

Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project
FERC No. 2016
Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee
Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery
Final Meeting Summary
October 17, 2019 from 9:30 – 4:15

Attendees:

Travis Nelson	TPU
Bryce Glaser	WDFW
Carol Serdar	WA Dept. of Ecology
Paul Sparks	WA Council of TU / TU / American Rivers
John Serl	Tech Rep for WDFW
Sam Gibbons	Tech Rep for WDFW
Brian Gale	Tech Rep for WDFW
Peggy Miller	Tech Rep for WDFW
Josua Holowatz	Tech Rep for WDFW
Eric Shoblom	Tech Rep for TPU
Florian Leischner	Tech Rep for TPU
Melora Shelton	Tech Rep for TPU
Chris Foster (by phone)	Tech Rep for TPU
Laura Wolfe	LCPUD
Steve West	LCFRB
Rudy Salakory	Cowlitz Indian Tribe, Tech Rep for TPU
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting / Facilitator

Remaining 2019 FTC Meeting Dates: Nov. 5, Dec. 3 from 9:30-3:00 at Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery unless otherwise specified.

Proposed 2020 FTC Meeting Dates: Jan. 7, Feb. 4, Mar. 3, Apr. 7, May 5, June 2, July 7, Sept. 8 (Sept. 7 is Labor Day), Oct. 6 (Election Day), Nov. 3, Dec. 1

- Action Item: All look at 2020 meeting schedule and be ready to approve or change it at the November meeting. Also consider changing start time to 9:00 and periodically altering meeting locations.

Great Washington Shakeout 2019

The FTC reviewed the recommended actions for earthquake safety from the state-wide “Drop-Cover-Hold On” drill. More information is available at these links:

[Earthquake information by Region – Washington](#) [Secure your space: Do a “hazard hunt”](#)
[Plan to be safe: Create a disaster preparedness plan](#)

Announcements

- As of the end of September, Tom Wadsworth has taken a new position and left the employment of WDFW. We appreciated his service on the FTC and wish him well. Bryce Glaser has stepped in to filling the role of the official WDFW representative.
- We were pleased to welcome Josua Holowatz from WDFW to the FTC. He is the interim District Fish Biologist covering the Cowlitz and Lewis Rivers and brings expertise in biostatistics, ecology and genetics.

FHMP Update

Presenter: Matt Bleich

Matt and Travis thanked those who participated in the 1:30 conference call on October 16. The feedback received on the call was helpful to Tacoma in framing this discussion.

Discussion preceding the editing of Decision Document 2019-9 included:

- The EOT request of FERC needs to be longer than 8 months.
- The duration between FHMP Updates be extended beyond 6 years, noting SA Signatories would have to approve this. Peggy noted that “6 years” is in the Bi-Op.
- The FHMP is a broader, foundational document and should be completed first and then the HGMP. Alignment is critical.
- Concern about NOAA’s limited resources and Rich Turner retiring the end of 2020.
- The 2011 FHMP is based on the ISIT Model which is founded on AHA Model that uses HSRG rule sets.
- We want to demonstrate we are making progress in the advancement of species recovery.
- We are working toward a new version of the FHMP and we need more time. We want a new plan that is broadly supported with a focus on recovery first, and then fisheries (harvest), and has clearly defined measures for success
- We want to provide sufficient time for all, including the public, to review the individual chapters as well as the entire document.
 - Still waiting for a crosswalk between 2011 and current draft FHMP.
- What if FERC doesn’t grant the complete EOT request? WDFW suggests that we should have a contingency plan.
- “Off-ramps” for the unlikely event that we get to the new deadline and the document is not yet complete. How to proceed operationally – under 2011 FHMP or other agreed-upon approach?
- It is not clear to all FTC members how close the draft chapters are to being final because the most recent drafts have not yet been distributed.
- The FTC has been (informally) continuing to operate under the 2011 FHMP and has communicated that to FERC.
- We need to identify areas of concern / unresolved issues during the review process and then have a process to address them in a timely fashion.
- We will have additional workshops as needed, including for any unresolved issues.
 - It would be helpful to set the dates of workshops that will be held on non-FTC meeting dates as soon as possible.

The FTC reviewed, edited, and by consensus approved an updated version of Decision Document 2019-9: FHMP Extension Request to FERC. Edits include a revised schedule, off-ramp language, a change in the EOT from 8 to 12 months, and the suggestion that the interim period between updates be extended from 6 to 10 years. By Nov. 1, TPU will initiate the process of getting SA signatories to approve this change. Travis noted that TPU attorneys are revising the letter to FERC. He will assure it is consistent with the approved decision document.

Action Items:

- Travis: Report back to the FTC after November 6 conference call with FERC.
- Travis: Email out approved decision document and the “DRAFT” FHMP referenced in the document filed with FERC and available on the public website. (*Done.*)

Cowlitz Restoration & Recovery (CRR) Fund: 2019 Grant Round Process

Presenters: Florian Leischner and Melora Shelton

Melora projected a spreadsheet she created with the preliminary scores she received from five of the participating organizations from whom she received draft scores. They were TPU, WDFW, LCRFB, TU, LC. The Cowlitz Tribe recused themselves from rating their proposed project and did not provide scores for the Friends of the Cowlitz (FOC) project. Florian reminded all that the goal of the line-by-line review is not to come up with an FTC consensus score, but to discuss the scoring as a group and provide an opportunity for scoring revision if desired.

Florian briefly recapped the background of this fund and our partnership with the LCRFB TAC for habitat projects. The hatchery associated projects are being evaluated on a technical basis by the FTC based on the final applications. Scoring categories for both types of projects include CRR Program priorities, benefits to fish, certainty of success, and cost.

After reviewing the LCRFB technical review and discussing the CRR scores, FTC members agreed to have Tacoma draft a decision document to approve funding for the Cispus Yellowjacket Creek Phase III Restoration Project. There was general agreement that this project would likely be successful and provide benefits to fish, and that it meets CRR program priorities. Although the first two phases are not complete, the approach has been demonstrated at many other locations and the tribe has a long history of implementing successful restoration projects. It was also noted that, as this project has multiple funders, ~\$600K from the CRR Fund can contribute to a ~\$2 million project, leveraging our influence.

The scoring and discussion indicated that there were many unresolved questions about the specifics of the Toledo Sand and Gravel Net Pens proposal from the FOC. There was concern about certainty of success and how the funds would be spent. WDFW suggested they would want to see a phased approach to increasing fish numbers and net pen capacity. The proposal needs additional details. This also signals an opportunity to improve the proposal process to help applicants provide more complete proposal information. During Greg King's presentation to this group, he made it clear that the FOC were looking for guidance for turning this into a more complete proposal.

We really appreciated Greg coming to give the presentation while acknowledging that they looked forward to future help in making the project proposal more complete. While the project seems to have merit, it doesn't appear to be quite ready for "prime time." Opportunity: Offer to meet with the FOC to provide them with sufficient feedback so they can possibly re-submit a more complete proposal in the future. Also noted: The property is currently up for sale.

At the end of this discussion, the FTC came to agreement on a preliminary funding decision for the 2019 grant round so that TPU could prepare a draft supporting decision document for review and approval at the November 5 meeting.

Action Item:

- Melora: Draft a Decision Document to approve funding for the Cispus Yellowjacket Creek Phase III Restoration project sponsored by the Cowlitz Indian Tribe for approval at the November FTC Meeting.

Coded Wire Tagging at Mayfield

Presenter: Matt Bleich

In Phil Sandstrom's absence, Matt explained that the coded wire tagging of Coho has been at Cowlitz Falls for the last several years. This was deemed the most appropriate place in representing the various populations. As the downstream collector is becoming increasingly efficient, capacity is becoming an issue. In order to avoid any associated biological impacts, it appears time to shift the tagging location back to Mayfield. Phil drafted and distributed a decision document reflecting that recommendation. As not everyone had been able to review that document, it was agreed to shift this topic to the November FTC meeting. It was suggested that the document also identify risks to recovery.

Action Item:

- All: Let Matt know if you have additional suggested edits (in addition to identifying risks to recovery) and be ready to discuss at the next meeting.

Tilton River Coho Disposition
Presenter: Matt Bleich

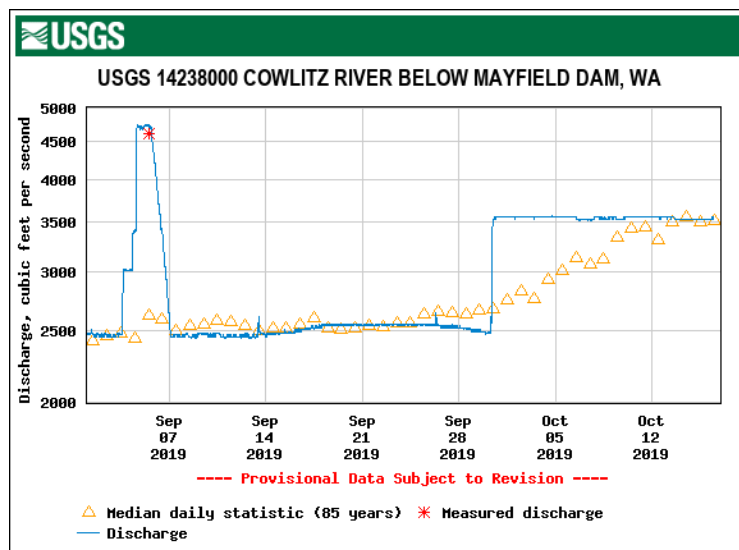
Matt explained that Phil requested this be added to the agenda because of the need to agree on a disposition protocol for when numbers of adult hatchery coho exceed 6K. This topic was deferred to the November meeting.

Meeting Summary Approval

Approval of the September 5 FTC meeting summary was deferred until November 5.

Updates

- Hydro Operations: Florian reported September average daily inflows were at 75% of normal, with average daily inflow of 1756 cfs. While the historical inflow average for October is 2,777 cfs, it was at 1,747 cfs on October 15. Riffe Lake drafted more slowly than usual due to the relatively cold and wet summer. The current reservoir level of 716' is anticipated to rise ~15' due to the forecast of a series of storms. October 1 through November 15, the minimum outflow is 3,500 cfs (though they may exceed 5K cfs following storms). TPU kept the reservoir above that level throughout the summer. A couple of spikes in the outflow coincided with the Mayfield drawdown; some of the units came online with different elevations. There were no ramping violations.



Link to the USGS real-time Cowlitz River hydrograph:

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

- **Action Item:** Melora to email charts to Carol and Lyn. (*Done.*)
 - **Mayfield Drawdown:** Carol noted that, as required in the Water Quality Cert and in the FERC License, two water quality protection plans approved by Ecology were in effect during the Mayfield Drawdown. These plans included the Mayfield Park boat extension where there was a unique situation with the bladders, and the Tire Removal activity. TPU shut down the tire removal operation soon after beginning as the tires were being drug across the sediment rather than being picked up and placed in a truck and hauled to an off-site location for washing before being trucked to a recycler. Some number of tires were removed and cleaned. Ecology's (Solid Waste Management Program) grant program provided funding for those tires once they were cleaned. As there were many tires left behind, there is a solid waste concern that requires coordination between TPU and Ecology. Carol reiterated that she needs to be notified before in-water activities occur. She also reported the 30' lower lake elevation has changed the pore water pressure such that oil from possible underground storage tanks or residual contamination in the underwater town of Kosmos is now oozing into Rainey Creek which flows into Riffe Lake. This may be important consideration when doing fish recovery.
 - **Water Quality Monitoring:** Ecology has been working with TPU for the last 5.5 years on summarizing water quality monitoring data into a single report. With these data, Carol reported it is likely that Ecology will approve the summary report. TPU will file a TDG monitoring plan with Ecology soon. Annual reporting is likely.
 - **Gravel Augmentation:** Florian reminded all TPU is working on an easement to get access to deliver gravel to the other side of the Cowlitz River. They are also evaluating another location on the south side closer to Barrier Dam. Will be seeking outside help with risk points at each location (e.g., problems with fishermen at Mill Creek, boat launch issues related to the existing pile, and what flows would mobilize the new material). They are also working on permitting for those sites (Forterra and DNR). A decision document will be required if gravel placement this year is deferred.
 - **Action Item:** Florian to prepare decision document for the Nov. 5 meeting.
 - **Additional Tilton Release Site:** Eric was pleased to report they have broken ground on the new release site and plan to complete construction by end of October or early November. The TPU Craft Shop has built the chute for the tube that will go down the center of it. The tube (16' tiger-flex hose) has been ordered and might not come in until December. The site should be usable by the end of the year. With the higher flows, they have been able to continue to release fish at Gus Backstrom. There will be discussion on commissioning the new site and when to implement proposed protocol for Steelhead.
 - **M&E Subgroup:** This update was deferred to the November meeting.
 - **Downstream Adaptive Management TWG:** Matt explained this group is working on a decision document with 2020-2021 recommendations for review at the December meeting.
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Satellite Rearing

Presenter: Matt Bleich

Matt reported R2 has provided TPU with a preliminary draft of initial satellite rearing concepts based on feedback the FTC provided at the August meeting. Matt is working with R2 to flesh this out before providing it to the FTC for an initial review. Stay tuned.

Meeting Evaluation

- Some technical difficulties with the phone. We hope they didn't keep Ann from being able to dial it.
 - Highly productive - Powered through difficult discussions
 - People were hard on the issues, not on each other (Thanks Josua for that observation!)
 - Nice to have the full 30 minutes for lunch despite the full agenda.
 - It was a long meeting. Everyone did a great job maintaining focus throughout.
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Potential Topics for November 5 FTC Meeting

- Usual updates incl. Water Quality, Alternate Tilton Release Site
 - FHMP Process Update
 - Review of FTC Protocols, including subgroups
 - **Action Item:** Lyn to distribute current protocols and prior work plan along with agenda for November meeting.
 - Cowlitz Restoration & Recovery Fund
 - Decision Document for Funding Decision
 - 2020 process discussion
 - CWT Tagging at Mayfield Decision Document
 - Gravel Augmentation Decision Document
 - Tilton River Coho Distribution
 - Next Steps
 - Set Topics for December 3 meeting including:
 - Mayfield Juvenile Collector
 - Update on Satellite Rearing
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Parking Lot

- Review Steelhead Recycling Program