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March 25, 2013

For the Record

A Sweetheart Lake Hydroelectric Project
2013 Aquatic Work Group Meeting Summary
March 15, 2013 9:30 AM

Re: Sweetheart Lake Hydroelectric Project Aquatic Work Group Meeting

On March 25, 2013 a meeting was held to discuss the In stream flow work conducted by Liz Flory of ASI in 2012 and to determine further In-stream flow and related aquatics work necessary for completing the JHI Aquatics study for the Project's Environmental Assessment.

Members Attending, Agency and phone numbers:

Barb Adams, USFS 907 789-6252
Julianne Thompson, USFS
John Matkowski, FERC 202 502-8576
Shawn Johnson, ADFG 907 465-4302
Cathy Needham Kai Environmental 907 723-4426
Monte Miller ADFG 907 267-2312
Rodger Harding ADFG 907 465-4311
Dan Teske, ADFG
Mark Storm Civil Science Inc 907 350-0480
Robert Johnson Civil Science 907 784-3927
Duff Mitchell, JHI
Jim Ferguson, PhD for JHI
Mark Storm, Civil Science Inc.

Invited but not able to attend:
Sue Walker, NMFS - 907 586-7646 - on leave
Richard Enriquez, USFWS - 907 780-1162 – on leave
Eric Rothwell, NMFS, unable to attend

Meeting Objectives and Agenda Items:
1. Discuss the instream flow (ISF) work performed by Elizabeth Flory in 2012;
2. Determine if further ISF work is necessary downstream of the barrier falls in Lower Sweetheart Creek; and

3. IF further ISF work is called for, determine the methodology necessary to accomplish any work deemed necessary.
4. Next step

Prior to the meeting the following documents were distributed:
Meeting Agenda
Agency Comments Regarding PHABISM/In stream flow, Sweetheart Lake prepared by Robert Johnson

The meeting commenced at 9:30 AM Alaska time with FERC representatives dialing in from Washington DC.

Introductions were made.

Robert Johnson – Regarding work performed by Liz Flory of ASI would like to get the process back on track to get direction to address the potential effects of the Sweetheart Lake Hydroelectric Project

Shawn Johnson – Need to look at what has been done, need for more info. – modeling information, calibration details, how the suitability curves were developed, etc.

Robert Johnson– Calls on Mark Storm to address and provide insight on those issues.

Shawn Johnson – Issue: Water surface elevations were only measured at one flow and multiple measurements are necessary to create a water surface model. Were more measurements taken?

Robert Johnson – agree with that, especially measurements taken close to the discharge proposed for this project.

Mark Storm dialed in and apologized for difficulty in getting dialed in. – Top of bank measurements – further discussion of technique with Shawn Johnson.

Shawn Johnson – Data input data sets would be helpful.

Robert Johnson, Mark Storm – Brief discussion of historical annual periodic discharge.

Robert Johnson - As far as the process of collaboration in developing a study plan, what has been used in the past to develop a study plan (for now, just the In stream flow portion). What exactly in the past has been a successful way to get the blessings of the agencies to use as a process as a model to apply to the other aspects of the aquatics study? May I have some input from the agencies as to accomplish this? Monte, FERC, anyone else?

John Matkowski – Getting the agencies to help prepare the study plan is the most important part of what we are looking for. We rely on local expertise as far as how much data. You definitely want to submit some written study plan so the agencies can review it. I also came in late to the project so you want to ask more questions about that to the agencies.

Robert Johnson– I wish Sue Walker was able to attend. The development of the plan has been problematic – we are aware of this from the meeting we had in Juneau recently from the input we received from the agencies and I guess what I am looking for now is how exactly to proceed. Do I write up a proposed study plan and submit it and get some review on it and then go, or what is the best way to get out there because like I said I am coming in late in the game and I want to accomplish the work in a timely fashion and I know everybody's busy and the water levels are low and at some time in the next weeks, or month or two – not longer than that, that is a maximum, we are going to have flows in various ranges that are not going to be back down in the lower ranges so what can I do to proceed and get out in the field and get something that'd going to be usable for the agencies?

Shawn Johnson – Well again, before we start writing up a study plan, that study has already been done out there but at this point I think the first thing we need to do is figure out what information was collected, how it was collected, and if it's sufficient to address our concerns. At this point I do not know if additional – my guess is that we will need additional water surface elevations and more transect measurements – I think the four transects are fine but we only have habitat modeling for one of the transects so we can't write a study plan until we figure out what it is that we need to study and to do that we need to get a hold of the data that was used in the modeling and the modeling results.

Robert Johnson – Absolutely, and I'm in agreement with that and that makes sense, and along with the department of Fish and Game, how would the other agencies like to be involved in this process, and in this review? Can I hear from the Forest Service please?

Barbara Adams – I'm hoping that Julianne would be willing to chime in on that.

Julianne Thompson – I've been late to the table and intermittently involved too. I guess that I would say that for the technical expertise related to the ISF work I think we would probably defer to Fish and Game, and some of the other agencies to be a little more involved in the details. My perspective is that we want to make sure that the results are credible and that they are presented in the context of the operations model so that we can see how the whole thing comes together. So really right now I'm just here to catch up on this project and be able to track interagency dialogue in hopes that we can come up with some constructive steps forward but I'm really (at this point) not going to weigh in heavily at this point on the technical aspects of the analysis. It does seem like it's important that we have a complete study plan that sort of puts that context in there that's had agency input and approval.

Robert Johnson– I have a process question. In the past, how has it been as far as interactions back and forth with NMFS? Has that been a fairly fluid operation or interaction in the past?

Jim Ferguson- I think first it would be important to engage with Sue Walker and Eric Rothwell and just see if this is something that they are interested in being closely involved with, and the kind of work you are talking about doing is really Eric's domain and if they are then I think it's important like Julianne just said to get Shawn and Eric working on the details, and fairly quickly though what do we actually have and what are the data gaps and then move from there immediately to how do you fill them and how much information do you need to collect cause it sounds like we're under kind of a pretty tight timeline so I think probably the schedule and the time frame of this interaction could be as important as who actually does it but I think the invitation to NMFS has to go out because they are kind of selectively engaged in my experience some projects they are pretty heavily involved with and other ones less so, so I guess gaging their interest and getting a commitment from them will be the important thing, or commitment from them either way either yes or no and moving forward from there – maybe that seems obvious but that's how I see it.

Robert Johnson - Monte, are you still on? I want to make sure I get some input from you as far as this process goes.

Monte Miller – Actually I think Shawn pretty well stated that to move ahead we need to know what went on before to properly evaluate what's needed we have to know what has been collected and how it was collected I think that's probably a good basis to get started. Shawn and I have talked about this and I'm very confident in the way he's looking at it and his evaluation of it so with regard to process I think he's quite right that to move ahead we have to know exactly how it is that we got to the point where we are today, or the point that you think we are at.

Robert Johnson – Well I don't know what point we are at and that's why I'm looking for direction. In order not to drag this out because without the information is will be impossible to go forward. What I'm hearing, and I'll reiterate, I'll get the original data set and more information about how the mission was accomplished and get it out to the various agencies and get some review on that and input and then with that information I can develop a plan, a proposed plan for action as soon as humanly possible and get it back out for review and at that point by interaction and copying with all of the agencies involved hopefully we can come up with something that is acceptable to everybody, and at this point – of course we don't have Eric involved at this point – I know that Sue is on leave, but copy them on the information that was exchanged, and the ideas that were exchanged at this teleconference and see if we can't get something in the hopper and get going fairly soon. Does that make sense to everybody?

Monte Miller– Shawn do you feel that you had enough information about the methodology that was utilized, is that something that you need more information on?

Shawn Johnson – Well yeah as far as what water surface model was used, how did they take the raw suitability data and there's a lot of techniques to take raw suitability data to turn into suitability curves, how was that done, just all the basic – if I get the input data set and the modeling details then we can go from there.

Monte Miller – Ok, I was just concerned that they might just think that all they needed to provide us with was the data sets – I think it's a little bit beyond that this PHABSIM model just popped up at the last without much knowledge about how they approached it, so by requesting those protocols and methodologies and things like that , I think that is also information that we would like to have.

Shawn Johnson – We're kind of fortunate in this case that a lot of PHABSIM studies can get overly complicated, dealing with miles of river, really diverse habitat, diverse hydraulics, dozens and dozens of transects. This is one short reach, relatively simple.

Monte Miller – Yes, we recognize this as one short reach.

Shawn Johnson – Yes, it's a pretty simple instream flow issue, relatively speaking – it's all riffle.

Monte Miller– One question that I have, was there any gradient work done on this reach?

Mark Storm – We measured two transects and absolute elevations so we know the slope between the two if that's what you mean by gradient.

Monte Miller– I've been looking at an old report that was looking at high intertidal areas and success of spawning - 38:05 – not that we want to increase success, I think the last thing that the dip-net fishermen want, or anglers want, is a bunch of pink in there that they have to toss back. 39:04

Shawn Johnson – Speaking of these sockeye and the personal use fishery - ~another issue is the passage of sockeye over the waterfalls into the series of pools. I think that should be part of the instream assessment Transect 3

Mark Storm – Safety issues

Duff Mitchell– I was the only one here that was at the meeting where transects were discussed. Sue was very clear to make sure that the transects needed were conducted such that we weren't putting anyone in hazards way. She was leaving where some of the transects crossed up to Liz's discretion based on what is deemed safe.

Robert Johnson, I appreciate everyone collaboration and input and be getting information out as soon as possible.

Julianne Thompson – Very briefly outline what the general plan to move forward is to capture and understand.

Robert Johnson – Right now get a hold of the original data set. Get more information on the methodology. Disseminate that information to Shawn, Julianne, and other agencies that are interested so that we can actually have a better understanding of what has been accomplished, and how it was accomplished. That makes sense Shawn?

Shawn Johnson- yes.

Julianne Thompson- Ok in essence that the understanding of the call today is that you are to provide information on what has been done to date for review

Robert Johnson, Absolutely based on the review. Future interaction will be addressed by whatever collaboration is desired by the agencies and form a basis of a plan . We will exchange the data talked about on this conference, protocols and methodologies and get going on this.

Julianne Thompson- Will there be a future phone call on this or dependent on comments received?

Robert Johnson- that will depend on the group if a call is warranted and I want to be faithful to the process that I need to follow. If the group wants a call, I can make that happen that is great. If the group wants to correspond by e-mail and get the information out and form a basis that is great too...whatever agencies need to fulfill their cooperative process.

Duff Mitchell- I appreciate everyone's cooperation and help in moving this along and that agencies are cognizant of the low water flows occurring right now that are necessary for us to get in the field to get the data necessary. Also, in the future we continue to encourage NMFS attendance.

Robert Johnson. Thanks and I look forward to working with everybody.

The meeting lasted 47.43 minutes

Meeting summary prepared by Robert Johnson, CSI and Duff Mitchell, Juneau Hydropower, Inc.