

Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project
FERC No. 2016
Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee
Final Conference Call/GoToMeeting Summary
November 3, 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
Brian Gale	WDFW
Matt Bleich	TPU
Eric Shoblom	TPU
Phil Sandstrom	TPU
Chris Foster	TPU
Ann Weckback	Lewis County
Steve West	LCFRB
Kate Day	USFS
Laura Wolfe	LCPUD
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting / Facilitator

Remaining 2020 FTC Meeting Date: Dec. 1

Tentative 2021 FTC Meeting Dates: Jan. 5, Feb. 2, Mar. 2, Apr. 6, May 4, June 1, July 6 (tentative), Aug. 3, Sept. 7, Oct. 5, Nov. 2, Dec. 7

Approval of Last Meeting Summary

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

Announcements

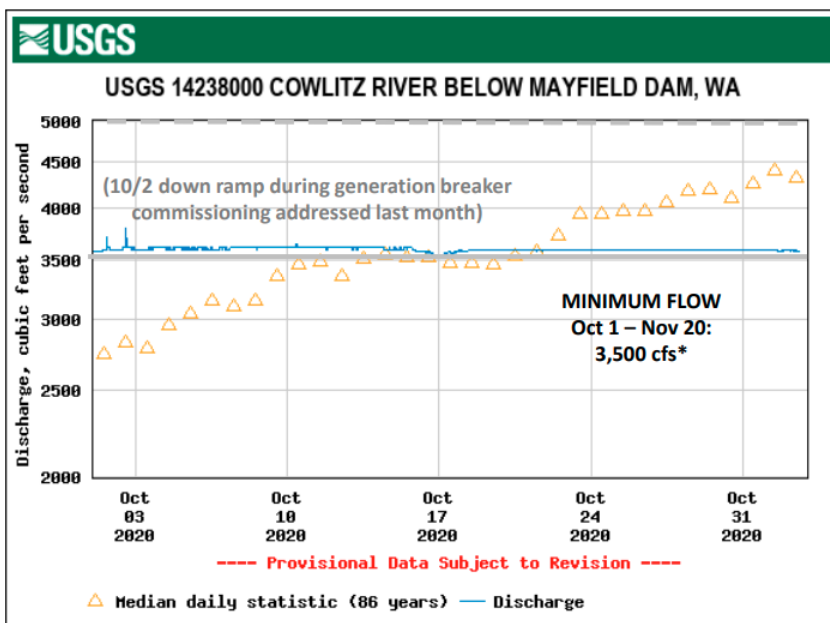
- Paul Sparks, who has been attending FTC meetings on behalf of Washington Council of Trout Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, and American Rivers notified Travis and Lyn yesterday that while he would like to be kept on FTC distribution lists, he will no longer participate in FTC meetings. He intends “to operate in the Large Mouth Bass mode ...i.e... lurk un-noticed in the shadows and only strike when something large and tasty swims by.” We have not heard whether anyone will be filling his shoes. Thanks Paul. We miss you already.
- Phil announced the Annual FHMP Status Update report will be out shortly for a 30-day review.
- Scott Anderson is now the official FTC voting member for NMFS (vs. Scott Hecht).

Updates

Hydro Operations:

- Inflows: With anticipated rain, daily average inflows are expected to trend upward (2,500cfs on November 1).
- Riffe Lake Storage: Currently at 725' which is slightly above the historical average of 718' and well within the operational max of 749'.
- Mayfield Outflows: These have been very solidly at 3,600 cfs. Melora noted the down ramp, which occurred on October 2, will be noted in the annual report.
- Forecast: Shifting to wetter and cooler with freezing levels down to 2K' for the next month. Inflows into Mossyrock could exceed 1,100 cfs.

Outflow



* 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 noted that she has discussed recent updated bathymetry data for the Barrier Dam with Matt Peter. There are several WQPPs for activities within the Project are in the queue for her comments and approval. She expects to receive the Debris Removal WQPP for the Cowlitz River project soon.

Downstream Adaptive Management TWG: Matt reported they last met on October 27. (Lyn emailed out the notes from this meeting on October 29.) Recommendations for the coming year are based on those from the previous year with modifications. Recommendations include:

1. Expanded operations in spring, beginning mid-March, and in fall, into and possibly through October, with blocked operations (information on life histories from neighboring watersheds will be documented for comparison);
2. Opportunistic spill evaluations up to 750 cfs with testing during the off-season to better understand the restrictions and limitations (to test the hypothesis that increasing the flow from 500 cfs to 750 cfs causes fish to be collected more efficiently);

3. Conduct alternate floor geometry study with modified conditions from what was done last year;
4. Development of adult Spring Chinook study design to understand effectiveness of life history strategies;
5. Conduct block study design with pumpback discharge system to evaluate Chinook entrance efficiency, with recommendation for Acoustic Telemetry study in 2021 or 2022;
6. Post-hoc analysis of unit operations vs FCE for 2019 and 2020 for general information purposes; and
7. Develop debris management evaluation study design for trash rack in front of Cowlitz Falls Dam turbine units and implement go-no-go for conducting that study (involves developing a study design).

Matt reported conversations continue with LCPUD and everyone seems to be on the same page. He will send out a DD prior to the December FTC meeting.

Fish Facilities: Eric reported that fall adult fish returns are strong, noting especially good Coho and Cutthroat returns. WDFW is encouraging anglers to take advantage of the Cutthroat fishery. We are on track to meet broodstock requirements for Coho, Cutthroat and Fall Chinook with egg takes in progress. We have received all of the Kalama Spring Chinook eggs (365,460 eggs). This brings us close to 1 million Spring Chinook eggs, which is still well short of our goal. We are currently releasing the 16 fish per pound Spring Chinook. They are all healthy and looking good.

Friends of the Cowlitz (FOC) Net pens: This is the 2nd year in a row that we didn't put Spring Chinook into net pens. The FOC are having issues with the access agreement with owners of the ponds there. While WDFW and Tacoma support doing this in the future, a new cooperative agreement needs to be signed before moving forward.

Coal Creek Release Site: Eric reported visiting this site with a TPU engineer. Both the Coal Creek and Alderwood Drive sites appear to be good release site candidates with low infrastructure requirements. Next steps include exploring potential to secure access and redesigning the backend of one of the fish transport trucks to be able to hook a hose onto it to provide for secure release at multiple locations.

New Position: TPU has just posted a Cowlitz Trout Hatchery biologist (eight year) position to help facilitate the remodel of the Cowlitz Trout Hatchery.

CFFF: Chris Foster reported they concluded the traditional collection season on Sept. 30 and then operated on a block schedule until October 30. The block schedule consisted of starting the NSC on Tuesdays at 0800 and shutting down Fridays 08:00 during each week in October, for a total of four block periods. Chris reminded the group that these extended operations are to further understand life history strategy which was previously difficult to obtain using the existing spillway flume collection system after removal of baffle panels this time of the year. He said collection should start again around mid-March and the current effort will be transitioned to maintenance activities around the facility.

CRR 2021: Travis reported Tacoma anticipates starting to advertise the 2021 round in the second quarter of 2021. At the December FTC meeting, Anchor will give a presentation on their Upper Cowlitz (stops at Packwood) hydraulic modeling effort and results. Their report will be posted to the CRR Website and will include maps to help us focus on priority areas

for habitat restoration projects. Tacoma is still figuring out how to coordinate this second grant round with Salmon Recovery Funding Board efforts.

M&E Subgroup: Phil reported this group is currently meeting every Wednesday. They usually cover a couple of topics during each 1.5-hour meeting. These include:

- Spring Chinook SAR project: Presentation to the FTC in December or January
- AHA/ISIT status update: More on this at the December FTC meeting
- Fall Chinook in the Tilton: Concerns about debris impinged on the fishway that looked like it might create passage issues. A quick survey of the mainstem revealed over 100 redds, though none were observed below the Cascade Aquaculture weir down to the new release site.
- Fall Chinook Broodstock Collection: There was agreement in concept to get Fall Chinook NOR fish from Mill Creek, representing fish from below the Barrier Dam. After discussing this with the hatchery folks who were busy with broodstock spawning, the idea was sent back to the M&E Subgroup for more discussion. Bryce expressed disappointment that no action has been taken and cautioned that it is now fairly late in the run. The discussion on this will take place November 6.
- Recycling of Cutthroat Trout: Phil reminded all that we did recycle 2K Cutthroat trout, but none of the first group were marked. These fish were sent downstream and could come back into the separator. There are plans to do one more round of recycling this year, though it is too late to do full marking this year that would allow us to assess a recovery rate. WDFW indicated that a sub-sample in the second group could be marked to determine a recovery rate for use in expanding to the entire recycle group. It was decided not to pursue this effort this year. The marking issue will be reevaluated in the future.
- Adult Handling Protocol: All were asked to review the 2020 protocol for fish arriving at the separator. They will discuss how to proceed at the next M&E meeting.
- Transition Plans: Phil is the lead for the M&E Workplan, and Matt is the lead on transition plans for the various species.

Action Item: Phil will send out M&E meeting notes using the Meeting Summary Template by November 6.

FHMP: Next Steps

Presenter: Matt Bleich

Matt reminded all that Tacoma filed the FHMP with FERC on October 2. He projected a draft Workplan for development of the Transition Plans and asked for feedback. The schedule for the Fall Chinook Transition Plan has a lot of detail. The other species lack that detail at this point, though he allocated a similar amount of time for each. The Workplan includes a series of half-day workshops. He noted the responsible party for the workshops is the FTC itself vs. a subgroup.

Bryce sees this as a very aggressive schedule. WDFW hopes the transition plans won't be lengthy documents. They would like to see a template that is streamlined and efficient. While appreciating the organization of the schedule, he is concerned about whether folks will have time to be sufficiently engaged. He is also concerned that the public input piece is very late in the game. Maybe provide a public comment period on the Fall Chinook plan?

Matt agreed that the schedule is ambitious. For that reason, he has included a reality check on January 31. He also is open to including additional public input points. When he asked key stakeholders if they “want to give it a go” responses from NMFS, WDFW, and LCPUD were affirmative.

At the December FTC meeting, we will finalize the draft Transition Template (as per line 6) in the table below:

1	Workplan - Fall Chinook Transition Plan		
2	Task	Responsible	Dates
3	Discuss and Finalize Workplan	FTC	11/3/2020
4	Develop Workshops	FTC	11/3/2020
5	Develop Draft Transition Template	Tacoma/FTC	11/17/2020
6	Finalize Draft Transition Template	FTC	12/8/2020
7	Workshop on marking and escapement	FTC	week of 12/16/20
8	Workshop on trigger points/transition timing	FTC	week of 12/16/20 and 1/11/21
9	Adult Collection plan (i.e. brood source)	FTC	week of 1/4/21
10	Workshop on Bioprogramming needs	FTC	week of 1/11/21
11	Workshop on harvest	FTC	week of 1/18/21
12	Schedule reality checkin	All	1/31/2021
13	Draft final of Fall Chinook Transition Plan	All	2/2/2021
14	Winter Steelhead Transition Plan	All	1/15/21 - 2/28/21
15	Spring Chinook Transition Plan	All	3/1/21 - 4/15/21
16	Coho Transition Plan	All	5/1/21 - 6/15/21
17	Combined review of Transition Plans	FTC	7/1/21 - 7/31/21
18	Solicit public input on Transition Plans	Public	8/1/21 - 9/1/21
19	Edit Transition Plans (as necessary)	FTC	9/1/21 - 10/15/21

Action Items:

- Matt - Send out Doodle Polls to set up the workshops.
- Matt - Send out a Draft Transition Plan template prior to the December meeting.

Satellite Rearing

Presenters: Matt Bleich and Eric Shoblom

Matt hoped that folks have had time since the last meeting to review the Satellite Rearing schedule internally. In the next few weeks, he will pass on comments to R2 to include the document which will then go out for public review, followed by a final FTC review, which may include an FTC workshop to incorporate public comments.

Workplan

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
Potential workshop to incorporate public comment	FTC	1/5/20
Finalize Satellite Rearing Facility Plan	Tacoma/R2/FTC	1/31/20

Matt also updated the slide that described what is and is not included in the Planning Document to include feedback from the FTC:

Planning Document	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is in it:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Stock Prioritization– Program Goals– Satellite Rearing Objectives– Assumed Challenges– Design Criteria– Program Assumptions– Satellite Rearing Program Alternatives<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Considered, Ranked and Pros and Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is Not:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Site Selection<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water source evaluation• Land use agreement• Space/water assessment• Assessment of access• Assessment of infrastructure– Program Details/re-ranking– Adaptive Management Plans– Designs– Construction

After completing the Planning Document, the items listed under the “What is Not” section will be addressed in the order in which they are listed, from site selection all the way through to construction. During each phase, we will reevaluate whether ranking of considered alternatives is still correct.

Matt is seeking feedback on the programs themselves. He asked everyone for creative ideas from spawning all the way to release. Are there other programs we should bring into the mix? Matt acknowledged that WDFW has yet to consolidate their thoughts on the plan. The public is anxious for the opportunity to review and comment on the plan from November 21 to December 21. Matt is happy to extend that same time frame to WDFW and any others to facilitate their review of the document. Josua found the planning document slide to be very helpful. The plan is a foundational document to lay out the ideas because the sites may have different goals (harvest/recovery), etc. We need to be able to adaptively manage the program over time so we can pivot as necessary.

Do satellite rearing installations have to be in the upper watershed? Yes, though there is room for interpretation. Rich agreed that it makes sense to focus on the Upper Basin. NMFS will analyze what TPU proposes. It doesn't have prescriptive numbers for this. NMFS perspective on recovery objectives: Trying to maximize the distribution in the Cispus and Upper Cowlitz so populations can become self-sustaining. This means the broader the distribution in the streams above CF the better. Sam asked about what strategies NMFS would recommend. Rich suggested acclimation sites even if they are temporary such as a modular pool or pond – a pump in the creek that pumps the water in and out. He acknowledged there will be access issues due to snow in the Upper Cowlitz in the spring. Another idea is adult outplants that have to swim down as opposed to having to swim up. We could also do smolt plants further up in the basin. Sam asked about numeric goals. Are we looking for a certain percent increase in adults in certain areas? Phil noted that with some really low abundance numbers like we see with Spring Chinook, there is a need to develop key desired outcomes. John asked how we might measure an improvement since we don't know the current distribution in the upper watershed. Bryce said CE, especially for Coho, seems to be improving. Do we need satellite ponds to build abundance? Or do we

need them to improve distribution or contribution to underutilized areas. The plan will likely identify some key data gaps.

Matt thanked everyone for the discussion and suggested we not get lost in the details at this point. He hopes we can look ahead to the next phases – the things listed under “What is not.” He sees a rational order to get to the next questions. We just need to start with a concept we can agree on – whatever will have the highest likelihood of success. Then we can work out ways through site selection and ultimately, how to best use the facilities – at different life stages.

Gravel Augmentation

Presenter: Travis Nelson

Travis began by reminding all that general agreement from last meeting was not to pursue gravel augmentation at Brim Bar and the Cowlitz Trout Hatchery, both located in the lower end of the 11-mile treatment reach identified as being gravel limited. The FTC had recommended focusing on releasing the supersack material that will be used for the Barrier Dam repair at Barrier Island. The supersacks will be filled gravel meeting the Settlement Agreement specifications and the released gravel will be credited toward Tacoma’s gravel placement. Travis will coordinate with Matt Peters on USACE permitting.

Work to develop the long-term gravel augmentation plan included other sites however they have been eliminated from consideration due to associated impacts that make them less desirable. Tacoma is still evaluating the Jorgenson site for future gravel augmentation. They plan to reinitiate conversations with the landowner as well as evaluate road access and condition. Travis will check how access to the site might be sequenced with the Barrier Dam repair. Barrier Island will also be considered as a site for long term gravel augmentation. Carol asked for assurance that the Barrier Island site will not impede upon other project resources such as the boat ramp at Mill Creek.

Peggy suggested two DDs. One for the supersack material being placed at Barrier Island as opposed to placement on “gravel mountain” and the second, updating the past DD for the preparation of the long-term gravel augmentation plan. She suggested the second DD update the schedule for milestones and work products that will be provided to the FTC before the plan is finalized. Bryce suggested we start with the existing DD, updating the schedule and specifying Barrier Island / Jorgenson as the alternatives moving forward.

Steve West cautioned that there are new FEMA / RCO requirements about whatever activity you do can’t result in a new rise in the river or increase flooding. During the meeting he sent the documentation on this to Travis who forwarded it to the group. It appears Tacoma Power may have to do an H&H (Hydrologic & Hydraulic) analysis for gravel augmentation.

Action Item: Travis will send out a revised DD or two for all to review prior to the December or January meeting.

Coho Return Discussion

At the October FTC meeting, we approved a DD that called for increasing the existing 6K adult Coho transport cap to the Tilton to 9K to increase angler opportunity. We agreed at the time that we may need further discussion if we approach the 9K cap. Bryce announced that, according to Sam and Brian, we are at that point. He asked if anyone has concerns about

further increasing the number of Coho in the Tilton. According to the Coho Runtime report, we are about 70% through the run. We have been getting 300-500 Coho in the separator the last few days.

Coho Runtime Report: Segregated Population Projections

Coho NORs to date = 1326 and NOR Season

Coho NOR Season = 2911 (rough projection based on historic means)

If we stay on track there will be 13K HORs and 2911 NORs for the season.

Coho Runtime Report: Integrated Population Projections

Coho HOR Season = 13,790

Coho NOW Season = 10,741

After discussion including broodstock needs and the fact that some of these fish are being harvested, Rich suggested it would be okay to put an additional 3K Coho up in the Tilton this year (9K plus 3K more for a total of 12K). There was consensus by the FTC to approve that action. Eric will revise the prior decision document and this decision will take effect immediately.

Action Item: Eric will update the DD and Travis will distribute.

Meeting Evaluation

- Great attendance
- No distracting technical issues this time!
- Stayed on schedule for break and lunch, ending a little early.
- 17 second pause worked well; would be fun to zoom in on the face of the person waiting for responses.
- Quotable Quote: "Peace cannot be achieved through violence; it can only be attained through understanding." -- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Potential Topics for December 1 FTC Meeting

- Updates incl. Hydro Ops, Water Quality, Flow Planning, CRR, 2021 FTC Work Plan
- Presentation by Anchor on Upper Cowlitz Hydraulic Modeling
- FHMP: Next Steps
- M&E Subgroup
- Gravel Augmentation Work Plan
- Satellite Rearing
- Downstream Adaptive Management TWG (DD)
- Plan for January Public FTC Meeting, including meeting topics
- Review/approve 2021 FTC Meeting Schedule

Parking Lot

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