

FINAL NOTES

Upper Columbia White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative Technical Working Group



January 23, 2018 – Video Teleconference

TWG Co-Chairs: Jason McLellan and James Crossman

Call Participants: Scott Bettin, Adam Brooks, Mitch Combs, James Crossman, Andrew Gingerich, Maureen Grainger, Mike Keehn, Herb Klassen, Bronwen Lewis, Amy Mai, Jason McLellan, Andy Miller, Mike Parsley, Louise Porto, Reuben Smit, Alison Squier, and Will Warnock.

PART 1 – TWG BUSINESS AND PRIMARY DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. TWG business

1a. Revised UCWSRI-TWG Terms of Reference

Recommended edits and comments on the revised UCWSRI-TWG Terms of Reference (ToR) were received (as of January 23) from: from Jason M., Herb K., Louise P., Maureen G., and Mike P. In addition, Michael Z. has indicated they (ONA) are sending comments directly to DFO.

Next steps:

- James C. still plans to review the document and provide comments.
- James C. will contact Michael Z. to secure his input on the ToR.
- Any other UCWSRI members who wish to provide comments should do so by January 31.
- Alison will compile all edits and comments and coordinate with the TWG co-chairs to finalize the ToR ASAP.

1b. UCWSRI-TWG Membership

The updated UCWSRI-TWG ToR, and discussions at the November 2017 meeting, confirmed a new approach to UCWSRI-TWG membership (i.e., voting and non-voting members and the elimination of the observer category). In addition, individuals may be terminated as members if they miss three-consecutive in-person meetings without compelling mitigating circumstances. See UCWSRI-TWG and November 2017 notes for details.

Next steps:

- After the ToR is final, Jason M. and James C. will contact Bob Hallock, Vanessa Benwood, Brent Nichols, and Sue Ireland – to let them know since they've missed three or more consecutive in-

person meeting, and therefore will be removed as members – unless they request to reapply and recommit to attending.

- James C. will seek clarification from BC MFLNRORD regarding who they would like to have as their voting and non-voting members.
- James C. will seek clarification ONA regarding who they would like to have as their voting and non-voting members.

2. Mortality check-in

2a. Member updates regarding any known mortalities

No known mortalities were identified by participants.

2b. Update on status of Canadian mortality protocol

Herb reported that Martin has met with a small group that has been developing the mortality protocol. They've reached agreement around a final version. There will be one final review after which it will be released to broader audience.

Next steps:

- Herb will distribute the final mortality protocol to the TWG when it is complete.

3. Actions from November 2017 in-person meeting

3a. Website update

Jason reported that the Colville Tribes has a contractor on board who is working on the website. Unfortunately, when they went to transfer the web site from the old hosting location to the new one it got lost. There was no back-up. The contractor has set up a basic web site to populate. Jason noted that this is an opportunity for the TWG to start from scratch and build it exactly the way they want. The contractor is asking for content and guidance (e.g., the number of pages, what's on them, etc.)

The TWG has spent a great deal of time in the past developing ideas for the web site. Jason will summarize that input from previous TWG notes for the education subgroup and other TWG members to use as a guide to identify what should be on the new site. The sooner the TWG can provide guidance to the contractor on how to lay out the website and what should be on it, the better.

Next steps:

- Jason to summarize previous TWG recommendations and discussions for the UCWSRI website.
- Education and outreach subgroup (and any other TWG members who wish to contribute) to review previous materials and prepare ideas for the web site prior to Education subgroup call (date TBD).

- Alison will coordinate an education and outreach subgroup call in February to develop specific recommendations for the website (along with other subgroup activities).
- Note: additional discussion topic related to website is identification of contacts for website (i.e., when people want to contact someone via the website, who will that be; how do people get more information if they request it?)

3b. Education and outreach subgroup

At the November TWG meeting participants discussed the need to develop language for the public describing the difference between the US and Canadian approach to harvest. The education and outreach subgroup agreed to draft language for TWG review addressing the different approaches. Subgroup members were asked to individually draft language, Alison offered to combine the different versions into one, or two drafts for further TWG review and discussion. As of January 22, Alison has received draft language from Jason M., Louise P., Matt N., Bronwen L., and Will W.

Next steps:

- Alison to combine draft language into one or two different versions by Feb. 9 and send to subgroup for a round of edits.
- Subgroup to present draft communications on harvest to TWG at April meeting (or sooner) to finalize language (for use on web, public communications, etc.)
- See also, web site content discussion above.

4. Environment Canada Environmental Damages Fund

A TWG subgroup was identified in November to coordinate on development of a project proposal or proposals for habitat restoration work under the Environment Canada Environmental Damages Fund. Steve M. is coordinating the subgroup and hosted a first call to update everyone on the fund and requirements for proposals. A second call was planned. Steve was not able to attend the January 23 call. Participants on the January 23 TWG call indicated that a planned call to discuss/coordinate proposals had not yet occurred.

Next steps:

- Steve M. to coordinate a subgroup call to discuss proposals and next steps.
- Report back on March TWG call.

5. Stocking target model subgroup

At the November UCWSRI TWG meeting a stocking target model review subgroup was identified to review the stocking target model in detail, including review/update of inputs, assumptions, etc. The model review subgroup members include: Jason M., James C., Andy M., Paul Askey, Larry H., Mike P., Bill B, and Paul Anders. Jason M. said that subgroup members have looked through the model and provided comments,

identified some errors, and provided clarifications. An updated model was provided back to everyone and Jason sent a poll to organize a call for late February.

In addition, the Lake Roosevelt co-managers are getting together the week of January 29 to go over the model. They will then be working toward development of approaches to stocking and regulations for upcoming years. Jason will update the TWG on the outcomes of those discussions.

Next steps:

- Jason is coordinating a subgroup call for late February.
- The subgroup will prepare an update and present the results of their review (and any recommendations) at the April 2018 TWG meeting.

6. Recruitment failure session planning for April 2018 meeting

At the November meeting the TWG agreed to incorporate a review of recruitment failure hypotheses into the April 2018 in-person meeting. Jason M. and Alison discussed potential approaches and presented the following recommendations to the TWG for a half, three-quarter or possibly full day session:

- Prepare summary of previous recruitment failure hypotheses reviews (formal and informal) and compile any supporting information that helps trace the history of those hypotheses.
- TWG members review above and come prepared to discuss each hypothesis.
- TWG members engage in structured discussion to identify and document 1) what we know about each hypothesis, 2) what we don't know, 3) what level of confidence we have in what we know.
- TWG members identify recommended next steps to address uncertainties.
- TWG members identify any new recruitment failure hypotheses resulting from information gained since the initial lists were generated.

Next steps:

- Alison coordinate a subgroup (Jason M., James C., Herb K., Andy M.) to compile a list of hypotheses from previous formal reviews and subsequent informal hypotheses review. This subgroup will coordinate to prepare for the April working session. Alison will send a poll to identify a date for a call in February or March.
- Hypotheses review history/background information will be send to the TWG prior to the April meeting and TWG members will be asked to review it and come prepared for a structured group discussion.
- Check-in on March TWG call.

7. Upcoming call and in-person meeting

March 2018 video/conference call (date TBD)

Alison will send a poll for dates. Call topics to include: planning for April TWG meeting, web site content, recruitment failure hypotheses session planning, update on Environment Canada Damages Fund proposal coordination (if needed), other as needed.

April 24-25, 2018 in-person meeting

The April meeting will be held in coordination with Lake Roosevelt Forum Conference in Spokane, WA. TWG members have identified the following initial draft list of meeting topics (not in order):

- Presentations/updates
 - Review of joint stock assessment results from the 5-year period (2013-2017) [informs discussion]
 - Update from stocking target model subgroup on model [informs discussion]
 - Presentation on Lake Roosevelt habitat assessment and, if ready, larval drift modeling (Jason M.)
 - Presentation (tentative) on Waneta predation study (final report) if there is something to report that the group hasn't seen yet (Check with Wendy H.)
 - Update on status of environmental DNA work (Steve M. and James C.)
 - Possible presentation(s)/updates (tentative) on early life history research (Steve M.)
 - Update on Canadian Action Plan (Herb K. and/or Martin N.) [informs discussion]
 - Database and web site updates
 - Education subgroup update [informs discussion]
 - Language describing different US and Canada harvest approach
 - "New" UCWSRI web site content
 - Presentation on sexual maturity research – three-year results (Page and/or Molly)
- Discussions/work sessions
 - Discuss joint stock assessment future activities (i.e., whether to continue beyond 2018, and if so, focus and frequency from 2019 on)
 - Discussion of TWG approach to using stocking target model to develop an "annual report" documenting stocking targets and how they were derived
 - Discuss one or more, of the transboundary program SARA listing/US harvest topics identified at the November TWG meeting (will start with highest priorities identified by dot voting – see Nov. notes)
 - Recruitment failure hypotheses review work sessions
 - Operational plan update review and/or discussion regarding development of Operational Plan for next 5 years) (taking into account Canadian Action Plan approach).

PART 2 – TECHNICAL COORDINATION CHECK-IN

U.S. conservation aquaculture program

Mitch reported the US program fish are a little smaller (about 80g) than they usually are (about 120g) this time of year. This is because they are a little younger since they started later this year. They will

have to hold them a little longer than planned to get them up to size. They have about 2,300 fish at Sherman Creek.

Canada conservation aquaculture program

Mike K. said everything is moving along well.

Technical issues/update U.S. Roosevelt Reach

Jason M. is working on reports and analysis. Reuben S. and Andy M. are also working on reports and analysis.

Technical issues/update Canada

James C. is also working on reports and analysis of the stock assessment (thanks to Jason M. for sending data).

Maureen G. said that Fortis BC has hired AMEC to do a study of the BRD tailrace. It will be a sturgeon habitat use assessment of the tailrace using sonic telemetry and will start in early 2018. Louise P. has been in touch with James C. to get support on how the study plan will be shaped and coordinated with BC Hydro's existing telemetry array. Maureen would like to meet with BC hydro and CPC soon and discuss how Fortis BC can become involved in recovery efforts. In April 2018, Fortis Inc. will take over WAX and be 51% owner.

Bronwen L. said ONA is working on 10-year prospectus of the Arrow Lakes program. They will be asking for juvenile data to do a comparison. They are also planning another monitoring session in the next year.