

**North Umpqua Hydroelectric Project
(FERC No. P-1927)****Resource Coordination Committee (RCC)
May 20, 2020 Meeting Summary****FINAL (8/19/20)**RCC Members or Alternates Present

Steve Albertelli (PacifiCorp)
Rich Grost (PacifiCorp)
Pam Sichting (USDA-FS)
Mike Korn (USDI-BLM)
Paul Bridges (USFWS)
Frank Weaver (USFWS)
Jim Muck (NOAA Fisheries)
Ed Meyer (NMFS)
Chris Stine (ODEQ)
Jason Brandt (ODFW)
Craig Kohanek (OWRD)

Other Attendees

Beth Bendickson (PacifiCorp)
Jon McSmith (PacifiCorp)
Scott Schevenius (PacifiCorp)
Pete Sukraw (PacifiCorp)

INTRODUCTIONS, AGENDA, OLD BUSINESSIntroductions/Member Updates/Organization News

USDA-FS: Gabe Wishart’s 120-day detail at Diamond Lake is up mid-June. The next short-term detail will be just a few weeks, and then it will be filled as a “not-to-exceed one year position.” They are not hiring a permanent replacement at this time. Steve Marchi has returned from his detail on the Wallowa-Whitman NF. Amada Hardman is the new zone botanist for the Diamond Lake and North Umpqua Ranger Districts.

COVID-19 Update: Some folks are working in the field (timber). Recreation sites will be opening in next few weeks, although there is still concern on cleaning restrooms and proper PPEs. Pam hasn’t heard anything about people returning to the office yet, and it may be voluntary. They should know more in two to three weeks. There is a risk analysis for anyone going into the field. There is no word yet on when ranger stations will be open to the public.

BLM: No big news or organization changes. There are rumors of a new director coming onboard soon. There are a lot of field office vacancies. On the COVID-19 front, day use areas are opening, although they never really closed. Facilities will not be supported. Discussion is starting regarding possible resources at boat launches. They are working through the process on how it will work. There is lots of activity on BLM lands – folks just want to get out. The timber group is working in single-person vehicles. They are starting to have discussions on other field work. They and USDA-FS have talked about guided trips on the river this Memorial Day weekend, and some guides are gearing up while working through guidelines as far as state COVID-19 requirements.

NOAA: Terri O'Rourke was hired as the new branch chief. The agency is completely shut down travel-wise. When it's lifted, Jim expects single passengers only in vehicles and social distancing until late summer.

USFWS: No updates. Regarding COVID-19, Pauly said it's like everyone else has been saying. He doesn't know when they will be back in the office. They don't have assigned vehicles, so they can't use agency vehicles. Not much action is going on in the field. Pauly's retirement date is November 30, 2020.

Frank Weaver gave an introduction. He is new to the Roseburg office and is primarily working on marten and fisher conservation, though he will be taking over the FERC hydroelectric projects as Pauly retires. He was a Wind Energy Coordinator in Corpus Christi, Texas; then he moved to New Mexico to streamline their conservation agreement process. He started in Roseburg on March 1, 2020. He has a lot of ESA Section 7 experience. He worked on desert/Southwest species in Texas and New Mexico and doesn't have a lot of hydroelectric project experience, but he's learning as he goes.

DEQ: Their long term manager, Dave Bellia (Regional Environmental Solutions), is retiring. His replacement, Deb Mailander is onboard and is the 401/On-site Groups Manager for the western region, which includes the North Umpqua. Their office is currently closed to the COVID-19. Chris said while they don't have a firm quarantine process, he is working from home. Travel is restricted except for essential travel and emergency situations.

ODFW: Ken Homolka was thinking about retiring, but it's now on hold. He has agreed to stay on through the next year. Jason is not sure where they are on hiring his replacement, as they currently are in a hiring freeze. Regarding COVID-19, their office is closed to the public but not closed to employees. There are folks still coming in but they are social distanced as much as possible. They are following state direction as far as reopening. Jason's been teleworking. For North Umpqua, both Sam and Chris have been working in the field continuously with staggered schedules. They are still doing spawning surveys and running the Fish Evaluation Building (FEB).

OWRD: Craig reported they have had budget cuts of 8.5% per year. Their budget is on a sectional basis, so they have been able to continue working. Eighty-five percent of people in their building are working remotely. He is unable to work from home as he is one of the two folks who is an incident coordinator. He did travel once with ODFW, but was socially distanced.

PacifiCorp: Rich and Steve are still splitting their time between home and the office. All employees and contractors are keeping safe by socially distancing. As far as COVID-19 locally on the project, operators show up to assigned plants and are social distancing the best they can. They have reduced the number of non-essential workers and contractors allowed on site, and there are no visitors allowed. They review each project going on to reduce who is coming and going. Josh Boyd accepted the North Umpqua Maintenance Supervisor position. He's been on the Project for nine years as an Operator and a Mechanic.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Jim announced that Ken Phippen (recently retired) had recently received a Distinguished Career Award from Washington D.C. for his 26 years.

Tour-wise, there was one school tour in late January, but nothing since then. Rich said there was a Source One Serenity tour scheduled for the first week of June but it may not happen at this point due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Regardless of whether there is an RCC public tour this year, Rich suggested we give the new agency representatives (Frank Weaver and Deb Mailander) personalized tours at the earliest possible opportunity.

FACILITY AND PROJECT UPDATES

Fish Protection and Passage Facilities

Since the last RCC meeting, upgrades and maintenance work were completed at the Soda Springs fish ladder including the repair of a leaking expansion joint and then fine-tuning and reprogramming the exit gate operating schemes. These corrections have improved the passage success of winter steelhead, but now the otter has also resumed visiting the fish ladder periodically. The first spring Chinook adult of 2020 was observed passing through the fish ladder on May 9, and a few juveniles have been observed going downstream in the ladder as well. Overall the fish ladder is working well. Upgrades and maintenance were also performed on the Soda Springs fish screen’s primary and finishing screen cleaning systems. We are adjusting the run times to reduce wear-and-tear during periods of relatively clean, debris-free water.

The Soda Springs Tailrace Barrier is operating normally. The Slide Creek Tailrace Barrier had been working great until the crane used to hoist the panels failed in March. Repair is currently underway but will be extensive and require custom-built components so probably won’t be completed until sometime in October. There is a temporary cleaning system in place using scaffolding and contract crews under PacifiCorp direction to keep the facility in operation until the crane repairs are completed. If necessary, generation may also be restricted to keep the facility within operating criteria.

Projects Requiring NTPs or Other Coordination

Project	Status
<i>Slide Creek Quarry Development Plan</i>	Pending
<i>Level 1 Road Gates</i>	Pending
<i>Hazard Tree Removal - Residences</i>	Pending
<i>Toketee fiber optic cable</i>	Pending

Low Poole Refuse Trench Dump Capping Project – ODEQ issued the 401 Certification, and we are awaiting the DSL/Army Corps permits.

Other/Upcoming Projects

Toketee Dam Rehabilitation: Scott said there are still questions with FERC about seismic acceleration calculations and potential delays due to COVID-19. The schedule may get pushed back, but he doesn’t have a definitive date. Pam asked about designs. Steve said design is still in flux, but the plan is still to complete designs by the end of the year. One thing of note is that we are still trying

to figure out if the flowline can pass over the former paleo-channel and still meet seismic safety criteria. The flowline may need to go under Toketee Ridgeon Road.

Financial Plans – Steve asked the RCC folks that normally sign Rolling Action Plans if they had the capability to digitally sign via e-mail. Pam, Chris, Mike, and Jason said yes.

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP (TWG) UPDATES AND ISSUES

Fish Habitat Studies (FHS): Monitoring and Maintenance Schedules

SA 6.2 Slide Creek Full-Flow Reach: *Nothing new to report.*

SA 7.2 Gravel Augmentation: Winter flows have subsided, and for the most part, the gravel added to the Slide and Soda Springs bypass reaches last fall remains mostly where it was placed. Some of this gravel was recently used by steelhead for spawning. Plans for this year are to use the remainder of the funds to place the already-staged 500 yards of gravel in the Soda Springs bypass reach when we do the channel shaping work (SA 8.3).

SA 8.2 Habitat Monitoring: *Nothing new to report.*

SA 8.3 Soda Springs Habitat Maintenance: The channel shaping and boulder work is still contracted and scheduled to occur during August 2020. As previously discussed, we expect that this work will use the remainder of the SA 8.3 fund this year.

SA 19.2 Long-term Monitoring/Predator Control Study: As Jason previously mentioned in the agency updates, Sam and Chris are still working and haven't skipped a beat even with COVID-19. The FEB operated three nights a week during last two months. The number of out-migrating juvenile fish being captured is much higher and more consistent than in 2019 with quite a few parr, smolts, and fry. One new effort for this year is the PIT-tagging of parr and smolts at the FEB and taking them back upstream for release near the Slide Creek tailrace barrier, to study the timing and survival of their second passage through Soda Springs reservoir. The results are preliminary, and we will have to calculate survivals based on capture efficiencies that vary with flow. It seems we are recapturing enough fish to be quite useful and help make up for the lack of a rotary screw trap (RST) in the bypass reach this year. The RST was not launched this spring due to the lack of a crane operator at PacifiCorp to launch and retrieve the trap. Because spring runoff was so moderate this year, Soda Springs Dam was only forced into natural spill for a couple days. Hence there was little need to have the RST in place anyways.

Jason said that the extra staff time from not doing the smolt trap this year has allowed us to do the PIT-tagging. One of the things he thought was very informative about the PIT-tagging was that some fish were recaptured at the PIT-tag array but not in the FEB, suggesting that they may have passed through the fish ladder or somehow escaped capture in the FEB. So far there have been about 350 juveniles tagged and over 100 recaptured in the FEB. There has also been at least one juvenile cutthroat trout captured in the FEB.

Rich said the TWG is wrestling with how to initiate the predator control program in June as planned and yet comply with COVID-19 restrictions. All permits for the work are in hand. He is ready to do that work when we can, either the second or third week in June. It will involve four to five nights of angling/electrofishing and should get us approximately 200 fish, which is the proposed target for removal. We still don't know if we can participate that soon (due to the pandemic). Rich asked folks to keep him apprised of when their agencies allow them to participate, so that we do not need to involve the public (volunteers) and risk any liability or viral transmission issues. Steve said to think of costs, as in having everyone traveling in separate vehicles, etc. Jim said no one has travelled for eight weeks in the entire agency, so travel funds are adequate, but COVID-19 will be the thing holding the travel back.

Jim also mentioned that the NMFS has some grant money available and that the predator control work might qualify. They have been using it for small dam removal projects in Oregon, and he has been trying to think of ways to help the North Umpqua.

Lastly, Rich asked folks to take a look at Jason's spreadsheet summarizing the monthly hours for the ODFW full-time position. He noted there is no column for predator control work so he asked Jason if his thought was that we can absorb the effort within the other activities. Jason replied that if it is a Technical Working Group priority, it would be something that they would absorb, but he wasn't sure how to add it in for this year. It may be ODFW folks, but if other agencies can help out, that would help.

Flows & Ramping (F&R): Flows, Ramping, Gaging, Monitoring, Plan & Reports

Rich reported that they are plugging away at updating records and beginning analysis on annual water year reporting, but as usual are still awaiting the final records from the USGS. Other than that, gaging and ramping compliance are good since the last RCC meeting.

Chris inquired whether we had gotten final records for WY2019 from the USGS for the Soda Springs Water Quality Station yet. Rich said no but he will check back in with USGS. Chris also said that DEQ's Chief Water Quality Modeler, Ryan Mitchie, said they are going to begin revising the temperature TMDL and will be contacting Rich and Steve for a data request. DEQ is working with TetraTech on setting up a model in the coming weeks.

Pam mentioned as an FYI that a letter from USDA-FS on using the Fish Creek forebay for a fire-fighting water source should be coming out by the end of the week considering Douglas County's emergency drought declaration. Precipitation in southern Oregon is currently 67% of normal.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE UPDATES

Powerhouse/Canal Outages

Jon reported that Clearwater 2 is currently in an outage, and return to service is tentatively set for May 28. Lemolo 2 outage is scheduled for July 7 through August 18. In addition to the normal powerhouse outage, there is canal and road work to be completed during the outage.

Reservoir Management

Lemolo Reservoir: Elevation is at 4,147.5 feet, which is within the normal summer operating level.

Toketee Reservoir: PacifiCorp is continuing to manage the reservoir at the lower end of the operating elevation as a safety precaution while the dam rehabilitation project progresses.

Soda Springs: The reservoir has been relatively stable.

LWD Management Plan: *Nothing new to report.*

Pam asked if we were planning on adding gunite while Lemolo 2 was down. Scott replied yes but an NTP is not needed due to a change in the method, which would not require ground disturbance at the top of the canal walls.

SA 19.1 TRIBUTARY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM UPDATE

Jim expressed his appreciation for Kirk Haskett and ODFW being out front on the fish habitat work in Rock Creek that started in March, and it's potential for improving the number of coho salmon.

Jason reported that despite COVID-19, spawning ground surveys have continued since they started in January. At Harrington Creek, there were 21 redds. Steelhead surveys are going on in Rock Creek, and they are surveying three to five miles per week. There were 120 redds. These redd count numbers are solid. Lower water is good for surveying on a consistent basis. Lamprey surveys will start soon, and they will continue to monitor the last few years of surveys. They are also looking at gaging stations and doing data entry following the different sampling efforts. They are still moving ahead for restoration work in the summer. Kirk did a great job working with landowners and agencies (FIA and Seneca) and on the permits for hauling staging materials. He obtained 140 large boulders and some trees with root wads. Contractors staged boulders at 13 sites on Rock Creek and at 20 sites on East Fork Rock Creek. They are ready to roll during the in-water work period. The drone flight is on hold for now.

Jason also reported that they are working on the SA 19.2 report for 2019 work. The hold-up is on his end, as he is going through the report for the first time. He's picky, and said he's still working through it.

Mike asked who Kirk was working with on setting up the drone flight. Jason will follow up with Kirk and get back to Mike. Mike added that with the current grounding of drones on BLM lands, the work may not be able to happen this year.

SA 19.3 FEDERAL MITIGATION FUND PROGRAM UPDATE

Pam reported that the FY2021 project proposals that came in March through April were reviewed last week. Mike and Jeff McEnroe were part of the review team, which recommended 24 projects for a total of \$1.3 million. The projects have now gone to Alice Carlton for approval. She reviewed them last night, and Pam said she will email out the final list.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: *None at this time.*

Lastly, Jon said that he appreciated efforts by the USDA-FS to prevent the public from blocking access by parking in front of the NUHP facilities and roads. Jon asked about the vehicle that had crashed into the rocks on the side of the paved Toketee Ridgeon Road and said it's been there for a few weeks, abandoned at the first big curve. He checked on it and said the vehicle hasn't been registered in years. Pam hadn't heard about it and will pass the information on to the Toketee Ranger Station.

NEXT RCC Meeting: August 19, 2020 (Conference call only)

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM.