

# Cedar River Instream Flow Commission

## *Final Minutes*

### SPU Water Quality Lab

May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014

#### **Organizations/Members Present:**

- Seattle Public Utilities -- Tom Fox, Rand Little, Karl Burton
- Seattle City Light -- Liz Ablow
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife -- Peggy Miller
- NOAA Fisheries --Randy McIntosh
- Army Corps of Engineers -- Larry Schick, Scott Pozarycki, Chris Behrens
- Washington Department of Ecology -- Kellie Arthur
- Muckleshoot Indian Tribe -- Holly Coccoli, Eric Warner

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- I. Call to Order:** Tom called the meeting to order at 9:40 AM.
  - II. Approval of Agenda:** Approved as presented.
  - III. Approval of Draft Minutes:** Approved as presented.
  - IV. News and Notes:** Holly announced that Billy Frank Jr. had passed away. Billy was one of the primary Native American leaders who fought to legally secure treaty fishing rights for Washington State Tribes. Holly also mentioned that the Army Corps and the City of Renton are assessing mitigation measures for dredging in the Lower Cedar River. The proposal is to dredge 4' deep for 1.2 miles upstream of the lake. The Muckleshoot Tribe is asking the Corps and Renton to evaluate and consider dredging only 2' deep into the river bottom. The Tribe is also suggesting that the dredging project incorporate an accelerometer/scour study to determine the amount of head cutting above the dredged reach.

Tom mentioned that Landsburg Dam Forebay cleaning will occur in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of June. If, for some reason, that is not possible, the cleaning will occur in mid-July. Tom also said that SPU had notified the City of Renton that it intends to implement some improvements to the sockeye collection weir. The plan for the different improvement options will be completed in the near future.

Randy mentioned the recent settlement of the Wild Fish Conservancy lawsuit challenging the continued plantings of Chambers Creek hatchery steelhead in

Puget Sound rivers. The settlement will discontinue the practice of planting Chambers Creek hatchery fish for twelve years in the Skagit River and defer plantings in all other Puget Sound rivers except the Skykomish until NOAA approves each specific hatchery program .

## V. **Real Time Water Management:**

**Hydrologic Conditions:** Currently, the Tolt and Cedar Watersheds have approximately 90% of median snowpack for this time of year. Tom expects most of the snow will be melted by June 1<sup>st</sup>. The reservoir is currently reading 1561.5' in elevation. Tom reported that May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> were the wettest two days in May on record. The 8-week moving average for inflows to Chester Morse is approximately 580 cfs, which corresponds to the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile. The recent wet weather has prompted SPU to increase releases from Masonry Dam 300 cfs. Currently, flows below Landsburg are approximately 1,000 cfs and flows at Renton are approximately 1200 cfs. Actual flows have been below estimated unregulated flows for most of April due to operations to refill the reservoir. Larry said that Ken Brettmann had asked whether flows in the Cedar would drop below 700 cfs in the next ten days. Tom responded that it is unlikely but it might happen for a short period of 3 to 4 days. Liz reported that downramping requirements had been successfully met downstream of the Masonry Dam and downstream of Cedar Falls Powerhouse during the month of April. The two week average for water demand is 107 MGD. Tom reported that there was a downramp exceedence below Landsburg in April. The cause of the exceedence is not clear. Demand is ramping up with the warmer weather although cumulative diversion is very close to levels seen in 2013.

**Lake Washington and Weather:** Larry reported that Lake Washington needs two more inches of elevation to refill to 22', which is expected to occur by late May. The short-term forecast is for wetter than normal weather. The summer forecast is for dryer and warmer than normal conditions. El Nino is evolving in the Pacific Ocean but forecasters won't know until the end of summer how intense El Nino conditions will get. Although El Nino is not a good predictor of seasonal weather patterns, there is a tendency for El Nino winters to lack the Arctic outbreaks of cooler weather travelling south, which can cause a warmer and slightly dryer winter in the Pacific Northwest. Larry said that he expected 1 to 1.25" of rain between now and Friday with warmer and dryer than normal weather for the first half of next week.

**Fish Update:** Karl reported that high flows have once again made spring redd surveys in the Cedar River quite challenging. No surveys were performed in March due to high flows and safety concerns. Karl and Dave Smith (WDFW) have performed 4 surveys since the beginning of April. To date, 16 trout redds and no steelhead redds have been observed. Eleven of the 16 trout redds are vulnerable to dewatering and 2 of the vulnerable trout redds, that require 560 cfs and 480 cfs to remain wetted respectively, will probably not be able to be protected against dewatering. SPU will develop a water allocation plan for the

two, HCP supplemental blocks of water and present the plan to the IFC during the June meeting.

***Army Corps Challenge Grant Discussion:*** Scott addressed the IFC and asked if anyone had any further questions regarding the request to help fund a Challenge Grant to develop a design to replace the Stoney Gate valves at the locks. Scott mentioned that there was no time constraint to pursue the grant. Tom said that the IFC needed to decide whether it had enough information to vote to fund or not fund the grant or whether more information was needed.

Tom asked Scott whether there were other higher priorities at the locks that may get funding preference over the Stoney Gate valve replacement and cause the design to be shelved. Scott said there were some higher priority projects like replacing the emergency stop log and replacing some old pumps. In addition, the anticipated release of the results for the Probable Maximum Flood Study could change priorities for funding, which could affect the probability of securing funding for the Stoney Gate valve replacement project.

Holly said the Corps needs to demonstrate that they strongly support the valve replacement project and communicate to the IFC what we can do to assist the Corps to get approval of the construction project. Peggy asked about other projects that could be built with IFC funding assistance if the IFC decides not to pursue the Stoney Gate valve replacement design. Scott said that the smolt flumes need to be replaced with better technology that isn't so expensive to install. Also, installing PIT tag readers at the filling culverts is something the Corps would want to pursue. Other options include: 1) funding a water quality study to evaluate bubblers that will help decrease dissolved oxygen problems associated with using saltwater intrusion to lower temperatures in the fish canal, 2) assessing the idea of mixing water from the bottom of the fish canal with surface water to cool the part of the water column where fish enter the flumes and 3) increasing the size of the entrance to the fish ladder. Scott said Marian would be the best person at the Corps to discuss 1) funding priorities, 2) the likelihood of approval for funding to replace the Stoney Gate valves and 3) steps the IFC can take to help the Corps secure that approval (in addition to funding the design).

## **VI. Supplemental Studies:**

### **Peak Flow Adaptive Management Study Phase II**

Topic 1 – Karl reported that the current scour threshold (2,200 cfs Renton) had been exceeded in March with a flow of approximately 3,800 cfs in Renton. Karl said that some areas where accelerometers had been deployed looked somewhat different and some were indistinguishable from what they looked like before the peak flows. No exposed accelerometers had been observed during redd surveys in April. The WCC has reserved 3 weeks in August for

the work to retrieve the arrays and Karl expects the contract for the work should be completed and signed well before the work is scheduled.

**Topic 2 – Off Channel Habitat Inventory and Peak Flow Assessment**

Rand said that he and Karl would re-survey the river in June to see whether the recent peak flows had changed any of the features identified in the last survey or added any additional features.

**Topic 3 –** Rand reported that USGS crews had characterized the geomorphic succession study reach. The USGS will use 3 different off channel habitat types to investigate differences in juvenile fish use and insect assemblages.

**VII. May 7 IFC Meeting:**

- 1) Supplemental Blocks flow allocation plan
- 2) Discussion of Corps priorities and the potential for assurances to the IFC about Stoney Gate valve replacement approval.

**VIII. Meeting adjourned at 11:45 PM**