July 28, 2026 Yakima Bull Trout Working Group Meeting NOTES

- Alex C - Facilitating 1st half; Aimee T - Facilitating 2nd half
- Participants:
    - Alex C -
      Olivia T -MCF
      Greg
      Mitch Long
      Emma Meyer
      Scott Kline
      Scott Wolf
      Conner
      Wiliam Meyer
      Hannah
      Kaila
      Ainsley
      Shawna (DOE)
      Todd Newson (Yak nation)
      Sarah Ehmer (YAK COUNTY
      Rober Kope (cabin owner)
      Erin Eton TU
      Jeff Tayer (usfw)
      Justin Bezold TU
      Mel babik KCT
      Kaitie
      Gary Torretta Fs
      David Dyan FWS

- Aimee has taken a WDFW Regional Fish Bio Job and starts Aug 12th. She will be a member of, but not coordinating, the Bull Trout Working Group going forward. There will be a MCF going away party on August 3 in Ellensburg!

- BTTF Field Calendar
    - Canva link working - any issues? - no
    - Redd survey signups are open
        - Late September and Oct looking slim - need more signups
    - Gary wants the link sent again (in followup email)
    - This season will keep as is. Next season - TBD who will update and maintain. (Scott + MCF)

- Field Season Updates:
    - Olivia will take over Aimee's role managing the Bull Trout Task Force for the remainder of this season. Later on TBD.

- South Fork Tieton Bridge Update (Sarah Ehmer)
    - Updated schedule : Project meeting tomorrow - subject to change
    - Contractor states Oct 12 project resumes, 1st of Nov with major construction
    - End of working days June 4th; Final Completion: June 21st.
    - Funding holes? 1.3mil (Scott)
        - There were additional costs added after project start.
        - Changes to design and construction (rock blasting, wall construction…)
        - County calling for additional materials +400k?
        - Potential extra costs due to dewatering based on conditions
        - Construction will continue regardless of more funds, until funding runs out
    - Alex: How is the pool level now? What happens when the reservoir fills more?
        - There are efforts being made to stay out of the water
        - Project restart date was pushed back to account for spring time rains to reduce interruptions to construction.
    - Is there any more BTWG can do to help further? - no, there just is a need for additional funding.
    - Jeff Tayer - There has been a call for help for more funding pushed through. This is a major project that needs to be completed. Concerns for late project start date.
    - Shawna W - More concerns about late start - don't want to see another Nov-Dec conditions. Friday having a meeting to discuss the funding gap with the BLM, USFS, ?. Should be good for funding for this year but need to find more.

- Bull Trout Signage
    - Aimee showing ‘ANGLER’ Signs
    - Going up to be putting up where ever angers could be found
    - Large signs going along roads

- SC Conference
    - In Alberta; William and Scott (WDFW), Emma and alex attending

- Cold Creek Update
    - Erin Eaton TU
    - First meeting being put together for working group - Chat Erin if you want to be apart
    - Engineer attending meeting to get designs in
    - Behind on time (right of entry permit for state parks ground delayed)
    - How has cold creek looked? (Alex)
        - No one has been out this season? Josh or Megan might have seen it?
    - First chunk of funding 10% gets project to preliminary design (cost benefit analysis)
        - Not sure about relative cost yet
        - Contractor Gary Foresgrin ?
    - (Scott) Is there anyone from DFW on technical team? DFW, FS, Bureau Rec.

        - Reach out if you want to be apart of this group!
        - Todd Newson, Alex Lopez BR, others email in

    - YBIP Recommendations:
        - Draft was sent out - not a lot of feedback, not many changes since May meeting
        - Are we happy with this draft?
        - The sub committee is meeting on Thursday to be reviewed.
        - BTWG gives recommendations, this can be used by Ecology to advise greater govt. Organizations.
        - Reviewing Document:
            - Starwater – TU has completed a walkthrough of drain to see conditions and discuss possible engagement with landowners. Expect 350K funds needed for 4 Phases:
                - 1 - engagement with landowners and developers (3 months)
                - 2 - site assessment (4-5mo) hire engineer specializing in municipality engineering
                - 3 - conceptual design - 3 possible designs and rough cost
                - 4 - 30% design and draft, details on cost assessments
            - Overall timeline: 13-14 months
            - Jeff Tayer - all of these funds are needed for this fiscal year? - yes.
                - Can send that proposal out to the group (Erin Eaton)
            - This is a top priority - any concerns with that? - no problem
            - Do we add more info to this doc?
            - KCT helping with gathering resources
            - Justin - #1 need is funding for TU - get it moving faster
            - This is a yes to move forward with these proposal.

        - Craig has some slides for the recommendations for the document for temporary passage solutions for next Sept 2027
            - Shawna - should we expect some coms from the bureau
            - There will be more discussions on implementations, the bureau is moving forward with these ideas -
            - Jeff Tayer. - Craig will write up a synopsis on the project plans for the group to reference.

        - Gold Creek Restoration Project
            - Mitch - don't need this funding this year - this contingency funding can be used for phase 2, and maybe that can be matched for a water smart - (stream flow grant)
            - Requesting other funding
            - Want to fill the pond in spring of next year

    - Wait and see where they're at in Oct Nov with the funding they have

- SFT Bridge - contingency funds to fill a need for funds, they can go to the bridge as a backup if needed. - sounds good

- Thumbs up all around. For first section and edits

Next section

- Gold Cr Rest (Mitch) Costs continue to be a ?; prices have gone up and mayneed to raise the estimates
    - Raise the res. Bed?
    - KLB has some sources for material
    - Pond fill = 3 projects for the fill
    - Reaching out to the tribe
    - 20-25 mil to fill the pond?
    - Could use the 1.2 mil that is being requested.

- BTTF - Budget reviewed for sustaining and expanded
    - What is the price if there weren't any other sources ? hard to project.
    - BTTF uses outside grants to fund the program
    - Crew size is dependent on funding
    - 420k would keep a 4-5 person crew on for the full season.
    - What about data analysis portion? MCF might hire a data person for year round data work + coordination
    - Looking at ½ time bull trout + ½ time MCF project manager
    - Redd data work with wdfw funds
    - Some monitoring analysis with MCF funds
    - Some temp work with temp monitoring
    - Recovery coordinator being picked up in house from Alex TBD
    - Data will be collected, question is who will analyze the data TBD

- Section D - WDFW funding for 2 bio- no notes

- How does the chart look for the low-med-high? - no notes

- Other projects section; BTWG doesn’t proved specific $ recommendations, but does highlight priorities, including:
    - Clear creek dam fish passage, and Tieton dam fish passage …
    - Trap and haul, dinielsdeniles and weirs into this doc? Yes
    - Ensure ongoing support for critical state programs added.
    - Refining WDFW’s role in bull trout evaluation projects. Pre and post project monitoring efforts

- Is Cold Creek called out? (William) Added in: ongoing work with TU in partnership with state parks and BOR for next steps and funding for implementation for Cold Cr

- Submit to the Habitat Sub Committee Group on Thursday? - YES

- Alex will give an update on the recommendations, the btwg, and btap to the habitat sub committee
-

- Share some pics to Alex for conservation work (Mitch)

BTAP Action Tracking Tool - update

- Yakipedia up
- Actions query launched via website (live)
  - This will get embedded to the yakipedia for a cohesive experience
- If there are edits you want - navigate to the bottom of the page to notify Alex, and use the email listed.
- **Scott wants a filter for “by priority” not just by next steps.
  - Alex: want to keep this system for continual adjustments
- Yakipedia - Actions database is accessible for IFrame - for viewing in website (Alex) to be completed in the fall
- BTAP updates upcoming:
- Waptus populations
- Next step is Teannaway and upper yak populations
- Basin wide actions that help all populations
- Then wrapping up small details
- Thank you Aimee for the updates!!! <3

Gold Cr Construction Update: Mel KCT

- Berms 1-3 pushed into NE Cell
- 184k cubic yards
- More fill from Will’s Hill in Hyak
- Helicopter work done in 8-9 days
- 22 log jams in river mile 1
- 30 pieces loose wood for roughness
- Heli’s Pond 6,600 cf filled, ready for planting
- 50 type 5 structures made with helo (ready for bolting)
- Rm 2-3 = 70 pieces of wood added by helo to reduce machines on the ground
- Flood plain fill to reverse winter flooding
- Side channels created/reconnected and graded. Ready for wood and planting.

- Side channels will activate with there is 1' of flow on thalweg - need rain

- Conner - Defishing Season Wrap up
  - In Gold Cr Pond
    - Oneida nets - funnel in fish to baffles
    - May 18-June 26 (22 sampling days)
    - 6075 fish removed
    - Majority of fish
      - 70% pike minnows
      - Suckets, white fish, cutthroat, 5 burbot
      - 5 bulls,
        - All fish were of wild origin
      - Rate of fish caught dropped after mid june?
      - Exclusion: some fish still snuck over (bt), adjustments made, still some got in - the rest were cutthroat
        - Fish released below culvert in the outflow of the pond
        - The last of them, released in reservoir - and reentered pond
      - Are there many pike minnow in keecheuls lake? Alex
        - Below the reservoir - some caught last year
        - Every fish got released.
        - Shout out to Dom for organizing
          - Making a Yakipedia for the findings
        - Turbidity curtains backed up so much water that fish could get over
        - Anglers were reporting catching burbot - assumed lots of fish, and healthy
        - Different fish found during different levels of turbidity? Burbot in turbid water

  - Craig: Solutions for Keecheuls Dam Entrainment
    - Why Keechelus? Different from Clear Creek Dam - less fish
    - Every fish thats entrained in Keech = important - How can we increase the number for fish caught (rn its 50%)
    - Hook and line is the current method, increase the # of people participating?
    - No more rapid response genetics done = more people available
    - Can double the effort for this year
    - Hard to do at high flow
    - Antennas inform how many fish are missed
    - False Weir
      - Small, hand implemented, otter proof, Whooshh $25k total

        - Cons: need a pump, hard at high flow, experimentation needed, needs to be securely attached
        - *gotta get the fish IN the device
        - Talking about 30-40-50 fish, not 100's of sockeye
    - Fyke Trap
        - Use with high flows (steel), no pumps/screens, year round use, Fish Bio ~15k? Can get plans to fabricate
        - Not otter proof, need power, need greater capacity
    - Discussion:
        - Bigger is better to cover the whole stream? 2.-¾ of the channel spanning
        - What about the other fish you capture? No plan yet
            - Chinook?
        - Otters: they can get in there.
        - What about a fish wheel? Some found in N. Bc rivers
        - Steep pass: cons = lot more infrastructure and materials, not that mobile after all said and done. Like a fish ladder

- Skylar - WDFW Aquatic biodiversity study 2025 Yakima Aquatic Bio Metadatabarcoding
    - 50 native species of inland fish and mussels
        - Need baseline dist info.
    - Obj1 - generate standard occurrence data
    - Develop occupancy models and other predictive tools to inform dist.
    - eDNA
        - Q PCR for single species (sensitive and specific)
        - Metabarcoding * Universal marking target groups - fishes
        - Species level assignments
        - Can reduce accuracy compared to Q PCR
    - 100 sites visited
    - 46 species level and some broader distinctions
    - Collecting for native and non native fishes
    - Bull Trout
        - Upper Gold
        - Nile Creek + SF Little Naches! - Single replicates, could be low confidence
        - Reservation Cr - multiple replicates (sf.Aht.)
    - Brook Trout
    - Data is available; WDFW is making an app so you can reach out for more data - soon
    - Questions:
        - Timeline for samples: May-Oct. - Scott wants specific timeframes for this map

        - SF Little Naches R.
        - Coal + Cold cr (upper county) - none sampled.
        - Nile Cr - got a hit, further up.
        - How do we get more samples done - Lisa at DFW lab manager - needs 96 samples at a time to fill a plate
        - Cost: $80 a run? Single species - more cost effective to do Q PCR
    - What other fish should we be paying attention to?
        - Sucker sp. - mainstem to the upper

Alex Lopez – Keechelus Tributary surveys in beginning planning phase

- 2 Tributaries Coal + Cold Cr
- How many brooks are there, are they making it into the reservoir?
- Working with Scott, Trevor, …
- Do some exploratory work
- What to do next if many brooks are found
- Get up high and work down stream, mark gps where we see them
- Anyone wanna help?
- What is in the wetland complex below the Gold Creek pond? Warmer complex still? (Alex C.)
- Mel - How are you sampling? Efishing.
    - 1 Cold Creek First
    - 2? Gold Cr lower complex
    - 3 Coal Cr - has access issues?
- What are some good days? - poll the group

William M - Drone Monitoring

- Orthomosaic - lots of pics and vid and stitches
- Bull Trout projects
    - Passage projects, restoration projects, forest units

Next meeting Sept 25th Friday