

Yakima Bull Trout Work Group

Thursday, February 4, 2021
8:56 AM

Attendees:

Alex Conley (YBFWRB), Andrew Matala, Todd Newsome, Shawna Warehime, Russ Byington (YN), Marc Divens, Scott Kline, Josh Rogala, William Meyer (WDFW), Mitch Long, Melissa Speeg (KCT), Erin Kuttel, Marie Winkowski, Steve Caromile, Jose Vazquez, Aimee Taylor, Abby Sage, Bruce Heiner, Jason Romine (USFWS), Collette MacLean (Forterra), Emily Smith, Connor Parrish (MCFEG), Sue Mecklenburg (home owner), Paul James (CWU), Eric Merten, Gary Torretta (USFS), Scott Willey, Richard Visser, Pat Monk (BOR), David Thompson

Updates and Announcements

Michele Capp, District ranger at Cle Elum FS office, is moving on to another job in a few months. Scott Willey informed the group that they are waiting for more info in KDRP, Box Canyon is progressing, and they are making progress on passage at Clear Creek Dam.

The YBIP budget will be reviewed for March, as a group we need to look at our budget again.

The group may be interested in looking more into Spinola Creek.

Follow up; Threats analysis / proposed revisions

Erin Kuttel with the USFWS reminded the group to have your threats analysis worksheets for your agency turn into her ASAP. The bull trout species status assessment will be happening in the next year, the 5-year review completion should be in August 2022. Over the next few meetings, the group will look at the USFWS proposed revisions to the threats and give our feedback.

Steep pass proposal

Craig Haksell with USFWS presented the one pager for the steep pass proposal. They are currently looking for \$50K to fund the design, BOR is willing to fabricate it. The design so far is structure that is permanently on a trailer that will be backed up to where passage is needed and then 10' sections of ladders with retractable legs can be attached, with 4-5 sections being the maximum length. BOR can deploy the steep pass with their fish passage crews. The group then opened up for discussion; It was brought up that access to some sites will present as more of a challenge, Clear Creek and Bumping have an access road but Tieton dam and the Kachess narrows would need to have a rough road put in, and it may be good idea to test anow at Clear Creek to see how it can be included in KDRP. Todd noted that steep pass is used at Prosser hatchery and works well, it takes a lot of water to get it full, the Prosser one runs at ½ full and still is effective, 1.5 cfs pumps can be a challenge. There my need to be a screen added to the intake, and we might need to find more ways to increase attraction and better flows, but that would require a larger pump. Temperature and depth should be considered at the intake.

Kachess and Gold Creek update

Melissa Speeg updated the group on the Gold Creek restoration plan, the hydro team is reviewing ground water models. No major updates yet.

She then displayed the 90% design for the Upper Kachess River restoration project. Changes from the 60% design to 90% designs include shortened the restoration section in Reach 2, no ground water tributaries, Floodplain reconnection of Magic Creek and Cold Creek, gully created by existing roadbed will be filled in, and additional wood in Reach 4 that is not bank buried. Wood delivery may need to involve a helicopter due to switchbacks on the road. Tributary temperatures are being spot checked.

Hatchery Update

Todd showed video is the bull trout in La Salle hatchery feeding. The fish are larger than the fish last year at this time, Kachess fish average 18 mm larger and Gold 50mm larger. They will switch to feeding them fry in mid-March.

Peek-a-boo falls

Scott Kline presented on what needs to be complete and what is completed for above Peek-a-boo falls reintroduction. So far completed tasks are SEPA exemption, labor to capture and relocate, labor for population assessment, sexing, and relatedness, Cutthroat health assessment, PIT tag array at mouth, NTTOC process results, and PIT tag array above Peek-a-boo falls. What still needs to be done includes a monitoring plan, radio tag capability, and increased outreach, there is not likely to be a change in the fishing regulations. The group then opened to a discussion on tagging, monitoring, and genetics. Radio tags are ideal so we can see where the fish are going, and we will know if they leave the system. Acoustic tags will not work well due to the shallow water. Floy tags could work if we relied on snorkeling to relocate fish. Todd has unused Lotech tags. The question of how much Kachess genetics do we want in box canyon was the next discussion. It is a concern of placing Kachess fish above Peek-a-boo falls, there may be a need for genetic testing done prior to moving fish, Scott Kline will talk with USFWS geneticists and Maureen Small to determine what the base course of action to take is and if rapid genetic test will be required. A small group will get together to discuss next steps on reintroduction.

Teanaway Next Steps

Alex presented a document listing bull trout limiting factors in the Teanaway including quality of spawning and rearing reach, hybridization/ competition with brook trout, poaching/harassment, and up/down stream migration bottlenecks below Safford Creek. The group opened for discussion; William noted all the accomplishments that the Teanaway has made over the years with acquisitions, road work, and water purchases. Middle Creek is still the main remaining barrier. Paul James mentioned it might be a good idea to establish resident and see if fluvial develops. John Khor's crew could possibly look at critical riffle/flow/temp. Sediment starving in upstream areas may be an issue, we know that the road cause a lot of stream issues. We hope to be able to reintroduce bull trout to the Teanaway, and by discussing the limiting factors and looking for solution, hopefully we can get to the point of reintroduction.

Temperature

Emily shared the Yakima Basin temperature map. She took the 2020 logger data from Taneum and Big Creek and colored coded the average August temperature to correspond to the NoRWeST predicted stream temperatures. The goal is to compare our data with NorWeST predictions and use it as a tool in projects and proposed re/introductions. NoRWeST is having a call for all data by April 15th, 2021. Please feel free to send raw data to Emily (education@midcolumbiafisheries.org) so she can pass it to NoRWeST and update our Yakima temperature map.

Final Thoughts

Our next meeting will be April 1st, 2021 and the morning session will be 2021 field season planning.

Meeting adjourned 12:30 PM