction by the end of January. The YN is permitted by end of summer to release in Taneum in 2022. Good for Taneum fish in 2021

Acoustic Telemetry

Aimee Taylor with CWU and USFWS is studying the behavior comparison of YN hatchery raised bull trout and wild bull trout in lake Kachess using acoustic tags. They tagged 5 fish from the YN hatchery and placed them into the lake and tagged 2 wild fish at peek-a-boo falls. 3 fish with acoustic tags are swimming in the lake now. Her goal is to tag more fish in the 2021 season, including YN raised and wild bull trout.

2020 Box Canyon Wood Survey

429 large pieces of wood (25 jams) were placed in Box Canyon creek in 2019, post project monitoring included location data, quantities, juvenile rearing and redd counts. 2020 wood surveys concluded that 23 jams of new wood remain (349 pieces). Total project wood in 2020; 397 pieces. Field season 2021 will include more post project monitoring (pebble counts, sediment wedges, and pool count).

2020 Box juvenile rearing survey

In 2020 there was the lowest densities of YOY in Box Canyon Creek we have seen. 31% of YOY and 56% of redds were above Big Pool Falls, 69% of YOY and 44% of redds were below Big Pool Falls despite the 2019 wood placement. Wood mobilized in-between redds and YOY emerging.

Peek-a-boo Falls reintroduction

Efforts to reintroduce bull trout above peek-a-boo falls is moving forward, so far they have the SEPA exemption, Labor to capture and relocate, labor for population assignment; relatedness; and sexing, cutthroat health assessment, PIT tag array at mouth and NTTOC process results. Things remaining to continue the reintroduction include a monitoring plan, PIT tag arrays above Peekaboo, and fishing regulations changed above the falls (this isn't critical but would be ideal). Hopefully trapping and hauling at end of July 2021.

YN 2021 plan and feasibility assessment

The BA should be done in January and they will hopefully have a permit to release bull trout in Taneum Creek (50 fish or less) July 2021. They will also have 4 pit tag detectors on Taneum Creek.

In August-September hopefully have permits to take 100-200 SF Tieton YOY. The hatchery plans to expand and spread fish out to 6 tanks total. In 2021 they will keep moving forward with Gold and Kachess collecting the same amount of YOY as this year.

Brook trout eDNA

Connor presented to the group the results for the Teanaway Brook Trout distribution eDNA samples. In 2017 the Teanaway was tested for bull trout and 80 eDNA samples were collected all coming back

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negative. 49 samples that were in known prior bull trout areas were re-analyzed for Brook trout and 7/49 came back positive, all in Jack Creek. This is hopeful for future Teanaway bull trout reintroduction.

Meeting adjourned 4:15 PM