



Wells Project Relicensing Phone Conversation Summary

Call to: Steve Lewis, USFWS

Call From: Bao Le

Date: 11/27/07

Time: 2:00-2:30pm and 4:00-4:45pm (2 calls)

Issues Discussed:

1. Proposed modifications to 2008 Pacific lamprey study.
2. USFWS comments to the Draft Bull Trout Management Plan.
3. Final reporting timeline for the 2005-2008 Bull Trout Monitoring and Management Plan.

Summary:

Proposed 2008 Pacific Lamprey Study modifications

I spoke with Steve regarding our proposed changes to the 2008 Wells Project Pacific Lamprey Adult Passage Study. The three major issues discussed were:

1. Add an exclusion floor screen at each of the orifices directly below the overflow weir lamprey traps (4 total, 2 in each ladder). These exclusion screens should be benign to HCP plan species and should force lamprey higher into the water column where they can be captured via the overflow weir traps.
2. The addition of the exclusion floor screen may introduce a trap delay for tagged lamprey, released in the tailrace and re-ascending the ladder.
3. Shift the release location of the 10 adult tagged lamprey from the mid-ladder location (per the study plan) to the Collection Gallery area just inside of the entrance in the lower ladder. We would maintain a release of 30 adults in the tailrace similar to the 2007 assessment.

With regards to #1, Steve understands the issues with adding such a structure but was supportive of pursuing the modification given the fact that currently, not enough lamprey are trapped at Wells Dam to provide statistically significant study results necessary to inform future management decisions. He is also assured by the recommendations of Chris Peery, University of Idaho lamprey researcher that exclusion screens will likely not cause drop back and is the most appropriate option.

With regards to #2, Steve understands the fact that in order to increase lamprey trap efficiency (4 traps caught only 6 fish over 10 weeks of fishing), there may be a trap delay for tagged fish re-ascending the ladder. Given that our 2007 data suggests that from above the trap to the exit (See #3), passage times for tagged adult lamprey are consistent and reasonable suggesting no major impediments or delays, it would not be unreasonable to break the overall project passage time into two metrics, tailrace detection to trap and above trap to exit. Based on this information, the necessity to capture more lamprey at Wells Dam, and the few appropriate options, Steve acknowledged that a trap delay could be addressed through multiple metrics and that increasing trap efficiency and therefore the use of the exclusion screen is a high priority.

With regards to #3, the data from the 2007 study which suggested that the tagged adult lamprey released mid-ladder (immediately above the broodstock collection facilities) at Wells Dam appeared to negotiate this section of the ladder successfully. Steve believes that it makes sense to shift the in-ladder releases for 2008 (n=10) to the collection gallery area so that data could be collected on what appears to be a critical section of the Wells ladder for lamprey passage.

Steve is in support of all proposed modifications and would like to bring these issues to the larger RWG for final approval.

USFWS comments to the Draft Bull Trout Management Plan (BTMP)

Steve and Bao proceeded to go through the comments on the draft bull trout management plan over the phone as both of us agreed that many of the comments provided by Judy DelaVergne (USFWS) were minor and could be easily resolved. All comments were addressed and it was agreed that some editorial comments provided would be integrated. No substantive changes were necessary to the BTMP and an updated draft to the Aquatic Settlement Work Group's next meeting on January 10, 2007 for final approval.

One issue did arise related to the operation of the Twisp Weir and whether this off-Project trap that is operated by WDFW for hatchery evaluation activities may need to be cited or included in the USFWS Section 7

Consultation for the Wells Project Relicensing. Bao will discuss this issue with Shane and provide Steve with further information.

Final reporting timeline for the 2005-2008 Bull Trout Monitoring and Management Plan (WBTMMP)

In the 2005-2008 WBTMMP, the reporting section specifies that Douglas PUD shall provide an annual report by March 31st for activities the preceding year. Typically, the District has provided this report to the USFWS for activities ending December 31 of the preceding year. The 2008 report will be the final report of the 3-year monitoring study and will be a comprehensive three year report and include a take calculation for the entire 6 years of available data on bull trout at Wells Dam (2001-2004 and 2005-2008). Douglas PUD proposes to provide this final comprehensive report to the USFWS in June of 2008 as opposed to March 31, 2008 so that it can integrate data up to March 31, 2008 into the final report. This report will also include the take calculations for the 6 years of bull trout monitoring activities at Wells Dam. Steve was in support of delaying the final report until June so that one comprehensive report could be produced as opposed to several incomplete reports based around arbitrary timelines.