

Bull Trout Technical Working Group Meeting Minutes

Date: June 26, 2015 8:30am-12:30pm

Location: Yakima Basin Fish & Wildlife Recovery Board 1200 Chesterly Drive, STE 280 Yakima, WA

Attendees: Ashton Bunce (CWU), Paul James (CWU), Gabe Temple (WDFW), Josh Rogala (WDFW), Mitch Long (KCT), David Child (YBJB), Dave Fast (YN), Garrett Brenden (AmeriCorps, MCFEG) Cassandra Anderson (MCFEG), Alex Conley (YBFWRB), Judy Neibauer (USFWS), Arden Thomas (BOR), Jeff Thomas (USFWS), Eric Anderson (WDFW), Walt Larrick (BOR).

Topic	Notes
RUIP Review	<p>Judy Neibauer updated the group on the status of the draft USFWS Bull Trout Recovery Plan. The Regional Unit Implementation Plan (RUIPs) is currently out for review. The Middle Columbia RUIP has more identified threats than other RUIP units, some of which only identified three primary threats. All partners are urged to comment on the Draft RUIP. The group suggested adding a better record of what has already been done in the Yakima Basin to the USFWS Recovery Plan. The Yakima Basin Joint Board, WDFW, BOR, and YBFWRB are all planning to submit comments; the Yakama Nation is also considering. Comments are due by July 20th. The group would like to touch base on topics before comments are due, and to share comments following submission.</p> <p><i>Next steps: Set up a call/meeting to discuss RUIP comment letters due July 20th Share comments after submission (RUIP)</i></p>
Links between USFWS Recovery Plan and Yakima Bull Trout Action Plan	<p>Alex and Cassandra updated the group on the work they have done to compare the Yakima Bull Trout Action Plan to the RUIP. Microsoft Access was used to compare the USFWS Middle-Columbia RUIP actions and BTAP actions to determine where there may be gaps within each plan. The RUIP and BTAP are written and structured differently; the RUIP actions are broad, whereas the BTAP actions are very specific. There are a several BTAP actions that are not addressed in the RUIP, most notably: supplementation/translocation, outreach, nutrient enhancement, sediment monitoring, land acquisition and implementing local forest management plans.</p>
Updates to BTAP	<p>The Technical Working Group agreed that it would be valuable to update the BTAP and maintain it as a working document. With the USFWS Final Bull Trout Recovery Plan coming out, RUIP actions could be incorporated into the BTAP actions table. A discussion is needed to determine where to begin and how to prioritize updates. Cassandra has already updated the redd count graphs.</p> <p><i>Next step: Fall/Winter updates and prioritization of BTAP actions</i></p>
Gold Creek update	<p>Mitch Long updated the group on the status of the Gold Creek assessment. The group discussed the proposal for a broad Gold Creek working group to ensure shared priorities across all actions in area. U.S. Forest Service participation will be required for the pond work to move forward. Participants asked whether the discussion of take due to pond being a major contributor to dewatering something to address in forest plan review? All agreed that continued stakeholder outreach is needed.</p>

	<i>Next step: organize Gold Creek Working Group</i>
BA submitted to USFWS	<p>Arden Thomas updated the group on the status of the ESA consultation for the Bureau of Reclamation Yakima Project. She noted that the BA for continuing operations was submitted to UFWS in April. USFWS has accepted it as sufficient and asked to extend the timeframe for BO consultation to Nov 30. Arden highlighted Bull Trout measures in the BA, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Commit to manage Rimrock lake for passage in SFT until Aug. 10 2) Set minimum pool for Rimrock at 30,000 acre feet 3) Improve winter flows 4) Specific Conservation measures: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assure Trib. passage across lake beds when drawn down b. Evaluate trap and haul at Clear, Kachess and Kecheelus Dams to address entrainment issues
Bull Trout and the Integrated Plan	<p>Walt Larrick updated the group on the status of the Bull Trout Enhancement Plan that was included in the Bureau of Reclamation's draft EIS for Keechelus and Kachess projects. The group discussed the role of the Enhancement Plan in the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan and the need to ensure that the Enhancement Plan builds on and enhances existing partnerships and projects.</p> <p><i>Next step: Support development of actions identified in Bureau Ops Biop and BT Enhancement Plan</i></p>
Salvage Plan and Emergency Passage Issues	<p>The Bull Trout Task Force (BTTF) will monitor for passage impediments due to low flow or dewatering and will notify Eric Anderson promptly when an impediment due to flow is discovered. Emergency passage will only occur if the tributary flow and temperature looks suitable. We need to think carefully about putting bull trout (adults or juveniles) into harm's way on well-intentioned passage improvements or salvage efforts that go awry. Further discussion needed on whether to collect otolith or caudal clip on mortalities found during spawning surveys. A protocol for handling morts for best genetic and isotope samples is needed.</p> <p><i>Next step: Develop protocol for handling morts for best genetic and isotope samples</i></p>
Clear Creek Dam Fish Passage Assessment	<p>USFWS is continuing to operate PIT tag arrays again this year. Nine PIT tagged adult bull trout have already migrated past the lower PIT tag array on the NF Tieton River. No PIT tagged bull trout have attempted to ascend the spillway yet this year. The spillway temperature has already been hotter than it was at any time last summer. Genetic samples show six of the forty study fish from 2012-2014 are F2 hybrids. Passage at Clear Creek Dam is an Integrated Plan project. A food web analysis is needed at Clear Lake. Jeff, Pat and Rob will be hook and line sampling and tagging bull trout in the Clear Creek Dam stilling basin in the next couple weeks.</p>

Bull Trout Task Force Update	Cassandra Anderson updated the group on the 2015 Bull Trout Task Force (BTTF). The crew is working a Friday-Monday schedule to maximize contact with recreationists. Goals of the project are to conduct outreach to recreationists, remove rock dams, post signage, monitor for low flow and dewatering, and assist with population monitoring. BTTF will record temperature and flow observation while monitoring. Several rock dams have already been dismantled this season. When passage is impeded due to low flow or dewatering, BTTF will contact Eric Anderson promptly to determine next steps.
Keechelus and Kachess Food Web Study	Preliminary results of the UW/WDFW limnology studies indicate that bull trout are not limited by reservoir productivity; but that having sockeye instead of kokanee would increase productivity.
ScCS Meeting Updates	The ScCS meeting will be held at Camp Dudley at Clear Lake September 15-17, 2015. The planning committee is working on the details.
Bull Trout Translocation, Reintroduction and Feasibility Assessment	Judy secured \$50,000 for Jason Dunham and a PhD student to develop a population feasibility assessment. Jason Dunham will be attending the ScCS meeting in September and there's a potential to have a separate meeting with our Technical Working Group. We will need to pull folks together locally to build a decision structure that uses habitat, demographic and climate change data. The \$50,000 is USFWS internal funding and match will be needed. <i>Next step: arrange fall/winter meeting with Jason Dunham</i>
Concluding Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up call/meeting to discuss RUIP comment letters due July 20th • Sharing comments after submission (RUIP) • Fall/Winter updates and prioritization of BTAP actions • Possible September meeting with Dunham • Gold Creek Working Group next steps • Protocol for handling morts for best genetic and isotope samples is needed • Support development of actions identified in Bureau Ops Biop and BT Enhancement Plan <p>Next Technical Working Group meeting will be in late September.</p>