

## Thursday, October 13

Attendees

### Public

Michael Schmidt - LLTK

Nick Gayeski- Wild Fish Conservancy

Frank Urabek - concerned citizen

Hal Boynton - concerned citizen

Andrew Marks - CCA

Roger Urbaniak - PSA/Issaquah hatchery

John Barr- HSRG

Lars Moberand- HSRG

Norm Baker- Sierra Club

Attendees

### WDFW

Heather Bartlett

James Dixon

Jeromy Jording

Annette Hoffman

Sara LaBorde

Jon Anderson

Thursday, October 13, 2011

1:00 PM

Heather- So by the end of today we'd like to be finished up with the steelhead, and WSMZ. And also where we had high priority hatchery programs we wanted to maintain. Questions about the Agenda? Green River fall Chinook questions first?

Frank U- so I sent you an email and the question was why we didn't know about this during the last meeting. I understand they went in last week and are still going in.

Heather- I responded to one right?

Frank U- yeah one.

Heather- ok and the purpose of this body is how to meet hatchery reform and respond to that. We are looking for responses on how to align our hatchery objectives and planning for the future, not necessarily dealing with in-season management.

Sara- And this body isn't dealing with current hatchery decisions

Frank U- You made it clear that if we had issues we could use this body to bring it up. Affecting those decision would likely need to be made outside this body, and some of these things were a process issue. One was transparency and public input before you started mixing the sand and gravel. We realize our goal is planning, but we come down here and see that decisions are made it seems like we have a small chance in hell about changing things.

Sara- Ok, comment taken.

Heather- we have conveyed, and in this discussion, there's a perception that our fishery management and hatchery management are out of sync and this body is trying to bring them into align. We are working on the hatchery component and taking those into another forum. I'm perceiving there was confusion.

Frank U- Let me be clear, I'm not using this forum for fighting the NOF forum. I've been there for a number of years, and we see the NOF process as flawed and this is a better process. But when we came in and talked about enhancing the NOR component of the Green River that's not a harvest issue, that's a hatchery issue.

Nick- I'll agree with Frank as when we came in the Agency's stance on the Green was stabilizing, and we fought that significantly. For us to hear about the transplant the way we did was a bit shocking.

Annette- I would like to speak to that if I could. The designation is one thing and how we get there is another.

Sara- the real issue is whether we gave folks a heads up.

Heather- I'm going to provide letters regarding what's gone on between the Director's office and the tribe to show everything. (hands out letters)

Frank U- yeah but we didn't know that this happened last year.

Heather- We assumed that people knew about last year, we weren't hiding that. As we make decisions about what to do in the future it's important that we are not prepared to write the population off. If 900 fish is all that is spawning in the river this year the decisions that we're making to improve the population the low abundance threshold is 1,800. The Soos Creek hatchery fish has been on the grounds for a number of years. The letters outline what we are interested in and why we want to do that.

Nick- Lee B has already spoken to the 900 fish. The other issue is in the Puget Sound Harvest Management threshold.

James- the 1,800 and the 835 that lee referred to was more like the quasi extinction threshold. The number is applicable to the population as a whole, including the hatchery fish. The habitat would need the abundance plus the hatchery fish. Its more a discussion for setting a more appropriate number for the Green, the original numbers have been used since the early 1970. The problem with the harvest driven assumption is that the basis for the 900 was completely separate from fisheries and forecasts for fishery abundance. This was done using stock assessment measures that are separately generated, and the tribes contribute to.

Frank U - what was that based on?

Annette- it was based on spawner counts that we and the tribe do collectively

James- guaranteed it was heavy to hatchery fish, we've been running up to 70% pHOS. These efforts are to update a new MOU with the Muckleshoots and the operation of Soos, Palmer Ponds, and explicit requirements for examining different fishery management potential. I think there's some good stuff there.

Heather- with some of the poor recruitment we're seeing one of the first recommendations is to get an updated productivity. I hope when you read the letters you'll see some of your desires.

Sara- I understand it seems like we're at status quo. But the track record is to force Muckleshoot to move, and we're trying to wedge the issue now. My frustration every week we don't come as a group and we keep from Agency staff going into negotiations. We're running on a NOAA vision for the Green that every fish counts.

Frank U- we want to get you there, some of us are talking with Will Stelle frequently. Did you talk with NOAA?

James- yes, talked with Tim Tynan. He didn't have an issue with the way we were doing things, but they would like to see if we're going to have an integrated goal that we need to set up more of a tiering system. Depending on the abundances we would step down our proportions of hatchery fish tied to a specific tier.

Michael- I did send around an example of that in the Oregon approach used in the Wallowa. Was there a % of hatchery fish that been there long term?

James- we are trying to figure out the most important short term % to set up the tier. Some of the index numbers are highly variable, and the thing is can we set ourselves up to get an agreement for when we have higher NOR we can meet a goal with a higher % of those fish making up the vast majority of the fish.

Frank U- I understand that our exploitation rate are on the NORs.

Jeromy- no that's wrong. That's the big misunderstanding, as the ER is calculated off the aggregate of fish, hatchery and NORs for the Green.

Sara- the other piece is how many fish the population can drop to before it's a risk of bottlenecking, NOAA is real nervous about that. We ran into that down in the Lower Columbia, but down there we had more people willing to take a bigger rissk. You cannot predict where they are going to land on this issue, and as Lars always says you have to start somewhere and that's what the Green is about. I realize we confounded the issue with putting more hatchery fish there.

Lars- the real problem is there is no agreement and plan to move forward here. That doesn't mean we're making real progress towards hatchery reform in the Green, and I don't think this is the right decision, but it's what was done.

James- it's one of the situations where the real important term goal is that the MOU in place for production

Lars- well a plan that hatchery reform is defendable part of. That's the end point, and questioning the decision each year is where you are at because you don't have a plan.

James- Right, and so we have a facility and an increase in production that the Muckleshoots are interested in, and so they are willing to talk.

Frank U- I understand the leverage, but once another 1million Chinook are at Palmer, and we go about this stepwise it seems like the little sand castle we just built got knocked over by a wave.

James- No I think we are asking for something serious in return.

Nick- so what's the truth about the 1million Chinook and an upriver hatchery being built?

Heather- I'm unfamiliar with that, or any hatchery being built, but we raised 1million Chinook at Palmer Ponds last year as a 1 year agreement. The 1million is still part of the negotiations. The eggs are being taken but the long term disposition is uncertain.

Nick- So the Dept's view about releasing that many Chinook at Palmer?

James- so the Green right now is functionally dependant for hatchery fish to stray to make up the escapement. They want those to stray higher into the system. Control mechanisms to help with that have yet to developed if it's a long term release. A small part of the program could act as a supplementation program, and they'll be uniquely tagged.

Nick- right but that's different from increasing NOR escapement in the upper watershed. This seems to be a strategy of inviting introgression.

John B- is there brood stock collection up there?

James- there is a small amount of attraction if Palmer is operated correctly. This is one of the reality checks if we went forward. If we don't have any changes anywhere else we'd just have a higher pHOS. We could try to work to pull more fish out of the system, and I think we did put out more fish there than we are now. We used to spawn every fish, and plant fry that we couldn't fit in the hatchery system, so this isn't an increase in hatchery production that this stock hasn't seen before. This is a conciliatory action that we had to make.

Nick- that's the question that I'm asking, it seems the fish are straying

Sara- we said timeout to that, as we opened the gates and they didn't stray anymore to the spawning grounds, and so the escapement isn't being met now.

Nick- so that change that is going to reduce pHOS from keeping the ladder at Soos creek open isn't releasing fish at Palmer going in the opposite direction.

James- So we have some productivity issues here.

Frank U- and that's in the list of things we wanted to address. It's just that we felt blindsided by the busing of hatchery fish to let them spawn in the mainstem.

Lars- so the fish that you put in the wild are going to produce NORs. You could make a better argument about putting the fish in the wild that at least some selection is going on.

Nick- if they aren't being swamped by 1st generation hatchery fish each year! I'm getting the impression this is simply trying to have it both ways. We're down so low that we might lose the NORs as a population, but if the hatchery fish are always there in numbers at Soos Creek, there what's the risk?

Sara- We can push some where we have that. But Lars is right until we have a plan and follow it we'll be in this situation each year.

Heather- I'll tend to take responsibility for the feeling of being blindsided. I've done my best to keep us transparent, and I'm certainly not up to date on the harvest management component. Before we go into updates from the Regions, we have come to agreements that the Muckleshoots will pay for 500k back in to Issaquah, so the reduction will only be 500k total, it's a one year agreement. Relative to the other reductions we issued brood document change forms, and that process is still ongoing and I'll keep you apprised. Jon Anderson is here for region 6. So onto a status review of the HAIPs.

Annette- So north and going south, we've been meeting with the tribes. The south fork spring Chinook program is still changing. I don't expect a lot of controversy there.

Heather- so the HAIP is in draft form.

Annette- so we've gotten a draft form there. Skagit we haven't made hardly any progress, it's been very difficult to get them in one place. The Stillaguamish is very similar to the Nooksack, as the stock is in a supplementation and recovery modes. The questions have been how large should the programs be. I'm kind of glad that we had the discussion on the Green today, as in the middle the question is what we do? The Stillaguamish we are wrestling with that question with 52 fish coming back as this program goes on when do we cut the umbilical cord?

John B- recovery mode and rescue mode are confusing, as the recovery mode is confusing.

Annette- rescue is captive brood, pulling out all the stops, but recovery is supplementation.

Lars- that is confusing to me as well, as the hatchery is serving as a gene banking. I would avoid using the supplementation term as that confuses the situation.

Heather- I think you are saying we are trying to protect some component of the population to protect it. From Annette the question is at what point do we move on from using the hatchery?

Lars- Well to me it's better if you say the colonization mode, and then local adaptation mode, and focus on those.

Heather- This group wanted to try to get the highest PNI possible in the short term.

Annette- well its all wild brood stock. If these fish can't colonize that's not due to hatchery interactions. The Snohomish is further along; we're hoping to have a draft further along. The Wallace is doing the heavy lifting here, meeting its contributing status. I think we're moving along real well.

Frank U- So what you're saying is what we came up as a group and what you're getting through negotiations is lining up?

Annette- yeah, and it's more of a stepwise approach that's coming forward.

Nick- I understand that but the more in trouble you had with the habitat the less you'd want to increase the risk from hatchery effects.

Annette- so going on down Lake WA we haven't done a lot, as the Green has been the focus. We've been struggling to getting some meetings. Paul Hage retired and that left a bit of a hole with the MIT. The direction we are working on has been outlined though. For SH we've tended to talk about primary, and I don't know that we've talked about anything less than primary.

Michael- can you walk through the populations that you've identified as primary?

Annette- we do have our own SASSI populations that we're trying to deal with, but SH is in a bit of a flux.

Heather- right, as we're still dealing in terms of our SASSI

Annette- we have a lot of out of basin Skamania/Chambers Creek programs. We like to get those aligned with hatchery goals.

Michael- so no populations in North Sound that were primary?

Annette- Green River summers, which wasn't identified by the TRT.

Frank U- So with the Lake WA are we getting closer to a point to talk about the Cedar?

James- so how we settle on and agree to the Issaquah program, independent to financial issues, the considerations of the stray rate is over the designation. There's two points of potential removal, Landsburg and the sockeye weir.

Frank U- I agree, as that is a Director level discussion with the head of the Seattle Public Utilities. And we might be able to keep Issaquah production if we can keep them off of the Cedar.

James- Yes, that could be a benefit the tribes see.

Frank U- so is there a chance in this year's discussion that maybe we'll be talking about doing some operational changes?

James- so since we'll be moving into a monthly meeting schedule, we'll try to keep you up to date. I'm assuming the majority of the reasons we'll continue to meet is to keep you updated on the progress.

Jon- I will be quicker. Here's where we are (hands out update page). Nisqually we've talked through the Chinook component. East Kitsap is an easy one, and Puyallup is fairly close. Skokomish tribe wants to bring in Spring Chinook on the North Fork.

Nick- I noticed on the Puyallup South Prairie Creek isn't listed.

Jon- these are the facilities, not the stock or watersheds.

Heather- so the DRAFT available is the technical drafts only.

James- so for Nisqually the Chinook have gone through, but for the rest of the species they are not done. For the Elwha the agreed to programs and the recovery programs are captured, it already has a much more formal plan in place.

John B- so my recollection of the Elwha is that those actions for getting long term is very general.

James- it's the front end of the plan. For the Agency at least the primary points of reservation is that the programs are set to sunset, and the production that will remain. We are destined to sunset the programs at some point. For the Nisqually the tribe developed an independent plan that was out in front.

Nick- so we talked with Norm Dicks staffers yesterday and is going to ask the HSRG to evaluate the Elwha plan and clarify that.

Michael- so the task of getting through SH, are we going to get to that?

James- so not having much with SH, like we do have with Chinook, the easier route was to just list what populations we would like to designate as WSGB (Wild SH Gene Banks). That's the handout we just passed out. Dick sent a request for escapement abundances for most of the major watersheds. To go back over where we have yes's and to clarify question marks areas would be our first goal.

Michael- I just hesitate to focus on WSMZ, as I'd like to see where we are with the population designations.

Heather- If I look at SH we are moving into this backwards. It doesn't mean a WSMZ is a primary population designation, but highly likely.

James- the main point of question marks are lack of data. Since the distinct independent populations are in draft form, there's potential some of them may not be there.

Frank U- TRT makes that determination?

James- Yes. The recovery board then develops the recovery goal from the VSP criteria the TRT comes up with. Functionally we don't have a program in the SF Nooksack, but we do in the NF. We chose to use the more conservative definition of WSMZ which identifies a 2% gene flow.

John B- and so it would be at a primary level

James- yes, so the SSMP surpasses the thresholds that are applied to other salmonids. It took the PHOS issue down to one level, but left the other elements of hatchery risk (ecological, environmental) to be cognizant of. The plan is yet to be developed in the sub-basin level.

Heather- So if we say the SF Nooksack summers are a WSMZ and we have a segregated program that would stay we could not have any more than a 2% gene flow. If that was happening the program would have to be changed.

Frank U- How would you measure that?

Heather- samples on the wild fish.

Franks U- we've been doing that?

James- the more recent samples have been taken for the TRT process. We're on our way to measure it, I'm not a geneticist and I know there's a fine line. There is a potential of introgression, and some wild population are showing that.

Heather- So the SF Nooksack you would recommend it as a primary?

Nick- Yes

Heather- Ok so the NF Nooksack and its potential for posing a problem? It's 150k I would recommend closing the program, given the size and cost of raising those fish, thoughts?

Frank U- before we do that, we should take a look at it.

Nick- I think that's fair, but I would recommend it be reduced.

Heather- Ok, and I'm going to push back that we can't implement M&E programs.

Michael- can we do that first then, for which ones are important for fisheries.

Heather- so the Nooksack one is important to fisheries?

Frank U- I think so.

Heather- so Skagit is important to fisheries, what else? What about the Stillaguamish?

James- Whitehorse Ponds has a summer and winter hatchery program. In recent years the summer program is down under 100 fish reported through CRC, and the winter program is double the size and generates several hundred fish into catch. The tribe doesn't fish on these much either. There's important summer and winter wild populations here.

Heather- so I put down important to fisheries for the winter, maybe summer as well.

Nick- from my point of view can a hatchery program that's contributing significantly to sport catch, can we functionally integrate or segregate it. Ignoring the wild population for the sake of the fishery

James- So when we have a population that depressed the likelihood of generating a harvest program on the integrated program would be difficult.

Nick- that harvest may best be done in a catch and release fishery.

Michael- so Snohomish you had a lot of information on production but not harvest.

James- so a lot of the evidence of introgression could have been from tributary plants with no removal.

Heather- I would say a lot of the summers, if not all of them would have primary designations.

John B- aren't they mostly in a similar geographical area?

Heather- part of the only reason we have them is the elevation in certain regions.

Nick- as few of them as there are, I don't see a downside to designate them all as primary.

James- remember for this function this is about hatchery interaction.

Heather- so the Snohomish I have noted it important to fisheries and the other as contributing.

James- so the 2% isn't lowering your risk.

Heather- Ok so its primary. Now onto Green.

Michael- so the Pilchuck release is gone?

Nick- I didn't see harvest numbers as a whole.

Annette- it was in the thousands.

James- so there is a small integrated program that's been converted to a supplementation program.

Frank U- and that's been underway for 2 years.

Michael- so the NF Skykomish summers is still the same release from Reiter and Wallace.

James- So they identified the Tolt and NF populations only. We used to plant Reiter into both of these tribs until as late as 5 years ago. No doubt the reason we see cases of introgression there.

Heather- what I noted on my page from last discussion we needed more discussion on the risk posed.

James- This is an important hatchery program, and so some folks thought about keeping the program, but it may still have a conservation importance to be managed in conjunction.

Nick- There's a monitoring question. I would be uncomfortable to continue to release fish into the NF. So if the Reiter fish go further up and turn into there...

James- maybe in another generation we'll be able to tell that. Using the Phelps analysis we could evaluate whether they are moving further away or closer together. So the Green, don't know do we have an unclipped retention rule?

Annette- not any more

Nick- I forgot Gary Wynans is doing some genetics above Howard Hanson Dam. The DNA work might be relevant to identify a population.

Heather- so important to fisheries?

Frank U- the summer run is, as Hal would point out if he was here.

Heather- So Puyallup, no longer.

James- so the last harvest program would be the Dungeness and that 10k.

Heather- so we wouldn't say the Dungeness is important?

Nick- I would recommend the Dungeness be a primary.

Heather- ok, we basically have 5 hatchery programs that have some importance into the fisheries. We may now want to look at the risks they pose.

Assumptions are that we don't know pHOS on any of these stocks. The programs have to be self sustaining, and that the wild fish are now ESA listed, and we have a policy to meet HSRG standards by 2015. Based on that here is our priority order of programs to fisheries:

1. Snohomish	\$46million
2. Skagit	\$630k
3. Green	\$409k
4. Stillaguamish	\$507k
5. Nooksack	\$137k
6. Dungeness	\$300k

Heather- so for the Reiter Ponds, we've already taken steps to reduce risks. If we say in the Snohomish that they are most important fisheries, you might say that we need to look at the gene flows in the next 2 cycles maybe we can evaluate the introgression rates observed to see if we are correcting for the effect of past program risk.

James- the fisher number is going to be an estimate that we don't we have. For every dollar we spend on a species we don't have the catch per unit effort.

Andrew- ok but that would mean then you have to prioritize fisheries closer to larger population centers. At one time the Green was the top SH producing stream in the state.

James- so for where we had reasonable estimates of economic value might help us out. A lot of people go to the Skagit for catch and release.

Annette- that was in the Sauk and it's not there anymore. If you catch a hatchery fish you can keep it.

James- the reason there's a fishery in the Skagit is because of the Marblemount program, without it we'd have to close the fishery.

Frank U- so back to Heather's board, for making a decision the order of these should help you in some fashion and we'll share the blame when you cut the Nooksack because its #5. When push comes to shove this is limited by budget or why else would you prioritize. Ideally my position would be to keep them all going, because the more we cut the more license sales go down, and then you're caught again in having to reduce. It's a vicious circle.

Heather- I'm not prioritizing this for that necessarily, but we also have to meet the 2015 goal of HSRG standards for our programs. We have to answer the gene flow question.

Jon A- But we don't have the money for identifying that.

Heather- I'm not saying we do. Maybe for some of them we have answered the gene flow.

Nick- well why don't we raise money to say we need money to monitor gene flow, and if we don't get it in the absence of information the burden is to protect the wild resource.

Frank U- you essentially have to prove yourself innocent.

Michael- so some sort of narrative that comes from us is that the economic value helps drive the concern for the program.

John B- well you have to rank the biological value as well. For example you could use abundance to rank.

Michael- in comparison with Chinook there are fewer areas to focus on due to the limited number of programs.

James- we could put the genetic risk analysis we had most recently. I would say put in evidence of introgression, and yes/no. So the Snohomish had work done by Phelps, it is the Tolt R group and significant #s of wild fish had introgression.

John B- might it be of value to rate some certainty to that number

James- I can flesh this concept out.

Frank U- so when we get it all together we'll say we need more money to get more information

James- there's always some funding to be reprioritized. With these stocks being listed there's more likelihood of external funding.

Frank U- so this helps show where you want to spend it.

Nick- since say 2000 is there any microsatellite data for any of these populations.

James- yes I think for juvenile collections. We can also use the scale sample, and so we may have the basis for setting something up.

Lars- The certainty should be captured as well.

Frank U- so would you waste your money on the marginal value of additional information?

Michael- so one cost to produce is how sustainable the programs are.

Heather- so we'll frame this up and try to email it to folks for our next meeting. So our next date is Nov 1st.

***Next meeting NOV 1<sup>st</sup> 1PM-5PM***