

SEPA Determination of Significance Grandy Creek Steelhead Fishing Enhancement Project DRAFT - Scoping Notice Public Meeting Notes - July 1, 2002

These are notes taken at the public meeting. They do not constitute the official record of the meeting. I have not tried to verify any spelling of names and I thoroughly apologize if I have mutilated the spelling. I also have not had a chance to completely verify that the court recorder and my notes agree.

What I have tried to do is listen to the discussion and identify where possibly impacts/issues and alternatives need to be included. For instance, if someone says that there used to be flooding in the area, I would put a parenthesis around impact after the note. I have also asked myseft some questions after some comments so that I can discuss whether these issues should be reviewed in the EIS.

The project leader, Chuck Johnson, has been identified as (CJ), I am identified as (CP), Chuck Lavier, the hatchery manager for the area is identified as (CL)

Lyle Pullman - What is the net gain from the enhancement project?
None. It will increase the quality of smolts in the river (Chuck Johnson (CJ)).

Bill McMillan - The old EIS, he believes, said it was 250,000 fish.

Phil Tucker - Would this replace Marblemount? No. Neither Barnaby Slough or Marblemount will be replaced by project (CJ)

Reared and acclimated:
Marblemount - 25%
Barnaby Sl. - 25%
Lower river - 50% with no acclimation

John Yonge - How do you know it won't be an increase? Policy could change. Must examine these releases (impact analysis?). Straying occurs (I think he wants us to investigate impacts of what is being released now, and analyzing any changes that will occur from project based on smolt acclimation-need to check with FishPro to see if that is what they thought also.)

Dick Rice - Summarize state of art currently used at Marblemount and Barnaby Sl.
Discussed purposes of each; working with wildstock; no imported stocks (CJ).

Rich Johnson - look at elimination of hatchery steelhead in Skagit (alternative).

Bill McMillan - Primary limiting factor for steelhead fishing opportunity (???) . Is there another alternative- other than Grandy Cr. Acclimation pond? Another Species? (Alternative); enhance for wild fish - i.e., a (off?)- channel project which addresses multiple species. (Alternative)

Jeff McGowan - Possibility of closing Barnaby Sl. - turning it into a natural site; (alternative and maybe mitigation). Does WDFW still need all sites for production? (Alternative-might look at how one or more production sites can close or be converted?)

Ron Kegley/Tegley??) - This project provides fishing opportunity for fishers: if 1% comes back it provides more than what is provided by wild steelhead. (this is a statement, or should we look at fishing opportunity from wild vs. manipulated/raised?) Closing Barnaby Slough, based on its configuration, would prevent

those fish that are getting into the slough not associated with the rearing area. Doesn't want to close Barnaby Sl. (Alternative-look at advantages and disadvantages of closure or leaving open?)

Don Collin - He feels the expression, "what if" is used too much. Are we wandering off the topic too much?

Ron Kingley?? - the money is there for the acclimation pond. There doesn't need to be any other alternative. Water at Grandy Cr. is good, the water would just go back into the system, drawdown of water insignificant, people around the area are favorable, "studies show" non-significant impacts (he did not list the studies), not increasing amount; we are just disbursing them farther downstream. (Need to find the studies he mentioned, need to analyze ground/surface water quality issues, maybe look at conflicts between those that fish and those that use area for other purposes???)

_____ - Will the creek be blocked?

No. (CJ) (need to analyze impacts with and without trap: permanent or temporary)

John Youge - How are you collecting?

CJ-volunteers. Ladders. (This answer was not clear. I think the issue of collection alternatives will need to be explored).

Todd Ripley? - What is the % of volunteers; % that will go upstream; what is straying rate? (Will there need to be a survey of numbers of fish that go up Grandy Cr. or do we already know that? - need to ask Chuck)

Kevin Crowder?? - Will there be public access to site and to river, and what about parking? (Need to make sure the "whole" project is looked at: parking lot, if there is a trailer pad, if public boat launch is proposed. Need to at least identify that this possibly could be something in the future???) I need to check with Ray and Chuck to find this out).

Dick Rice?? - Fishing pressure may increase; fishing atmosphere may decrease due to a crowded fishing area. (Investigate pro/con of fishing pleasure at this site with the Grandy Cr. alternative)

Don Collin - With an increased facility, the less crowding throughout the site. (See statement above).

Gary Beame?? - Are there tribal members here? This is a fishing issue (tribal). They need to be involved. Director and CJ met with tribe earlier discussing this project. Would they lay off late run? (EIS needs to discuss commercial fishing vs recreational fishing on these fish???) Need to think whether this is beyond the scope, I don't think so, but...Certainly look at commercial fishing impacts)

Todd Ripley - Is there going to be additional enforcement? (Not sure this is part of EIS- Discussion of harvest management issues ensued. Okay, so if fish are concentrated, fishers will be concentrated, may cause need for more social services to maintain the peace. How does this impact local government/the state enforcement if they need to increase the protection. This could be investigated)

Gary Bee - Are they going to be marked, i.e., selective fishery?

Yes. 100% (CJ)

Lyle Poolman (Pulman?) - Not a reasonable to worry about "crowding" because there are many ways to address that (closing area around pond, put in access). (Look at pros and cons of crowding, look at mitigation measures??)

Rich Johnson - Investigate eliminating planting steelhead in lower river (Alternative). 1) interaction with wild steelhead in the lower river system (impact) and 2) Return on hatchery fish is abysmal and

opportunity to harvest those fish is poor in the Skagit. Spread out over the river reduces opportunity to catch fish (impacts). Better odds when the fish come back to 1-2 areas.

Cal Stocking - Need an area to fish. Look at economic impact to County for money coming in from fishers (pros and cons of project on economy, I don't think we need to do an Economic Impact Statement-maybe, though, we can get some general numbers as to how it will affect the County???)

James Kurshner - Is a summer steelhead fishery possible?

No. not right now (CJ)

(Discussion on summer-run steelhead-I don't know if this is part of this EIS...i.e., different runs; need to discuss with CJ-maybe Feds to see if this sidetracks the purpose or adds to discussion of impacts/mitigation/alternatives???)

Bill McMillan - If any rearing pond is to work, needs a rearing facility. Marblemount has been identified as being out of compliance (fish passage issue). Where will we get \$ to make them compliant? If there is no money for that (a requirement) where will we come up with \$ to build this project? Marblemount is the "facility for providing support" for eggs, etc. (CJ)

Bill McMillan - How will you do project if don't get hatchery in compliance?

The hatchery is not closing despite the compliance issue. (CJ) (Could this be potentially part of mitigation-probably not; they are required to provide fish passage, regardless of this project).

Todd Ripley - Wild vs hatchery fish interaction should be looked at (impacts)

Ron Tingley - Old EIS: didn't include different alternatives.

That's correct (CJ)

_____ ?? - As long as he's been fishing, don't catch wild fish. Timing issue.

(not sure if this is the same person or not)??.- Not mixing stocks any more. (Review timing issues, impacts and also mitigation; include information about mixing stocks-assume not done anymore??)

Rich Johnson - Didn't imply not to plant all 525,000 but feels there is more interaction in lower river because of timing issues. Early runs are severely depressed. Impacts to environment greater in lower river. (Look at timing on early/late runs and interactions between wild and hatchery at all sites).

Dave Gamacia (Yamaicita)??? - Could clipping help? (Place under mitigation?)

Cal Stocking - Catch (wild) is down later in the year, mid-February. Has records showing when fish were caught (10 yrs). Hatchery fish caught throughout the whole river begin. Around mid-November.

Rich Johnson - Agency's records (50 yrs) (fish counts) show spawning in these areas,.

Bill McMillan - I think we tend to look at our lifetime, but have only looked at losses during our lifetime, causes skewing (of what fish are there).

Not proposing increasing wildstock production (CJ)

Don Collen? - We didn't tag way back then. "You people" (not sure who he is referring to) are fighting it. Let's keep on the purpose of the ...(meeting) (CJ).

Bill McMillan - Federal hatchery failed, the proposed Game Hatchery failed. Why will this one succeed? (Should we compare the Federal hatchery with the acclimation pond proposal -can we? Apples and oranges??, maybe that would be okay...issues may be same or at least usable for comparison)

Don Collen - Lack of water is what caused hatchery to go. Grandy Cr. provided surface water. There was bedload movement, no ground water. Now have 4 wells up there. (Impacts: lack of water, surface water, bedload movement).-where it would come from (current environment)

Rich Johnson - Baker River alternative. There is a gravel pit area (near Concrete) at Baker R. FERC is re-licensing, has public access with a boat launch at the mouth of the Baker R.. There is a dam already there, manned by Puget Power so no interaction with native population, greater water flow in Baker River (alternative)

Gary Bee - What is the brood stock? Is there a imprinting facility there now?
(This was answered by Rich, Chuck and myself): Chinook facility. Acclimation pond would need to be built. Could be an alternative, and work as mitigation for FERC re-licensing, though.)

Scott Fowler - We have Wildcats Steelhead Club's full support of an acclimation pond. If we don't do anything, what will happen if tribe can't fish on hatchery fish-will impact wild stock? Economic impact (may need to look at economic impact if anglers can't increase their fishing effort in this county???) Impact is we remove the hatchery system, and not accessible for sports people to catch (impact of shutting down other facilities?). Grandy Creek facility spreads the fishers out amongst the whole river so don't have a "Blue Cr. situation" (not sure where Blue Cr. is).

Ron Tingley - Baker site: There are several projects going on there that may adversely affect the use for steelhead production, i.e., lower Baker Chinook spawning channel. Chinook are also being placed up into Baker Lake and coming down, and then the sockeye program in Baker and Shannon which has potential to place disease on top of hatchery fish. (Look at these impacts for each alternative: disease , other recovery programs).

Cal Stocking - Sport fishing on hatchery fish allows more control over rebuilding our wild stocks. (Look at whether hatchery stocking, i.e., Grandy, allows for wildstock recovery??)

Bill McMillan - Part of the objective seems to be to distribute hatchery adult returns throughout river and also more disbursed juveniles. Need thorough analysis of interactions between hatchery and wild juvenile fish throughout Skagit River. (impacts analysis)

There will be risk analysis on ESA management needed for NOAA-Fisheries (NMFS). (He mentioned the following that will be looked at: a) where site is, b) how it is built, c) how it will operate, d) what water it uses, e) how it raises its stock, f) how it will recapture them. There are impacts a high risk to stocking without a place for fish to come back to, if they're not all caught. (CJ)

Todd Ripley - Will wild fish that go into hatchery be put back into system?
All unmarked fish, wild or other wise will be passed back into system. (CJ)

Todd Ripley - What regime will use for the release of smolts as far as timing and the process of doing that?

Time and release will stay the same from our present practices. An acclimation may allows us to look at a different window (Later said he would not go outside of window). Chuck Lavier would be able to answer (CJ):

(CL) 5/1 is the start of release and all fish should be released by 6/1. Usually planted 5/1 until around 5/20.

Gary Bee - You're imprinted them to Grandy Cr, not to every place you plant them?
WDFW imprints fish to the hatchery, not the water where they are released (CL)

Gary Bee - Rather than releasing them a little bit earlier someplace else so they imprint to there and then spawn in the wild?

Right now we put some in David Sl. (CL) And they returned there, despite not having a trapping facility. The HSRG (Hatchery Research Science Group), who recommended Grandy Cr. is that we would have a trapping facility there so that unexploited fish would return to hatchery and would be removed, preventing interactions with wild. (CL)

HSRG looked at ways to prevent straying (CJ)

Jeff McGowen - Did they comment on the # of fish (534,000 fish) as being appropriate?

They did comment. They have a risk analysis that they're using. (look at # of fish as an impact or as benefit or both?? Look at impacts from straying; look at it in comparison to other releases?)

James Kurchner - What's the difference between hatchery plant size between the Skagit R. and Skykomish R.?

The Skagit is larger than winter steelhead hatchery plants in the Skykomish. It's one of the largest. It's similar to production in the Cowlitz system (CJ).

Mike Yenni -Does that include that which was put in by Friends of Cowlitz?

Yes, it does. (CJ)

Don Collin - Is there going to be a resident on site, or a patrol person?

No residence planned. No 24-hour standby like at a full facility. Most likely consider locked up alarms,(security system) and if necessary, and/or trailer house with a temporary employee for a couple months. (Need to look at impacts of trailer landing pad, road?, impact of noise from alarms if they are local?)

Phil Tucker?? - That means you have to feed them?

The juveniles will need to be fed (CJ) (Look at nutrient loading from fish food?)

Scott ____ - Wants return for the money if they spend it. The Skykomish hatchery provides a fairly good chance of catching a fish. Skagit system doesn't provide that now. The pond will provide an economic benefit back to the county and cities. Will take pressure off of native fish. (Look at economic benefit to county and cities of alternatives). Brought up about the Avon Bypass (need to investigate what this is, if it is applicable to this project, see if this project or that project impacts each other, can it be combined: Jeff McGowen, Skagit County Planning, seemed to know something about the bypass. Need to contact him.)

Rich Johnson - You stated at one point there would not be a rack at Grandy Creek, is that correct?

We are not interested in blocking the creek (CJ).

Rich Johnson - if you put in a rack, how will that not block it?

I'm proposing right now, we are not going to put a rack across it. Will not have a weir. Will have a volunteer facility, depending on style of intake. (Need to look at permanent and temporary collection rack impacts, as well as how to get fish without a rack; passage around structures, etc.)

Rich Johnson - Do you know what that is right now? ("something up the creek to get the fish to come into the creek" (CJ)

No. Will have a discussion with FishPro and come up with the best option (Need to look at several options as alternatives) (CJ)

Rich Johnson - Why would fish go up Grandy Cr. and stop to be collected?

Tokol Cr. we do that now. Also at other facilities. At Reiter Ponds. The fish do collect. They come back to

the hatchery and stay. They don't stray all the way up to Marblemount. It is dependent on imprinting at the right stage/time/length. (CJ)

Rich Johnson - if they go up Grandy Cr, that is their native stream, rather than straying. What is the difference between stopping in Grandy Cr vs stopping in Davis Slough (Need to have FishPro look at Davis Slough program/issues; maybe look at imprinting alternatives from Davis Slough vs Grandy Cr.?) Not necessarily advocating that Davis Sl. Is on the list for future plants. If have full acclimation site, why would be continue with Davis Sl? (CJ) (Look at continuing or dropping plants at Davis Sl.)

Rich Johnson - What is difference between Grandy and Davis?
One has collection and other doesn't (CJ)

Don Collen) - Tribal nets are strung across Davis Sl.

Kevin Kravt(??)(Parks) - Feel that the Grandy Cr. (project) is an opportunity for public education. (benefits-public education, i.e., life history, see juveniles/adults, discuss issues i.e. ESA-probably should be discussed in EIS: This could apply to all alternatives)

Phil Tucker - When will the notes from this meeting be completed?
It will be posted on the web and our quarterly reports will be sent to key mailing lists. (CJ) I am not sure, 3 weeks maybe? (CP); 7/15 is the last day for comments (CJ)

Phil Tucker - So won't have this recording by then?
August 1, probably (CJ) I did take some notes, although not official. If you want to find out about something that we discussed here, you can call me.

___ Simonseda (?) - When will the whole thing be done?
Without any court challenges, or snags, 3 -4 years.