

Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project
FERC No. 2016
Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee
Final Conference Call/GoToMeeting Summary
October 6, 2020 from 9:30 – 2:30

FTC Representative Attendees:

Travis Nelson	TPU
Bryce Glaser	WDFW
Carol Serdar	WA Dept. of Ecology
Scott Anderson	NMFS

Additional Attendees:

Rich Turner	NMFS
James Archibald	NMFS
John Serl	WDFW
Peggy Miller	WDFW
Sam Gibbons	WDFW
Josua Holowatz	WDFW
Matt Bleich	TPU
Eric Shoblom	TPU
Phil Sandstrom	TPU
Tim Hoffnagle	TPU
Ann Weckback	Lewis County
Steve West	LCFRB
Debbie Carlson	BPA
Laura Wolfe	LCPUD
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting / Facilitator

Remaining 2020 FTC Meeting Dates: Nov. 3, Dec. 1 (public meeting?)

Approval of Last Meeting Summary

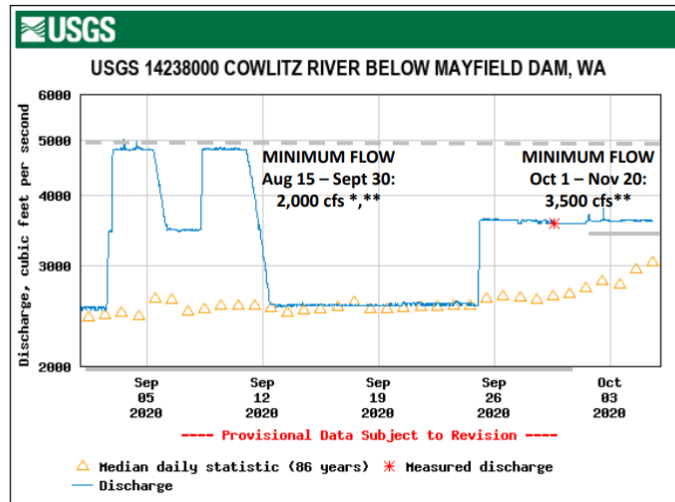
The September FTC meeting summary was approved with edits and will be posted to the FTC public website.

Updates

Hydro Operations:

- Inflows: There is currently (as of Oct. 4) an inflow of 1,396 cfs to Riffe Lake.
- Riffe Lake Storage: Currently at 722' – slightly above the historical average of 719'.
- Mayfield Outflows: On Oct. 1, they adjusted to the minimum flow period. On Oct. 2 there was a slight down ramp exceedance of 1.3" due to a malfunction caused by a stuck valve in the Powerhouse. The valve has since been replaced and the generator is functioning properly. This occurrence will be reflected in the annual report.
- Forecast: Turning rainy and cooler.

Outflow



* License requirement, in practice ~2,400 cfs

** Can reset higher if mean daily flow exceeds 5,000 cfs for 5 consecutive days

Link to the USGS real-time Cowlitz River hydrograph:

https://waterdata.usgs.gov/wa/nwis/uv/?site_no=14238000&PARAMeter_cd=00060,00065

Water Quality: Carol acknowledged that Tacoma Power did well in response to the issues from dredging gravel at the boat ramp near Mill Creek, from initial notification of beginning activity, to dredging, to site logs documenting turbid discharges, and reporting the Environmental Report Tracking System (ERTS). They appropriately waited for the turbidity plume to settle out. She noted the Environmental Report Tracking System (ERTS) and Ecology's statewide requirements for turbid discharges. She showed recent photos, including an upland area that needs to be seeded and the landslide area where Mill Creek flows into the Cowlitz River. The deposit material there will likely be naturally dislodged this winter and used as natural gravel recruitment. The boneyard was able to accept all the wet sediment. She expressed concerns about the placement of wet sediment and close proximity to a ditch that is connected to the Cowlitz River. Tacoma will need to continually remove sediment from the existing area of boat ramp until all the landslide material has been naturally moved by the river. She suggested perhaps a better place for the boat ramp would be near the ADA fishing site. She has been working with Matt Peter on several Water Quality Monitoring Plans. Travis will follow up with Carol on the location of the boat ramp.

Downstream Adaptive Management TWG: Matt reported FCE tests have wrapped up for this year. While FCE was down from last year, the numbers so far are 70% for Steelhead; 65% for Coho; and 50% for Spring Chinook. Considerations for 2021 season include a coordination meeting with LCPUD in mid-October. The five recommendations (currently under internal review) are the same as last year. They will also evaluate FCE in relation to potential trash rack blockage and in relation to various operations.

Fisheries Operations: Eric began by noting to all that October is a busy time of year for fish operations. The Fall Chinook return is better than expected. Coho numbers are also above average. They are currently getting around 1K per day and have 12K to date. Cutthroat numbers are 2,500 and climbing. This is turning out to be quite a strong fishery. Returns for all NOR stocks are also way above average. Eric is happy to add anyone to the mailing list for the weekly fish report which is very detailed. Just let him or Travis know. The crew is wrapping up spawning for Spring Chinook. They got twice the egg take expected (over October 06, 2020 FTC Meeting

738K), but still have a significant shortfall Tacoma met with WDFW and NOAA about the Spring Chinook last week, specifically about the logistics of possibly bringing in some Kalama stock. They are discussing future implications of fisheries and broodstock management. Matt expressed appreciation, especially to WDFW for such productive discussions. Bryce noted that for the Cutthroat program, WDFW is considering options including some recycling. WDFW and Tacoma would like to better promote that fishery and have begun to do some social media outreach.

Tilton/Coal Creek Release Sites: Eric reported the Bremer Bridge site is working well. On Sept. 9, a driver observed 12 Fall Chinook mortalities at the bottom of the pool. The subsequent investigation was inconclusive. There have been no related incidents since. The Gust Backstrom Park release site on the Tilton is being used so heavily by fishermen, that Parks & Rec had to close off vehicle parking so fish trucks could access the site.

Tacoma reported concerns that the fish ladder at Cascade Aquaculture upstream of the Bremer Bridge release site required maintenance and may be difficult for fish to navigate. Bryce had an e-mail discussion with Scott Bremer who said the ladder was intended for use by fish during low flow conditions. Further, only the north-east side of the fish ladder is supposed to be functioning at this time and water is flowing through the ladder. Cascade Aqua Culture will remove debris at the top of the ladder, though they have not seen any problems with fish not being able to pass. Possible topic for M&E Subgroup? However, Bryce mentioned that the priority for this topic may be much lower than other issues at hand.

Eric reported planning a site visit with an engineer to the potential release site locations at Coal Creek and on Alderwood Drive, across the river from Packwood. Tacoma is considering various release methods there, such as laying large hoses in a cradle or trough. Stay tuned.

CRR: Travis reported Tacoma is developing the language for the existing contract awarded through the CRR process last year. They anticipate starting to advertise the 2021 round in the second quarter of 2021. Peggy again suggested setting up a subcommittee to help work on that. There will be more discussions on this, including reviewing lessons learned from the initial round and possibly reestablishing the CRR Subgroup at the December meeting.

M&E Subgroup: Phil reported this group last met on Sept. 16. They discussed SAR activity moving into the analysis phase. They are also continuing to work on the runtime app for salmon returns. He welcomes any feedback / suggestions. At that same meeting WDFW's Thomas Buehrens gave a very informative presentation on Fall Chinook escapement estimation and transition planning.

After the update FTC discussion followed about Fall Chinook broodstock collection and disposition as well as broodstock collection in general. Bryce reported there currently isn't a transition plan for NOR broodstock collection for the hatchery program to guide how many fall Chinook should be released in the Tilton River vs. collected for broodstock. That said, we are fortunate to see a good return of Fall Chinook, including NORs and integrated HORs (both programs). The Fall Chinook program has been operating in "emergency operational status" where they have been using separator fish to backfill shortfalls to collect NORs for the program instead of releasing them into the Tilton River. It appears we are likely on track to meet broodstock goals for this year. WDFW thinks it's time to consider reducing the separator collection of NOR fish for brood and put more NORs into the Tilton while continuing to utilize the returning HORs until broodstock goals are met. They want to avoid ending up with a lot of surplus NORs that will not be utilized for broodstock. After being held

these fish are less likely to survive transport and spawn. To achieve integration goals, if additional broodstock is needed, NORs from the lower river should be used. Phil's numbers indicate we are 22 females short of the broodstock need. Further discussion followed including what to do with HORs once broodstock component is met, not wanting to hold NOR broodstock any longer than needed. If we need to collect additional broodstock on the back half of the return, we should consider options such as Mill Creek below the Barrier Dam as a collection area. Setting escapement targets for NORs and HORs should be part of the Transition plan. We do not want to over collect on NORs and in particular we don't want to over collect Tilton NORs as we do not have the option to surplus those fish to the food bank, like we can with HORs. Due to constraints in WDFW's operational budget from Tacoma for fish marking, they will be creating a single integrated program this year, as agreed to during task order development with Tacoma.

Next steps: Immediately after this meeting, Phil will arrange a meeting with Sam, Bryce, John, and Eric to further discuss this issue and come up with a plan of action.

FHMP Update

Presenter: Matt Bleich

Matt announced that Tacoma filed the FHMP with FERC on Oct. 2. And there was great rejoicing! FTC members received an email to that effect (from Maria Camilon-Price) along with a PDF of the document that same day. Matt expressed appreciation for everyone's hard work and collaboration in getting this done. He believes it is a much better document due to everyone's input. While there is more work to do (developing Transition and M&E plans), he encouraged everyone to take a moment to celebrate. Others affirmed the process and that it's great that we could submit it before the deadline. Matt reported receiving compliments from a member of public and from an administrator. It may take time for FERC to approve. In the meantime, will move forward with developing the plans within the timelines that have been laid out. Matt will bring proposed work plans, etc. to the next meeting. Travis has posted the document to the FTC site for easy reference.

Satellite Rearing

Presenters: Matt Bleich and Eric Shoblom

Matt reviewed the purpose and contents of the Satellite Rearing Facility Planning Document along with the goals and program objectives (in compliance with Article 5 of the FERC license) of the facilities. He reiterated that the purpose of the Workplan is philosophy and concept development vs. getting into details of land development, etc. The document will be sent out to all today for review, as per the schedule:

Task	Responsible	By When
Present Workplan/Next Steps to FTC	Bleich	9/1/20
Develop draft concepts and incorporate into Satellite Rearing Facility Plan	R2	10/6/20
FTC Generated Program Concepts (include Spawning, Egg Incubation, Rearing, Finish/Acclimation, Release and location for each rearing phase)	FTC	9/15/20
Describe/Familiarize with Concepts	FTC	10/6/20
Review and Comment	FTC	10/6/20 – 11/3/20
Incorporate Comments	R2	11/6/20 – 11/15/20
QC	Tacoma	11/15/20 – 11/21/20
Public Review	Public	11/21/20 – 12/21/20
Finalize Satellite Rearing Facility Plan	Tacoma/R2/FTC	1/31/20

As a result of conversations with WDFW, he added “Assumed challenges” to the list of items the plan will include. Matt and Eric then briefly discussed five options that are included in the plan, along with a geographical representation for each, along with details on spawning, egg incubation, rearing, finish/acclimation, and release. The first option aims to maximize fish exposure to the natural temperature of the basin. The next three options focus on capturing NORs at CF, with the ability to mix and match facilities to accommodate different strategies. The fifth option tries to take advantage of natural temperature profile to obtain a natural growth pattern and life histories, with the primary focus on increasing production capacity. Matt welcomes feedback on this over the next 30 days as he intends to put this out for public review on Nov. 15. When reviewing the Workplan, he encouraged anyone who comes up with an additional option, to go ahead and score it based on the attributes listed in the scoring matrix (below) and see how it rates.

	ATTRIBUTES											
	Increase Overall Abundance	Increase Natural Spawners in Upper Basin	Mimic Natural Growth Rates and Size of Migrants	High Security – Physical	High Security – Biological	Natural Environment	Self-maintaining Flows	Mobile Facility	Minimal or Automated Maintenance	Ease of Development	Ease of Year-round Access	Resiliency to Environmental Change
RECOMMENDED OPTIONS												
1: Upper Basin Subyearling Winter Rearing	3	5	4	3	4	2	3	5	3	3	3	3
2A: Overwinter Fry/Subyearling Collection and Rearing at Cowlitz Falls, Upper Basin Acclimation	2	5	3	4	4	2	4	4	3	4	4	4
2B: Overwinter Fry/Subyearling Collection and Rearing, Acclimation at Cowlitz Falls	2	5	2	5	5	2	5	3	3	5	5	4
2C: Overwinter Fry/Subyearling Collection, Upper Basin Rearing, Acclimation at Cowlitz Falls	2	5	4	3	4	2	4	4	3	4	3	4
5: Lower Basin Finishing	5	3	3	4	3	2	4	4	4	5	4	4

Bryce observed that one option may not fit all species. In that case, we need to be clear about priority species. Laura noted that LCPUD has concerns about fish acclimating to the reservoir and asked what water fish put in the CFFF would be acclimating to.

Action Item: All – Review and email comments to Matt and Eric by Nov. 3.

Coho Return

Presenter: Eric Shoblom

Eric referenced the new two decision documents that were emailed to all on Sept. 30. The new document is based on the similar one from last year and calls for increasing the existing 6K adult Coho transport cap to the Tilton to 9K to increase angler opportunity. This proposal is a one-year perspective and future strategy options will be defined and captured in the FHMP Tilton Coho Transition Plan. Josua observed that now that we have the Bremer Bridge as an additional release site and can separate HORs from NORs, there is a great opportunity for an all-around win by increasing the 6K fish ceiling and still release the NORs at the lower site. This is good for WDFW, Tacoma, anglers, and the fish as well! Bryce noted it is important that priority be given to the Upper Cowlitz Program if transport becomes an issue. We may need another discussion if we approach the 9K cap. After some edits, Decision Document 2020-03: Tilton River Adult Salmon Disposition was approved by

consensus. Travis will forward it to absent FTC voting members for final approval, as per the protocols.

Gravel Augmentation

Presenter: Travis Nelson

Travis invited WDFW to share their concerns about the lower two sites (Brim Bar and the Trout Hatchery) listed in the Decision Document 2020-02. Bryce reminded all that at the last meeting, Sam and John noted that the area from the Barrier Dam down to Baker Rock could really benefit from gravel augmentation. Accordingly, he hopes we can prioritize placement of gravel in that area.

Discussion highlights:

- Tacoma should capitalize on the opportunity to utilize gravel in the Barrier Dam repair supersacks for gravel augmentation.
 - Brim Bar and the Trout Hatchery should be removed from the DD.
 - If Brim Bar and the Trout Hatchery are removed from consideration for gravel placement in the next 3 years, a DD for placement of supersack gravel at Barrier Island is not necessary. Travis explained the Barrier Island gravel placement will occur regardless of the DD to meet the FERC gravel augmentation requirements and has been permitted as such through the license.
 - Tacoma is continuing to prepare a gravel augmentation plan to identify other augmentation sites such as access to the Jorgensen property. Travis will look for other opportunities and follow up with Jorgensen folks regarding access.
 - Another DD should be prepared updating the milestones to prepare the plan and date the plan will be available for FTC consideration (June 2021), the table with status of augmentation amounts and plan elements. The plan should include evaluation to determine if gravel is successfully moved from the new site at low and moderate flows as well as high flows, a monitoring plan in coordination with WQPP. Other suggestions included using a more current flow regime rather than historical flow data as we are in a new climate paradigm, and that the plan include Programmatic 404 consultation with the USACE.
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Action Item: Travis will review the prior DD and send out a revised DD for all to review prior to the next meeting.

Meeting Evaluation

- Still some technical (audio) glitches
- Missed Paul
- Meeting went well - Stayed on schedule for break and lunch.
- When evaluating the meeting, ask if we adequately covered the most important topics – call them out on the agenda. Try this at the next meeting and evaluate.
- Quotable Quote: “Loneliness is not lack of company. It is lack of purpose.” Guillermi Moldinero (inspired by Josua’s 15-year old son)

Potential Topics for November 3 FTC Meeting

- Updates incl. Hydro Ops, Water Quality
- 2021 FTC Work Plan (Dec?)
- FHMP Update

- M&E Subgroup
- Gravel Augmentation Work Plan
- Satellite Rearing (allow extra time)
- Downstream Adaptive Management TWG
- Cowlitz Restoration & Recovery Fund 2020
- Set topics for November FTC Meeting

Parking Lot

- Presentation by Tacoma's Power Management Group
- Review Steelhead Recycling Program