

Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project
FERC No. 2016
Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee
Final MS Teams Public Meeting Summary
December 6, 2022 from 9:30 – 3:30

FTC Representative Attendees:

Travis Nelson	TPU
Bryce Glaser	WDFW
Anne Baxter	Ecology
Jonathan Stumpf	TU

Additional Attendees:

Bonnie Shorin	NMFS
John Serl	WDFW
Peggy Miller	WDFW
Brian Gale	WDFW
Todd Hillson	WDFW
Larona Newhouse	WDFW
Matt Bleich	TPU
Chris Foster	TPU
Eric Shoblom	TPU
Melora Shelton	TPU
Matt Peter	TPU
Tim Hoffnagle	TPU
Jamie Murphy	TPU
Laura Wolfe	LCPUD
Steve West	LCFRB
Steve Manlow	LCFRB
Nick Grant	USDA FS
Ann Weckback	Lewis County
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting / Facilitator

Public Attendees: Jack Tipping and Larry Pryor

2023 FTC Meeting Dates: January 3, February 7, March 7, April 4, May 2, June 6, (No meeting in July), August 1, September 5, October 3, November 7, December 5

Approval of November Meeting Summary

The revised version of the November FTC Meeting Summary was reviewed and approved with clarifying edits and will be posted for public review.

Announcements

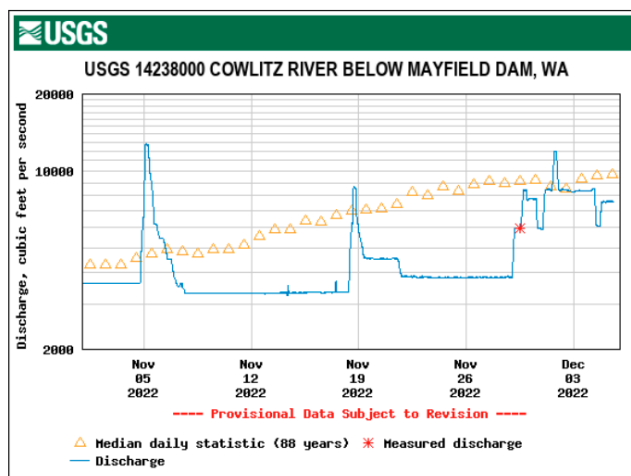
- Nick Grant announced his detail is ending so this is his last meeting with us. Thanks Nick! We've enjoyed having you with us.
- Chris Foster announced he has accepted a position with USFWS in Orofino, Idaho. His final day at the Cowlitz Falls Fish Facility will be January 27. January 3 will be his last FTC meeting with us. We will miss him and wish him well in his new position.
- Bryce noted the forecasts for spring Chinook returns are being reviewed by the Columbia River TAC and should be announced late this week or next.

Updates

Hydro Operations (presentation emailed before the meeting):

- Inflows: November daily inflows were 4,737 cfs (65% of the historical average. December inflows are currently 3,182 cfs; historical average is 9,350. Inflows have been below average since September.
- Storage: Riffe Lake continues to draft. 12/5 elevation was 700' which is more than 30' below the long-term and more recent historical averages. Mayfield continues to operate in its off-season band.
- Outflow: Currently at 7,620 cfs. The minimum Lower Cowlitz River flow is now 5K cfs. There was water management spill during high Mayfield sideflows from the Tilton during November 4-6 storms (max discharge 13K cfs, spill required at flow >3.6K cfs due to bank outage). The Mayfield Bank outage ended 11/18 with all units back in service. There were flow (11/14) and ramp (11/17) excursions during Mayfield Bank testing that be included in the annual report to FERC.
- Forecast: Snowpack is starting to build. Some precipitation is expected with below-normal temperatures. Inflows are likely to stay below 3K cfs. Riffe will continue to draft. Outflows are expected to be 5-7K cfs through the week.

Outflow



Minimum flow 3,500 cfs, reset to 3,892 cfs (11/21), reset to 5,000 cfs (12/3).
12/5: 7,620 cfs

Link to the USGS real-time Cowlitz River hydrograph:

https://waterdata.usgs.gov/wa/nwis/uv/?site_no=14238000&PARAMeter_cd=00060,00065
<https://www.mytpu.org/community-environment/parks-recreation/river-flows-lake-levels/>

Water Quality/Monitoring:

Matt P noted the November 4 sideflows mentioned by Melora resulted in Tacoma needing to spill around 6:00 that evening (due to Mayfield Bank outages). The TDG compliance limit is 110% saturation. Monitoring showed it remained above that threshold for ~9 hours. He explained this was a dam safety event and a letter discussing the exceedance will go out to Anne (Ecology) today. Anne thanked Matt for the dialogue during the spill event. He shared the following details from the Mayfield storm spill event.

- Generation limited to 3,600 cfs vs. 14,400 cfs
- Denitro tower activated 11/4
- Spill event duration: 11/4 @ 18:00 through 11/7 @ 11:00

- 11/5 @ 01:30 through 09:45 TDG surpassed the 110% compliance threshold
- Maximum TDG saturation of 114.6% reached at 02:45
- Maximum spill flow of approximately 9,300 cfs
- No observations of Gas Bubble Trauma/Disease reported
- Letter report of exceedance, cause and potential remedies
- Annual report summary of all events

ERTS Protocols: Ecology is responsible for making sure folks are compliant with water quality standards and Anne is currently in discussions with Tacoma re: *Why Ecology* requires the use of this environmental reporting tracking system. She emphasized that we are all working together to make improvements and adjustments because the environment is complex with many moving parts in which we all have a stake. The FTC works together to recommend actions to maximize the effectiveness of fisheries mitigation, protection, and enhancement measures in order to better the environment. ERTS reporting is a system that works to collect and disseminate data on the environment and is not a report card perse. For example: Municipalities are required to use ERTS to report any observed environmental problem related to any of their systems and this information is in turn reported and distributed to other stakeholders in the area so that one (or more) of them can work to address the issue. Anne noted Ecology can add Tacoma Power to the emails that get disseminated so that they can stay in the loop on these updates. E.g., if something happens at the Barrier Dam and is reported to ERTS, the email could be forwarded to Matt P. The idea is to collect data on the environment and to broadcast it digitally so that partners can work together to address the issue. ERTS - It's a system that enables us to work together to find solutions, build relationships of trust and communicate in a timely manner.

- Online: [Statewide Reporting Form](#)
- Email: swroerts@ecy.wa.gov
- Phone: (360) 407- 6300

Report other spills and environmental problems by web form, email or phone


If you see pollution or an environmental problem, you can report it via web form, email or phone. Our Environmental Report Tracking System (ERTS) staff will follow up.

- Contact the Ecology region office in the county where the problem is located.
- Call any time, 24 hours a day.
- If you are asked to leave a message, please do so and someone will call you back soon.
- You may request that your personal information remain confidential.

Southwest Region

Counties: Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Mason, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, and Wahkiakum

Online: [Statewide reporting form](#)
Email: swroerts@ecy.wa.gov
Phone: 360-407-6300



<https://ecology.wa.gov/Footer/Report-an-environmental-issue>

Matt P thanked Anne for this presentation and her collaborative approach to ERTS protocols. Bryce reminded all that members of the public can also report. Anne agreed and said it is helpful if you see something to take a photo of it and upload it to the website. Ecology often gets public ERTS notifications and that most of the time they are followed-up by local organizations.

Kosmos: Matt noted Tacoma has finished all the monitoring wells and test pits and are waiting for the data to come back re the extent of the oil contamination. After that, they will put together a plan of action for the next several years. In the meantime, quarterly sampling is ongoing.

Other ongoing projects include the courtesy dock extension at North Taidnapam and a fish passage culvert replacement.

There was a general discussion on the potential to place full spectrum material below the ordinary high-water mark but above the wetted width when removing material. The intent of this is to assure material removed from the system is given the opportunity to continue its downstream migration rather than being pulled up land for permanent disposal/placement. Tacoma is applying for maintenance permits through the Corps. Anne noted that depending on what the material is, testing may be required.

Fish Facilities:

Separator Collections:

- Coho numbers continue to drop at the separator. There have been 56,770 coho adults so far this season. 40,308 HORs and 16,462 NORs. There were 1,872 coho adults last week.
- They are seeing a handful of summer steelhead and cutthroat trout each week.
- They continue to release HORs at Gust Backstrom and NORs at the Bremer Bridge for the Tilton. With 11,011 HORs, they are close to the 12K HOR coho adult limit. This week they are sending 200 HOR adults to the Tilton.
- The Cispus Release Site is still not available and 3 additional feet of water would be needed before we could consider using it again this year.

Brood Collection:

- They are continuing to collect UM+BWT coho for broodstock following the collection schedule. We are getting well over broodstock needs for UM+BWT's.
- We are continuing to collect HOR cutthroat trout for broodstock.
- Summer Steelhead – Collection ended at the end of September.
- HOR winter-run steelhead brood collection began on December 1. They have not had any since before December 1.

Mayfield Counting House

- They had around 1,100 juveniles at Mayfield last week.
- The mortality has bounced around a little but is nothing close to the 40% at the beginning of October. Last week's mortality rate was 7%. The Mayfield Mortality Table is below.
- They are running the auto-flush for the secondary separator 3 times a week.

Cowlitz Falls Fish Facility: Chris reported the Annual Report is being populated by Tacoma consultants and should be out in the first quarter of 2023. On November 29, Tacoma had their annual meeting with LCPUD and BPA to discuss opportunities to coordinate activities.

Cispus Release Site: Laura reported LCPUD is in negotiations with the USFS about what they will be able to do with the site. The PUD wanted to bring in equipment to remove some material there. The USFS responded they would prefer the PUD use a crane, however there are issues with the procurement process and the amount of time that would be added to the project. Laura is

awaiting a write-up from the USFS re: their main concerns. She is also waiting for PUD project folks to come up with what they can do in a short amount of time from a cost perspective. This involves consulting with contractors. There is no set timeline for action. She will provide another update at the January meeting. Discussion included doing what we can as the FTC to help express to the USFS the urgency that this site be available in the near term. Would it be possible to do a temporary release at the washout area? Laura responded there were concerns about that also. Her USFS contact has been Ken Wieman.

Action Item: Travis to contact the USFS about the urgency in getting this site up and running.

Downstream Adaptive Management Technical Work Group: Matt B reported Tacoma continues to work with LCPUD and the TWG on recommendations to share with the FTC at the January meeting. At the last TWG meeting, they discussed these four recommendations:

1. Getting agreement with TP and LCPUD re: reducing trash rack occlusion on the PUD's turbine units. This would involve regular frequency of cleaning along with cost sharing. This is the top priority to be addressed before the 2023 season.
2. Conducting post-hoc analyses using co-variants for entrances in CFFF. This would involve hypotheses and testing requirements for outmigrants with a focus on steelhead, using existing acoustic and radio telemetry data to observe/determine how fish behave with flow and operating conditions so they can develop hypotheses for future testing.
3. Conducting spillway flume flow when in single unit operation. There may be an opportunity to maximize the flume flows to 25-30 cfs.
4. Conducting fish behavior flow experiments under different settings to operationalize fish entrance efficiency for Chinook. Tacoma will reach out to local experts on this.

TPU will coordinate with vendors to see if it is possible to conduct an acoustic telemetry study in 2023. He noted Collection Efficiency calculations are an ongoing point of discussion and there is a need to work on capacity (available staff time) to move this forward.

Anne B noted there are some temperature issues that may be influencing fish passage. Ecology looks forward to being kept in the loop re temperatures in Lake Scanewa.

Action Item: Matt B will follow up with Anne, Laura, and Joe First on this.

APR Process for 2023: No updates at this time.

Satellite Rearing Program

Presenter: Chris Foster

Chris reported that since the second workshop in October where there were discussions about juvenile rearing at the EN site, WDFW submitted a letter detailing comments and concerns with some of the conceptual items. This was much appreciated. Chris and other at Tacoma are working on responses to those concerns.

During the evaluation process for juvenile rearing, the group discussed the potential for a kelt reconditioning program as well. Chris is working with others at Tacoma to put together a conceptual program for 200 kelts. Phil asked him to announce at this meeting that they would be putting together a PowerPoint on this by the week of December 12.

Chris noted he has appreciated working through all of this in such a collaborative manner.

Action Item:

- Matt B: Coordinate a meeting with Amy Kocourek (NMFS) to help bring her up to speed on this project.

LCPUD Dam Operations

Presenter: Russell Page

Russell was unable to attend the meeting. He offered to respond offline to any questions raised during the meeting. The only question was whether removal of the debris in front of the LCPUD Cowlitz Falls Project Unit 1 and Unit 2 had begun as scheduled on November 7 and if that work had been completed (was anticipated to take around four weeks).

Note: Russell responded via email after the meeting that this work has indeed begun and is expected to wrap up the end of the year.

M&E Subgroup

Presenter Bryce

Bryce reported recent subgroup discussions have been around:

1. Baseline monitoring that needs to happen with some level of frequency that is ongoing to collect information to evaluate programs. The subgroup needs to determine how best to apply monitoring metrics to each population. They are working toward a way to prioritize populations and baseline monitoring metrics for implementation. Todd developed a spreadsheet framework for this task and the group agreed it should work well.
2. Directed studies on specific issues/questions. This was the primary focus of the last subgroup meeting. They are working through a prioritization and scoring process and have identified the top 5-6 things to consider in the short term.

Ultimately, both of these will drive future work described in the annual Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan that needs to be developed.

CRR Fund / Habitat and Production (HAP) Subgroup

Presenter: Melora Shelton

Updates:

The HAP Subgroup has enjoyed a well-deserved month off while Melora worked on application materials. They will meet again on December 13 to review those documents.

The LCFRB is between grant rounds (“quiet time”) and is contracting for proposal awarded in 2022.

The Annual Report to FERC on the CRR Program will come out for 30-day review by the end of the year.

Discussion Topic: Implementation Strategy:

The 2017 original document was updated in 2021 (interim) to incorporate the LCFRB partnership knowing a comprehensive update was needed. The 2023 version has been restructured, brings more parity between the HAP and HAB program elements, and fully incorporates the HAP Guiding Principles (updated in May). WDFW comments from the 2021 update process were very helpful in making these improvements.

Melora shared a draft of the DD which will be presented for review at the January FTC meeting, including two crosswalk tables she put together to facilitate the review of the document.

Melora identified one topic for discussion from the original document Program Criteria and Priorities (number 4 below) because it came up at both the LCFRB and internally at Tacoma as potentially not aligning with the upper basis focus for the program. She asked for discussion to understand the FTC’s intent since this was before she was involved with the program.

By combining the species prioritization and the geographic boundaries, the CRR Program project priorities are listed in ranked order as follows.

Projects directly benefiting:

1. → Upper Cowlitz subbasin Spring Chinook
2. → Upper Cowlitz subbasin Steelhead and Coho
3. → Tilton salmon and steelhead (listed populations) and Upper Cowlitz Fall Chinook (distribution currently limited to the Tilton River)
4. → Lower basin listed salmon and steelhead having a high proportion of matching funds

Bryce recalled there had been discussion around if lower basin programs that reduced harvest impact on upper basin programs. We had not fully completed the criteria about what hatchery programs would look like and what actions could contribute to recovery populations of fish.

Peggy remembered discussing habitat projects and how they could occur in the lower basin if they benefited upper basin populations, e.g., migration holding area or rearing for upstream populations. She was not sure why the lower basin salmon populations were included. Melora noted it was part of the 2017 document.

John noted this may have come from Settlement Agreement language around the production cap.

Melora noted that the HAP subgroup has been specifically talking about how programs that don't necessarily target upper basin species can have other benefits associated with them. However, projects targeting lower basin populations should not be eligible without bringing a benefit back to the primary populations.

Melora suggested striking #4 for clarity and relying on the other three to get to the original intent of #4.

Peggy agreed and suggested striking #4 and also strike "directly."

Bryce noted that projects with direct benefits to 1-3 would be more supported than those with indirect benefits.

Ann W asked if it would be helpful to the LCFRB if "high proportion" was quantified such as a specific percent of the overall cost. Melora agreed with that suggestion.

Steve W suggested #4 should not be on the list. It could be mentioned otherwise. The focus here is on the upper basin fish. If held to the mainstem or confluence areas and it needs a high proportion of match, it may not qualify for SRFB funds.

Melora thanked everyone for this discussion and explained she wants to respect the intent of the original document to the extent it makes sense. When she sends this out for review, she will drop #4 and strike "directly" per Peggy's suggestion.

There was concern about how realistic it was to expect folks to return the document with comments by December 16 (to approve the DD in January). She asked that folks look at the documents and then let her know if the 16th seems doable. If not, she asked everyone to bring comments / questions back to the January 3 meeting after which they would do a post-meeting

review as they have done in the past. Jonathon and others supported this idea. January approval will support both grant rounds going live in early February. Steve W noted the LCFRB is still waiting on RCO, so their calendar is not firm yet. At this point, they plan to put the grant round online on Feb. 6.

Action Items

- Melora: By December 6, send draft DD along with clean version of the Implementation Strategy for all to review.
 - All: Let Melora know if you want to see the track changes version or a version with comments to aid with crosswalks. Comments received before the January 3 meeting will be consolidated to support January approval.
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Public Comment Period #1 - Agenda related

Jack Tipping asked about the number of Chinook juveniles tagged at Mayfield, and what percent of those juveniles were not tagged. Mortality? Breakdown of yearling vs. sub yearling? Continue with same tag code in 2023 as used for 2022?

Tacoma responded that 19,610 Chinook juveniles have been tagged at Mayfield and Chinook 377 (just under 2%) fry were untagged during 2022. For 2022, there were 795 Chinook morts out of the 19.6K Chinook. Moving to a new tag code in 2023 – may break it down further. 19,272 Chinook sub-yearlings (fry, parr, 0+ smolts) were collected at Mayfield along with 715 yearlings.

Re CRR: Jack noted the SA said hatchery production would increase substantially if downstream passage was discontinued which it has been. He reminded all that Jamie Herrera Butler wrote a letter to FERC asking about this. FERC has yet to respond. The public would like to see an investment on the lower river production without the requirement of matching monies. Per the prior discussion, Jack would like to see #4 remain on the list.

Topics for January 3, 2022 FTC Meeting

- Updates incl. Hydro Ops
 - Water Quality, incl. ERTS protocols
 - LCPUD Cowlitz Falls Dam Operations
 - Fish Facilities
 - Update on Cispus Release Site - Laura
 - Satellite Rearing DD
 - Downstream Adaptive Management TWG
 - CRR Fund / HAP Subgroup DD
 - M&E Subgroup
 - 2023 APR Process
 - Preview February FTC Meeting topics
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Public Comment Period #2 – Any Topic

No topics were raised.

Meeting Evaluation

- We will disclose the agenda could change for future meeting announcements.
- Issues with A/V.
- Happy to have the public attending these meetings on an ongoing basis.

- Thank you, Jack and Larry, for attending!

Inspirational Quote offered by Travis:

“The world is full of a lot of great people. If you can’t find one, be one!” - Anonymous

Closing Remarks

Travis thanked everyone for the thoughtful input at today’s meeting. He is pleased that the public is now free to sit in on these meetings. This is what makes the FTC effective. He also wished everyone a wonderful holiday season.

Parking Lot

- Presentation by Tacoma’s Power Management Group and/or from Grant PUD re improving SAR
- Review Steelhead Kelt Recycling Program