

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Title - 21DEX02 Middle Fork Willamette CHS Outplanting & Fingerling Release(s).

NOTIFICATION DATE - 16 August 2021

PROJECT- Dexter Fish Facility and Willamette Hatchery

RESPONSE DATE - NA

Description of the problem

Spring Chinook Salmon (CHS) broodstock collection (stock 22), adult outplanting, and juvenile releases in the Middle Fork Willamette River are managed via the 2016 Hatchery Genetic Management Plan (HGMP), Willamette Valley Hatcheries Contract (W9127N19C0030), and Willamette Fish Operations Plan (WFOP). Adult CHS returns to the Dexter Ponds Fish Facility in total during the 2021 season have been below both broodstock and outplanting goals laid out in the HGMP, contract, and WFOP. Broodstock collection as of August 10, 2021 consists of 2,565 CHS collected – 435 CHS short of the 3000 adult brood collection goal – with the run largely complete.

Broodstock needs for the limited number of returning adult Spring Chinook has restricted outplanting efforts. Adult outplanting to date into the North Fork Middle Fork (NFMF) Willamette River consists of 374 of the targeted 1,350 adults currently being outplanted. None of the targeted 1,100 adults have been transported into the Middle Fork Willamette above Hills Creek Dam (HCR).

Priority has been given for the NFMF Willamette CHS outplanting and recovery efforts, to maximize adult survival per the HGMP (p. 93), due to the shorter transit time (36 miles v. 50 miles to above Hills Creek). Similarly, juvenile outmigrants will have an enhanced chance of outmigration survival due to the fact that these outplants occur lower in the system, and one less reservoir and dam will have to be navigated during juvenile outmigration to the Pacific Ocean.

Limited numbers of Middle Fork Willamette Brood Year 2020 juvenile Spring Chinook also necessitated that priority be given to smolt production. As such, the scheduled release of 100,000 Spring Chinook salmon fingerlings into Hills Creek Reservoir for June 2021 have not occurred. Releases above HCR are mainly ecological including the nutrient inputs. Until we get some kind of fish passage at Lookout Point (LOP) and HCR, providing adult chinook to reestablish the native fish fauna in both the Middle Fork and North Fork (and feed bull trout in the MF) is still our next objective after broodstock.

Expected impacts on fish

The lack of Hatchery Adult CHS and fingerling Outplanting will reduce forage available for Bull Trout to consume. In addition, providing legally harvested Chinook for the HCR fishery is the primary objective for releasing marked Chinook into the reservoir

Sincerely, Dan Peck Willamette Hatchery Manager, and Robert Wertheimer 19C0030 COR.

Please, email or call with your question or concerns.

Thank you,

Chris Walker
NWP Operations Division Fishery Section
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