

McNary Fisheries Compensation Committee Meeting

Northern Wasco County PUD Conference Room

2345 River Road, The Dalles, Oregon 97058

Call in Number: 1-971-256-0996 , passcode: 148967

Updated 11/20/2015

Tuesday December 1, 2015, 1 – 4 pm

Attending: Rick M.-PUD, Gary F.-NOAA, Bob R.-Yakama, Dan R.-WDFW, on phone: R.D. N.-USFWS, Erick V.-ODFW, Brian M – CRITFC.

Guests: Rebecca Wassell-MCFEG, David Blodgett-Yakama, Tom Elliot-Yakama, Katy Finch-Yakama, and Brandon Rogers-Yakama (potential replacement for Bob Rose).

1. New Proposals, Extension Request or Final Report Presentations.

- a. Swauk Creek Floodplain Reconnection Design. Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group. Rebecca Wassell from Mid MCFEG will present this proposal which is for completing the design work on a project to do in-stream and floodplain restoration work in a 1.5 mile reach of Swauk Creek.

Rebecca began her power point presentation with some background information about the section of Swauk Creek they are proposing to work on. She showed a WSDOT slide that showed a meandering, beaver pond, wetland/floodplain connected healthy stream and the highway going through it all. The stream was straightened and moved and a berm was built to keep in from the floodplain area. She explained that the project had been discussed for years but that WSDOT did not have the money to fix the culvert that created a fish passage barrier. The rest of the project was dependent of the culvert getting fixed. Recently, WSDOT contacted MCFEG and said the culvert was scheduled for replacement with a bridge in 2018 and that they should pursue funding for the rest of the project.

MCFEG put together the current proposal in an attempt to complete design work needed before the project could go forward, so the actual work could be done concurrent with Wisdom's culvert replacement in 2018.

Gary asked if funding for actual work was secured. Becca said they had submitted a proposal for 285K to SRFB but did not get funded. Bob said he would rather see the proposal to us (MFCC) include the money for the work as well as the design. Becca said they didn't submit it that way because of our 1 year grant duration limit. We suggested to her that we do have the flexibility to make exceptions if the majority of committee members agree to it. Becca said she would amend the grant application and budget and resubmit.

Dan commented that the new plan is considerably different from the original stream layout. Becca said the design was scaled down to allow for potential future more dramatic improvements, including moving the highway.

Gary asked if WSDOT was concerned about the plan impacting the highway. Becca said they currently have to do maintenance work to repair erosion from the stream trying to encroach on the roadway so providing an alternate outlet would be beneficial to them.

There was a question about the forest service road in the area but Becca said the FS is on board with the plan and may move that road.

Erick asked is current plan would inhibit future improvements, Becca said no, it wouldn't.

Erick asked about fish presence prior to Highway, Becca cited a 1930's survey that found some steelhead and Becca added that she had done surveys in Williams creek and found steelhead.

Bob asked about lamprey, response was, not there now but probably were at one time.

Gary expressed concern about "funding paper", not tangible work, as stipulated in our criteria. This prompted some discussion about design being similar to research and that bigger philosophical question that the committee continually wrestles with.

Post presentation discussion was inconclusive so it was decided to schedule a conference call to discuss and vote on this proposal.

TO DO: Rick to set up doodle poll to schedule conference call.

- b. Yakama Nation Beaver Restoration Project. Yakama Nation Wildlife Resource Management Program. Katy Fitch and others will present this proposal for our consideration.

This presentation was given by David Blodgett and featured a PP presentation. He began by explaining how the Wildlife program, which was submitting this proposal with the Mid Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group, worked mainly on the reservation and was for the exclusive benefit of tribal members. He talked about the importance of water to the tribe and how it was the base for everything. He went on to talk about the stream problem which was primarily over grazing by cattle and horses and agriculture. He went on to talk about the two systems that would most benefit from these beaver relocations, the Toppinish and the Satus creeks, which together contain as much as 35% of steelhead production in the basin. He mentioned how they would reference the Beaver Restoration Handbook during their project. He outlined the methods they would employ, consisting of:

1. ID suitable beaver habitat
2. Survey the habitat
3. Locate relocation candidate beavers, saying they were plentiful in lower areas.
4. Trap pairs or families if possible
5. Hold in one of 12 facilities, provided by Yakama hatcheries
6. Hold for 2 weeks
7. Release at new sites using the soft release technique, leaving them in a log lodge which would require that they chew their way out.

David talked about Monitoring and how they would focus on 1. Translocation success, 2. Stream complexity and storage, and 3. Groundwater recharge. David concluded with this and opened the floor for questions.

Rick asked about the role of MCFEG. David said they would be available for consultation and training, and the application did include some money for MCFEG to monitor relocations they had made in the previous 4 years.

Bob asked why not just emulate the more experienced MCFEG methods?

Dave said they also have experience with beavers and would work together with MCFEG to find best methods.

Dan asked if relocations would be on reservation land or ceded land, Dave said it would be reservation only. Dan also asked about tracking, how long would they be tracked. Dave said 3-4 weeks, primarily to monitor post release movement.

Gary asked why beaver aren't there already. He went on to say that perhaps they need to look at this on a landscape level instead of a single or individual beaver relocation level. Suggesting that if you fix the corridors the beaver will disperse into these areas.

Dave said they will be moving a lot of beavers and didn't want to wait for the corridors to be fixed. They are working on the corridor repair by excluding horses from corridor areas but relocation is a tool they can use immediately to jumpstart the habitat repair that is intended to benefit fish.

Tom Elliot joined the discussion and added that beavers are abundant in the lower Yakama valley and they are essentially thinking on a landscape level but working on a granular scale. They realize that corridors could be repaired and they could wait and see if beavers move but that takes years and they don't want to wait. The cost of relocation is in line with actual habitat work.

Bob said he thought beaver management was in a fledgling state he would be forgiving in terms of success because we are learning and he viewed it as venture capital. In the long term, he thinks the benefit will far outweigh this initial investment.

Gary

- c. Final Report- Yakama Beaver Relocation Project. Final presentation postponed until Feb meeting. Discussion of Final report. Final invoice received and processed payment up to reserve amount approved, balance will be released when final report is accepted/approved.

- d. Williams Creek- Kittitas Conservation Trust – Mitchell Long. We had the presentation at the last meeting and need to vote on the application at this meeting. Please try to review the proposal and get any questions to Mitchell before the meeting.

2. August meeting minutes approval request.

3. Other new business, agenda additions, etc.

4. Grant Updates, work progress and financial activity.

- i) Swauk Creek Restoration- Yakama Nation-Henry Fraser (ED-2/10/12)
- ii) Lamprey Test Tank Construction-WDFW-Pat Shille (ED-12/4/12)
- iii) Yakama River Adult Lamprey Tracking-Yakama Nation, Bob Rose, (ED-6/30/13)
- iv) PIT Tagging Spring Chinook Parr-Year 1- WDFW-Dan Rawding, (ED-9/30/13)
- v) Facilities Inventory and RME preparation, CRITFC, Brian McIlraith, (ED-3/31/14)
- vi) Lamprey Screen Type Testing-USGS, Matt Mesa & Theresa Liedtke, (ED-12/31/13)
- vii) Lamprey Habitat Restoration Guide, Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation, John Crandall, (ED 5/31/15)
 - (1) Haven't gotten e-copy yet.
- viii) Cle Elum River Restoration-Phase 2, Kittitas Conservation Trust, Mitchell Long (ED 12/31/14).
- ix) PIT Tagging Spring Chinook Parr-Year 2, WDFW, Todd Miller (12/31/2015)
- x) Yakama River Adult Lamprey Tracking-Tags only, Yakama Nation, Bob Rose (ED 3/31/15)
- xi) Yakama River Beaver Project, Mid C.Fisheries Enhancement Group-Mel Babik & WDFW-William Meyer, (ED 12/31/15) Final report received, approval pending.
 - (1) Inv#4, \$14,876.10 submitted 8/5/15, paid, see written update attached.
 - (2) Inv#5, final invoice received 11/16/15, for \$23,269.03, paid \$14,354.44, \$8,914.59 held pending approval of final report.
- xii) Adult Pacific Lamprey in the Snake- Receiver update (ED 12/31/14).
- xiii) Evaluation of Restoration Actions to Increase Overwintering Survival of Juvenile Tucannon River spring Chinook and summer steelhead. (ED 12/31/15) Final report requested.
 - (1) Invoice for \$562.66 received 11/2/15, and paid.

See updated Grant Summary Table for complete list of activity.

5. Change Forms

- a. Committee Protocols – waiting for rewrite of section on decision making by Julie Carter, CRITFC.

6. **Website updates** Updated tables and added June minutes.

7. **Next Meeting Date** Mid February