

**Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project**  
**FERC No. 2016**  
**Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee**  
**Final MS Teams Meeting Summary**  
February 1, 2022, from 9:30 – 1:30

**FTC Representative Attendees:**

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

**Additional Attendees:**

Sheila Marcoe	WA Dept. of Ecology
Anne Baxter	WA Dept. of Ecology
Josua Holowatz	WDFW
John Serl	WDFW
Peggy Miller	WDFW
Sam Gibbons	WDFW
Brian Gale	WDFW
Todd Hillson	WDFW
Matt Bleich	TPU
Eric Shoblom	TPU
Chris Foster	TPU
Phil Sandstrom	TPU
Tim Hoffnagle	TPU
Steve West	LCFRB
Ann Weckback	Lewis County
Laura Wolfe	LCPUD
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting / Facilitator

**2022 FTC Meeting Dates:** Mar. 1 (Public Meeting), Apr. 5, May 3, June 7 (Public Meeting), (no meeting in July), Aug. 2, Sept. 6, Oct. 4, Nov. 1, and Dec. 6 (Public Meeting)

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**Approval of Last Meeting Summary**

The January FTC meeting summary was reviewed and approved with minor edits and will be posted for public review.

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**Review of FTC Protocols**

Travis displayed the protocols, and we made edits to reflect MS Teams as the default meeting mode. We also discussed how public comments are handled at public meetings. We will show the meeting ground rules and encourage use of the chat function. Other discussion included using the HAB Sub-committee as an example for establishing a subcommittee charter. We were reminded of the notes template that has been developed and used inconsistently by subcommittees. Travis will distribute this edited document with the meeting notes for additional review and approval at the March meeting.

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**Announcements**

- Alas, this was Carol's last day with us as she retires on February 2. Sheila Marcoe, Carol's supervisor, is taking all calls and emails related to both sides of her position:

FERC Hydroelectric Projects and contaminated Construction Stormwater General Permit sites. She can be reached at (360) 522-2987 or sheila.marcoe@ecy.wa.gov. Anne Baxter will be taking over the FERC side of things until a permanent hire is made. She can be reached at anne.baxter@ecy.wa.gov. In addition to the customary limerick, several members of the FTC expressed their appreciation for Carol's drive, focus, directness, attention to detail, and ability to build open and trusting relationships. We miss her already and wish her well in her new endeavors.

- Scott Anderson is on a detail with USDA until the end of April. In the meantime, NOAA is working to find a replacement to serve on the FTC while he's out.
- Tacoma is seeking to fill a seasonal evening shift (7pm-7am) vacancy at the CF Fish Facility. Please let Chris know of anyone who may be interested.

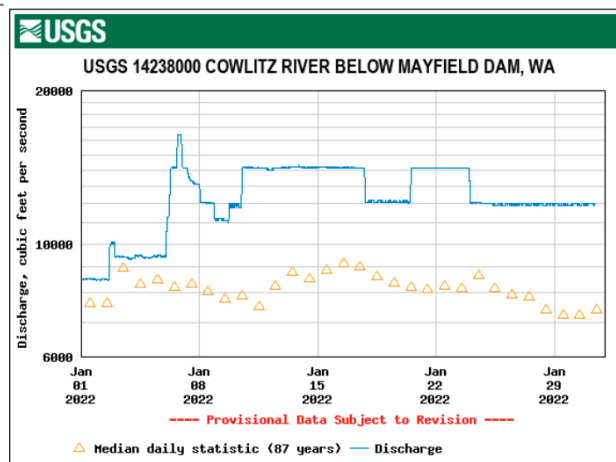
## Updates

### Hydro Operations

Melora reviewed the Hydro Ops PowerPoint Presentation emailed to all before the meeting.

- Inflows: January ended up at 145% of the historic average (over 13K cfs) with inflows on 1/30 at about 7K cfs.
- Storage: Riffe Lake was at 736.2' elevation on January 31. The max elevation since the last meeting was 744.9'. Mayfield operations have been typical.
- Snowpack: This has been building steadily and we are at or above average levels.
- Outflows: Mayfield is currently at 12K cfs with a minimum flow of 5K cfs. Operations have been above critical flow with no exceedances or unit trips. Down ramping restrictions are currently 2" per hour around the clock (until February 16). There was spill at Mayfield on January 6 (8 hours total, with max discharge of 16,400 cfs). Tacoma monitored for TDG during the spill and will report to Ecology per the Monitoring Plan.
- Ecology noted that they need more information re. regulating spill at Mossyrock as well as Mayfield (e.g., estimated discharge on the generating units). Matt Peter and Melora can work with Ecology on characterizing operations to meet Ecology's needs.
- 10-Day Forecast: Cooler and drier weather is expected. Lower freezing levels until February 4. Inflows are expected to stay low. Riffe Lake is likely to keep drafting with outflows expected to stay around 12K-13K cfs.

### Outflow



Minimum flow 5,000 cfs. No exceedances.

Link to the USGS real-time Cowlitz River hydrograph:

[https://waterdata.usgs.gov/wa/nwis/uv/?site\\_no=14238000&PARAMETER\\_cd=00060.00065](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/wa/nwis/uv/?site_no=14238000&PARAMETER_cd=00060.00065)

### Water Quality/Monitoring

Carol reported that on January 31 she did some recon at the Kosmos site with her unit. It was raining and there was a sheen that was sampled. She appreciates Tacoma working with Ecology on the water quality concerns at Kosmos. She is approving the interim remedial investigation and is working on approval of the WQPP. The toxics clean-up evaluation is still going as part of the remedial investigation. The contamination at Kosmos is revealing itself to be a chronic (vs. acute) situation. Carol noted it may take another decade to complete all of the necessary work. She is also reviewing the Debris Removal WQPP – she has had it for a while.

Fish Facilities: Eric noted things are “sleepy” right now. That’s why Tacoma is planning the ladder outage for this time of year. They are still on schedule for the outage to occur February 14 -18 and use the time to repair and upgrade electro-anesthesia basket, replace a critical valve, and make other minor repairs to the ladder. They will operate the separator before and after the outage.

They have advanced broodstock collection for winter steelhead in hopes of providing additional angler opportunity. Bryce expressed appreciation for Tacoma working with WDFW on genetic screening on early returns. Pushing the run to return earlier is great progress toward our Transition Plans! Eric further reported that 110 winter steelhead have returned to the separator so far (above the 10-year average of 77). He is very pleased to see the stronger returns.

The coho return has dropped off significantly. There were zero returns to the separator on January 31.

Fishing regulations for spring Chinook: Josua provided an update on the Cowlitz Fisheries. After the meeting the Cowlitz Kalama Lewis Factsheet (CKL) document was distributed to the FTC along with the notes from this meeting. The document contains high-level spring Chinook run size forecasts for these tributaries along with hatchery escapement needs and expected harvest. WDFW feels like they can provide some opportunity for spring Chinook in the Cowlitz. Josua showed two tables from the document and also the NOAA stoplight chart for ocean conditions. Bryce reminded all the past few years the Cowlitz River fishery has been constrained. The purpose of this fact sheet is to share the information about forecasts, harvest and broodstock requirements, we have had some bad ocean conditions that show strong signs of improving. WDFW’s current fishery strategy is to limit retention to 1 adult hatchery Chinook and close the fishery the end of April (before the peak of the run in May) so broodstock goals can be met. In May, WDFW will reevaluate broodstock collection and returns and adopt additional fishery rules appropriately.

Cowlitz Falls Fish Facility: Chris reported they have been offline since end of October and are gearing up to start the next season on March 15. Carol asked Chris to let Anne and Sheila know when Tacoma does the debris removal project.

Gravel Augmentation: Travis is updating the schedule as well as continuing to work on another downstream site. The process of putting together the schedule includes ensuring permits and Water Quality Protection Permits (WQPPs), etc. are all in place. Carol reminded all gravel augmentation requires a WQPP. She asked that the next gravel augmentation at the Barrier Dam have its own WQPP with a corresponding map, a list of what Best Management Practices are being used, and that everyone respect the boundary. She also requested that Anne and Sheila be apprised when the gravel subcommittee is formed. Travis and Melora will

send out a draft of the Gravel Augmentation Draft Long-Term Plan for discussion at the March FTC meeting.

2022 FTC Work Plan: Travis will send out an updated draft for all to review so it can be finalized and approved at the March FTC meeting. The public meeting schedule is the main portion that has been updated. Public meetings in 2022 are scheduled for March, June, and December.

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## **Satellite Rearing**

**Presenter: Phil Sandstrom**

Phil reported Tacoma is looking forward to starting a conversation on the impacts of various alternatives. He walked through a PowerPoint presentation supplemented by great photos recently taken by Chris Foster. The DD approved by the FTC in November supported investigating Option 2 (overwintering fry/sub-yearling collection Upper Basin and 5 (using net pens). Site Evaluation Considerations (columns in the spreadsheet) included location, land ownership, land required, potential water sources, adult access/site fidelity, power availability, road access, and any other additional comments / misc.

Tacoma reviewed all sites within the above considerations and then their Engineering group reviewed the sites looking for constraints, etc. They narrowed the list down to five potential sites: two each on the Cispus and upper Cowlitz Rivers, and one at Mayfield Reservoir.

The draft document by R2 stipulated less than 4 cfs for the facility (for securing permits). Phil walked us through potential production for various species within that limit. He showed tables of max smolt production and expected adult returns from max smolt produces for SARs. Another table showed parr and fry migrants for the last five years collected at the North Shore Collector(?), with coho in the largest numbers. Chinook collection has been relatively low as are steelhead and cutthroat. He also projected potential production from a net pen program (number of returning adults to the separator for each of the adult returns) and what might be propagated into a net pen facility. R2 had considered 42 fish /lb. and rearing up to 80K fish.

Progress toward recovery:

- Increased spatial distribution
- Resiliency and stability
- Boost to NOR productivity – will result in higher number of fish at CF
- Ability to help multiple species/origins – both NOR and HOR spring Chinook needs a boost. A lot of potential benefit to steelhead as well). Coho don't seem to need a similar boost.

Feedback:

- Good to see this information. Appreciate the thinking that went into how these facilities might help us. This is a good start.
- For many years many groups have been pushing very hard to have these facilities constructed. Currently, WDFW is paying close attention to Collection Efficiency (CE) improvements and tracking NOR returns, overall abundance, etc. Future Recovery will continue to be driven by CE at CFFF. It has been stated that a focus of satellite rearing will be to boost spatial distribution. Do we have baseline information on this? Will we be able to document how much of a boost we get? What is the problem we are trying to solve? Life history/limiting factors? What is the expected boost compared

to other actions we might take? WDFW looks forward to seeing these questions addressed in the biological evaluation component of the alternatives analysis.

- It would be helpful to see the site evaluation component and biological evaluation components married together.
- It is good to do a species-by-species evaluation. We still have a ways to go on spring Chinook. Which species are we focusing on and why, and what benefit do we expect to achieve? We need goals that are clear, transparent, and measurable.

Phil thanked everyone for these comments. When looking at the number of NOR fish in the recent past, it is important to make sure we answer these types of questions. Matt noted Tacoma is taking a two-pronged approach to satellite rearing. Phil is working on how we can implement one of the facilities to meet Tacoma's licensing requirements. How does Tacoma balance / prioritize that within their portfolio? It is important that we are all on the same page as we go forward. Bryce agreed that everyone needs to agree on the expected benefit. Phil agreed we are in a good place to do that within the five sites being considered.

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### **M&E Subgroup**

#### **Presenter: Phil Sandstrom**

Phil reported they have been developing a list of baseline and directed studies to incorporate into the monitoring plan which will be an addendum to the FHMP. Subgroup members are working on prioritizing the list and also hoping to make additional progress on the big table.

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### **Downstream Adaptive Management Technical Work Group**

#### **Presenter: Matt Bleich**

Matt walked everyone through the DD that was sent out prior to the meeting. He noted that there have been continued staffing challenges at Tacoma that have required transitioning some efforts to others in the team until an additional hire can be made. He is pleased that Gabe Maguire is stepping in for now.

Matt reviewed the four recommendations listed in the DD and reminded all that the FTC has been discussing the contents of the DD at past meetings. The decision can occur at the March FTC meeting. The TWG has a charter that includes working through an annual work plan which includes making initial recommendations to the FTC in the fall, coordinating closely with the LCPUD and then finalizing recommendations with the FTC at this time of the year. LCPUD's maintenance activities would not have conflicted with doing with active tag evaluations this year. Tacoma had been looking at ordering the tags – then found that supply chain problems prevented them from moving forward for this year. Sigh. The good news is we can now take the time to be more intentional in planning to do the evaluation next year.

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### **LCPUD Dam Operations**

#### **Presenter: Laura Wolfe**

Laura reported Russel was unable to attend this meeting as he is focused today on fixing the boat barrier so folks can start using the park. The PUD was considering doing a drawdown in October, for a debris barrier program walkthrough (moorage site). They are planning a drawdown of around 20' in October 2022.

Clarification from Russell Page for additional drawdowns (email sent to WDFW on 02/23/2023).

The PUD will need to draw down the reservoir for an inspection of the moorage site, contractor walkthrough, as well as for the rehabilitation of the moorage site in preparation for the maintenance that will be taking place on the Debris Barrier in 2023.

1. The 2-3 day-drawdown for the walkthrough inspection is slated for October 2022 after fish collection. This will be a 20' drawdown to dry out and inspect the moorage site. This is also dependent on USACE approving our project for 2023.
2. The Debris barrier moorage site repair work drawdown is a separate drawdown and is slated for Q1, 2023 dependent on a dry window of time and lower flows. Several factors need to be worked out still including selection of a contractor, proper permitting for the removal of sediment and the contractors plan for the rehabilitation of the site. This could be a 2-3 week-drawdown for the repair work/removal of sediment.
3. The Debris barrier rehab – 20' drawdown is tentatively scheduled for early September thru late October, 2023. Currently we are waiting on permitting and still planning on doing the rehabilitation next year.

Carol cautioned that there is much more sediment stored behind the dam now than in 2015. Riffe Lake receives the input of the drawdowns and can fluctuate so timing of a large drawdown will be critical for the Cowlitz River project and the Kosmos project as well. The additional sediment might cause a backup into Rainy Creek, potentially putting the Kosmos project at risk. Laura will ask that the drawdown be done in February instead of October and will make sure Joe communicates with Ecology on this. All agreed February is a better timeframe for a large drawdown. Carol noted this shift would mean the PUD would be less likely to violate Ecology regulations in terms of turbidity.

Josua reiterated the need to disseminate timely and accurate information to the public. He suggested a press release and making sure the PUD's website is up to date.

**Action Items:**

- Laura: Suggest the debris program investigation be moved from October to February.
- Laura: Ensure the public is well informed (perhaps include Joe's phone number?) and will keep Josua in the loop.

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**FHMP Transition Plans**

**Presenter: Matt Bleich**

Matt announced all the transition plans have been completed and the plan is to move forward with the plans as characterized in the FHMP and submitted to FERC in 2020. Information from the FHMP was used to develop the transition plans. "We've done the work. Why not use the work?" Bryce agreed and is excited to see the finish line on this.

Matt presented a DD for approval of the transition plans. There will be a meeting with the public before we finalize this DD. We will take the public comments and incorporate them. The transition plans will be considered complete once the DD is approved at the next meeting and then we can begin implementing the plans. There may need to be edits to the Coordination/Need section.

FTC will see the final plans after public comments have been incorporated and before they are sent to FERC.

**Action Item:** All - Send edits, especially to the Coordination section to Matt and copy Travis.

## **CRR Fund / Habitat and Production (HAP) Subcommittee**

### **Presenters: Travis Nelson, Melora Shelton, and Steve West**

Travis displayed a high-level flowchart showing how things might go once all the participants are identified and the HAP subcommittee is up and running. The diagram will be expanded to include interaction with / accountability to the FTC throughout the process. Melora expanded with examples of specific tasks to be asked of the subcommittee. Guiding Principles will be the first task and will be included in the charter/scoping. The Guiding Principles will come back to the FTC for approval and will be integrated into the implementation strategy. Melora is hoping the subcommittee can meet before the March 1 FTC meeting. She looks forward to input on the Guiding Principles, scope, and charter. Once complete, Carol requested these be forwarded to Anne and Sheila. Bryce noted WDFW can provide a template charter as a starting point. Melora will follow up.

Ongoing LCFRB Grant Round: Steve announced the pre-proposals are technically complete for this grant round. Draft proposals are due March 1. They have held three proposals for the CRR: Kiona Creek Design, Barrier Assessment, and Restoration on the upper Cowlitz tributaries.

HAP Subcommittee: Travis asked voting FTC members who they would like to be their representatives on the HAP committee. Bryce noted WDFW wants Sam Gibbons to be the primary rep with Brian Gale as the alternate once proposal solicitation/review begins. Peggy will be the rep for the initial work on Guiding Principles and charter development with Sam as the alternate. Travis noted that although we told the public we intended to have a HAP round this year, the round wouldn't actually occur until 2023. We can make this clear at the March FTC meeting that is open to the public. Travis sent out a document with HAP information and Guiding Principles that the subcommittee would be revising. This would then be put into the implementation strategy in its own section.

**Action Item:** Travis – Setup a Doodle Poll for a subcommittee meeting to take place before the March 1 FTC meeting.

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### **Topics for March 1, 2022 Public FTC Meeting**

- Review of Protocols and 2022 FTC Work Plan
- Usual Updates: Hydro Ops, Water Quality, Fish Facilities, etc.
- LCPUD Dam Ops
- Finalize Fish Protocols / Spring Chinook Fishery options for the Cowlitz
- Satellite Rearing
- Downstream Adaptive Management Technical Work Group
- FHMP Transition Plan Update
- Planning for 2022 APR Process
- Satellite Rearing Program
- CRR Program
- M&E Subgroup
  - Marking Strategies
- Gravel Augmentation Timeline
- Preview April 5 FTC Meeting topics

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### **Meeting Evaluation**

- Appreciate meeting Anne and Sheila

- Josua's Quote: "Today marks the end of the last chapter of the year. With the start of the first chapter of the New Year's book, let's put the old book on the shelf or even in the lower drawer, and let's pick up the new one, carry crayons in our hands, and start writing a new colorful story." — Nadine Sadaka Boulos
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### **Closing Remarks**

Travis thanked everyone for the good discussions and thoughtful collaboration as we move forward with many projects. And all wished Carol a final goodbye with gratitude for her excellent work. We look forward to seeing her in her retirement.

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### **Parking Lot**

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