

# NOTES from the July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Yakima Bull Trout Working Group Meeting

Meeting held remotely from 9 to Noon via GoTo meeting

## Attendees:

Alex Conley and Kayla Gallentine (YBFWRB), Catherine Furr and Gene Shull (USFS), Steve Caromile, Jeff Tayer, Anthony Fritts, Scott Kline, Mark Divens (WDFW), Clint Wertz, Scott Willey, Richard Visser, Colin Byrne (USBR), Craig Haskell, Jason Romine, Michael Humling, Connor Cunningham (USFWS), Andrew Matala, Todd Newsome (YN), Bob and Sue Mecklenberg (Gold Creek landowners), Melissa Speeg (KCT), Zach Zacavish (MCFEG), John Reeves (Lake Kachess landowner), Colette McLean (Forterra).

## Updates and Announcements

Alex noted that Erin Kuttel of USFWS is no longer coordinating regional bull trout status reviews, and that Jeff Chan will be reaching out to us in the fall about coordinating next steps for the Range-wide Species Status Assessment. He also noted that Michael Callahan is taking a new job within Ecology and will no longer be overseeing YBIP bull trout recovery contracts. Alex and others expressed their thanks for Michael's work supporting bull trout projects.

Alex noted that the Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board is working to fix issues with the online bull trout library, and asked partners to let him know if they find broken links or other issues. He also noted that the Recovery Board, Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group and the Department of Fish and Wildlife are collaborating to build a full-time bull trout position with MCFEG fisheries to take lead on the Bull Trout Task Force and support the Bull Trout Working Group.

The group briefly discussed the Salvelinus confluentus Curiosity Society meeting in Montana in September. Folks noted that the distance and conflicts with field work and the AFS meeting mean that few in the basin plan to attend. Alex noted interest in coordinating with any that may attend regarding travel and presentation topics.

Scott Kline updated the group on ongoing discussions about providing fish passage at Peekaboo Falls. A small group met to discuss recreation management in the watershed, and Scott and partners are working to secure the resources to complete a detailed survey of the falls that can be used to identify feasible design alternatives. Gene Schull noted that the Forest Service will need to be engaged and may have to go through a process to ensure that providing passage at a natural barrier is supported by the Forest Service.

Craig Haskell updated the group on the status of the mobile steep pass fish design being completed by Stantech Consulting for Reclamation.

Todd Newsome updated the group on the Yakama Nation Bull Trout Program juvenile releases at Lake Kachess and noted improvements in hatchery-reared bull trout survival and growth in 2021-2. All released bull trout have been PIT tagged and adipose clipped, but detectors have been down in some areas and are being repaired. Planning for the proposed Easton Bull Trout Research Hatchery is ongoing and water rights are being secured.

Zach updated the group on Bull Trout Task Force activities and noted Mid-Columbia Fisheries is excited to have Amie Taylor on board as the field lead.

Melissa Speeg shared that KCT is currently managing approximately \$1,000,000 in grant funding for Gold Creek and Lake Kachess projects and recently gave a presentation on comparable restoration projects to the SkiTur community. The Gold Creek project is in the design phase and NEPA analysis with the Forest Service is in progress; the Kachess project will go to bid this summer, for construction next summer.

## Field Season Coordination & Calendar

Scott Kline walked the group through the draft calendar for summer/fall field work and encouraged people to let him know when they are available to participate.

## **Reclamation Reservoir-Delta Interaction Study**

Colin Byrne gave a power point presentation on the Reclamation Technical services Center study on Yakima Basin reservoirs, reservoir tributary delta morphology and fish passage. They are mapping elevational changes and building hydraulic and sediment transport models that can then be used to predict reservoir delta development and assess possible solutions that improve fish passage across exposed reservoir bed deltas. The team will be reaching out to partners in the Yakima Basin for input at critical junctures in the project. For more information, contact [CByrne@usbr.gov](mailto:CByrne@usbr.gov) or 303-445-2260.

## **Bull Trout Habitat Modelling Update**

Scott Kline led a short discussion of current efforts to model habitat patches in the Yakima Basin that are suitable for bull trout spawning and early rearing. Jeff Tayer asked how this effort compares to efforts to characterize steelhead habitat. The group noted that bull trout have more stringent habitat requirements for cold, high quality water that can be tightly modelled, where steelhead utilize a much broader range of habitats, even as conditions that favor anadromous production over residency are only partially understood. Scott noted that the short-term goal is to characterize habitat patches in potential reintroduction areas using criteria from the literature, with a longer-term goal of modelling habitat patches in the entire basin using a multiple regression approach using the characteristics of areas currently occupied by bull trout to predict other areas that may be suitable.

## **Review of YBIP 10-Year Plan for Bull Trout**

Jeff Tayer introduced the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan Habitat Subcommittee's 10-year planning process and thanked Craig Haskell for volunteering to write an initial draft of a stand-alone 10-year plan for YBIP investment in bull trout recovery. The group discussed the relationship between this plan, the Reclamation Bull Trout Enhancement Plan, the Yakima Bull Trout Action Plan and the USFWS Bull Trout Recovery Plan.

Craig then walked the group through the current draft of the bull trout section of the 10-year plan. The feedback received during the meeting will be incorporated into an updated draft which will be emailed to the group for further review.

## **Future Meetings**

The group discussed future meeting timing and recommended aiming for a meeting in late Sept or early October and a meeting in the first week of December, late January, March, May and early July. An update from WDFW and USFWS on range and statewide status assessment and coordination was identified as a potential topic for the fall meeting.