

Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project
FERC No. 2016
Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee
Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery
Final Meeting Summary
February 4, 2020 from 9:30 – 3:15

Attendees:

Travis Nelson	TPU
Bryce Glaser	WDFW
Carol Serdar	WA Dept. of Ecology
Paul Sparks	WA Council of TU, TU, American Rivers
James Archibald, by phone	Tech Rep for NMFS
John Serl	Tech Rep for WDFW
Peggy Miller	Tech Rep for WDFW
Brian Gale	Tech Rep for WDFW
Sam Gibbons	Tech Rep for WDFW
Josua Holowatz	Tech Rep for WDFW
Matt Bleich	Tech Rep for TPU
Eric Shoblom	Tech Rep for TPU
Phil Sandstrom	Tech Rep for TPU
Tim Hoffnagle	Tech Rep for TPU
Chris Foster, by phone	Tech Rep for TPU
Steve West	LCFRB
Laura Wolfe	LCPUD
Ann Weckback	Lewis County, Tech Rep for TPU
Ruth Tracy	USFS, Tech Rep for TPU
JD Jones	USFS, Tech Rep for TPU
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting / Facilitator

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

FHMP Workshop Dates: Feb. 18 (10-2), Feb. 26 (10-2), and for the first 1-2 hours of the FTC meetings in March-June (see above for FTC Meeting dates)

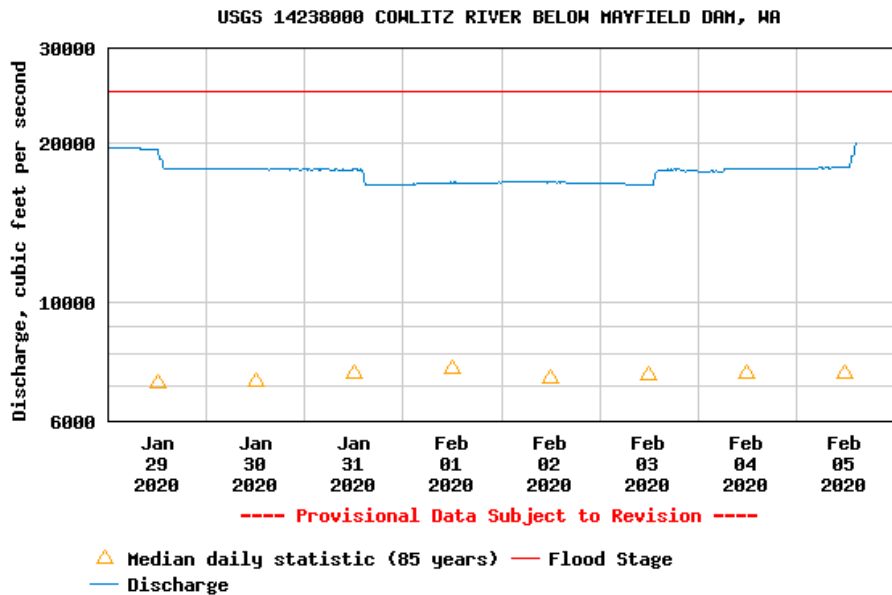
- **Action Item**

- All: Continue to identify issues that need to be resolved via FHMP workshops.

Updates

Hydro Operations:

- Inflows into Riffe Lake: January daily average at 18K cfs (the highest in the last several years, due to the recent rain).
- 10-day rain forecast: 8-10 more inches in the watershed. TPU will continue to spill to accommodate for the inflow. They are generating at full pool.
- Riffe Lake elevation: 747' (Historic elevation has been at 730').
- Downstream movement of gravel: A new bench right below the gravel surface has formed over the last few 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: Travis reported that the effort continues to remove 1,200 tons of material, most of the stockpiled material is contaminated. It has been stored on the Kosmos Flats. TPU plans to relocate this pile to a landfill by February 7; some of the material is stockpiled on the Kosmos boat ramp parking area until the landfills are willing to accept it. Carol requested that Jessica Knickerbocker (TPU Project Manager and engineer) attend an upcoming FTC meeting to do a presentation with maps and photos that illustrate the good water management work that TPU is doing there. She would also like to see the FERC order showing TPU has the ability to go up to 755'. There is a lot of debris coming out of the Cowlitz and backwatering around the excavation area. Carol also noted she is looking forward to receiving the Project Water Quality summary reports from the tire removal and Mayfield Park boat ramp extension.

Low Flow Planning: Last year's cold and dry winter resulted in a spring-time low flow situation which prompted TPU to have a discussion with FTC (including: Ecology, NMFS, and WDFW). At previous FTC meetings in 2019, Ecology requested Tacoma develop a plan or process in which to request a reduction of minimum flows that supports Ecology's conditioning authority related to changes of minimum instream flows. Travis noted that Ecology (not the FTC) has conditioning authority on the reduction of minimum instream flows. He will work with Florian, Jim, and Carol to develop a process paper that lays out a plan that takes into account the Bi-Op, the amended license from FERC (after the Bi-Op in 2004), and the SA. Though the forecast does not indicate drought conditions this year (2020), TPU has committed to drafting a plan for Ecology approval and FTC review. Carol asked if Melora could put together a similar presentation that was done for the Nisqually Basin for the Cowlitz River Project.

Paul suggested we all think about this in a more expansive way – it is also a habitat issue and may influence how we dispense the CRR funds. Why not plan to keep the water flows at a higher level throughout the season? British Columbia and the Cowlitz Indian Tribe have been using beavers for this purpose.

Action Items:

- Travis: Send to Carol FERC Order showing TPU has the ability to go up to 755' elevation.
 - Travis: Invite Jessica to FTC meeting to present TPU response to Kosmos seep.
 - Travis: Ask Melora to put together TPU low-flow response plan (as was done for Nisqually).
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M&E Subgroup Report**Presenter: Phil Sandstrom**

CWT at Mayfield: Phil reported that while they have been discussing this at the Subgroup level, they won't begin doing CWT of Coho at Mayfield this year. While disappointed at this, he noted that this will provide time to get the strategy in place and align with the FHMP. The marking strategy should function in accordance with transitions to various recovery phases. This topic will be placed among the FHMP workshop topics.

Tilton Release Site: Eric explained that the installation of the flume was completed at the end of January. The flume sagged during the water test, causing some water to flush back out of the funnel. TPU will tend to these issues before they commission the release site for fish. Fish commissioning will be flow dependent and rely on availability of hatchery fish. Current flows are not conducive for any testing with fish, as they need flows between 500 cfs and 2,000cfs for safety of individuals participating in the testing. They plan to do the testing with HOR Steelhead. The final adjustments should be done around mid-February. Bryce reported that WDFW is working on posting boundaries around that location. The current rule says there is a closure at the posted markers around the fish release site. They plan to make "release site" plural in the annual fishing rules publication and in the formal Washington Administrative Code (WAC). Changing the publication and WAC to accommodate this should be a simple fix. John will work with Phil and Eric to determine the best places to post the markers with input from WDFW enforcement.

Presentations: Phil reminded all that this group did presentations for the FTC on Chinook and Coho. It seems logical for the next presentation to be on Steelhead, which, if requested by the FTC, would likely occur in May. Bryce suggested the Subgroup put these presentations on hold and focus more on FHMP, as there will likely be an M&E component associated with the topics from the workshops. He suggested the current focus be around resolving data issues.

Action Item:

- Lyn: Send out solicitation from FTC for M&E Subgroup topics.
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Downstream Adaptive Management TWG**Presenter: Matt Bleich and Chris Foster**

Matt explained that this group last met on January 28. The TWG has been communicating about 2020 CFNSC evaluation recommendations to this group for the last few months. This is the culmination of the work of that group. The five recommendations from the working group are listed in the 2020 CFNSC Evaluation Recommendations Decision Document. Matt's PowerPoint presentation at the November FTC meeting contained considerable details of the evaluation. He reminded all that the intent of the evaluation is to begin to improve collector efficiency by better understanding the potential benefits associated with

the collector over an extended time period (February – November) and opportunistically increase the collector flow from 500-750 cfs during spring spill events.

Chris explained the summary of potential impacts is just now beginning. TPU started up collection on February 3. They will run the Northshore Collector continuously throughout the season. Of course, any flood events will require them to shut down. The spillway flume system has been and will remain offline until the spillway baffle panels can be safely installed. The baffle panels upstream from the spillway flume system are required when collecting fish using this system. FERC has mandated these can only be installed after coordinating with LCPUD, likely mid-March or early April after the flood threat has diminished. The intent to collect earlier and later than previous seasons is to gain understanding about life history patterns with an eye toward recovery.

After some discussion, the 2020 CFNSC Evaluation Decision Document was approved by consensus as written. Note: Fish collected so far include Coho smolts, Steelhead, yearling Chinook, Chinook and Coho fry. They have also collected lots of suckers and northern pike minnows.

Action Item: Travis: Complete the approved decision document and email it out to all.

Gravel Augmentation

Presenter: Travis Nelson

Travis explained there has been no gravel placement in the river for the last four years. The 2019 season marked the end of the grace period to figure out how to do the augmentation. TPU created a new decision document about developing some work plans and identifying some more desirable locations for future distribution of gravel near the hatchery. The intention behind this license article was that the loss of gravel transport associated with the dams has negatively impacted spawning gravel quality and quantity in the reach below the Barrier Dam. TPU is evaluating several potential gravel augmentation locations from Mayfield to Blue Creek. Travis assured all that they will come back to the FTC with a full alternatives analysis for the FTC to consider.

He also noted that currently TPU is planning a Barrier Dam repair project. It would make sense to sequence gravel augmentation with the repair. Construction will be in 2021 at the earliest and may take a couple of construction seasons to complete. TPU will bring a work plan with the alternatives' analysis to a spring FTC meeting. FTC members reported being very eager to see the plan.

Cowlitz Restoration & Recovery (CRR) Fund: 2020 Program

Presenter: Travis Nelson

Travis reminded all they are taking time in 2020 to apply lessons learned and will be prepared to sync the timing of the next CRR grant round process with the 2021 LCFRB SRFB grant round. That means beginning the solicitation process for 2021 this fall (2020).

Since the last FTC meeting, Keith and Florian met with Steve Manlow (LCFRB Executive Director) and Todd Olson (LCFRB Chair) to discuss how to best align with their process. They are developing some additional recommendations to improve the process. This may include offering some workshops with potential applicants. This will help to build and

educate the sponsor base. Steve reported that while the LCFRB has an interest in the CRR process, it is unclear at this time if they will include it in their Grants Manual for 2021.

The first Annual CRR Fund Report was sent out on January 7 for a 30-day review. After reading the report, Peggy had a question about the changes made to the CRR Fund in 2019, specifically where the money is being kept. Money Market? Escrow? The report is the first time the information was made available to the FTC and she would like more information. Travis will follow up with Florian for the answer.

Last year, toward the end of the process, The CRR Subgroup was rolled into the FTC administratively and the transition was less than smooth. Part of the lessons learned discussions relative to this are scheduled to occur at the March or April FTC meeting. Note: The FTC did not delegate their authority to the CRR subgroup. The FTC gave the subgroup an assignment to vet the proposals and bring a funding recommendation back to the FTC for their approval. This is specifically stated in the implementation strategy.

Action Item: Travis: Check with Florian about the CRR Fund, per Peggy's question.

FHMP Update

Presenter: Matt Bleich

Unresolved FHMP Topics: Matt asked folks to provide him with a broad review of high-level concerns. TPU is planning several workshops to address key unresolved issues within the FHMP. The first two full-day workshops will be February 18 and 26. Additional workshops will occur as part of the March - June FTC meetings if needed.

By April, any remaining unresolved topics will be developed into white papers, as placeholders, to describe the different viewpoints, interim actions and plan for resolution. By June, there will be a "home" for all issues, and these will be passed to TPU's technical editor who will integrate them into the draft FHMP before it is distributed widely for review.

Brainstormed List of Potential FHMP Workshop Topics:

- CWT of Coho at Mayfield
 - Shift from CFFF
 - Chinook marking
 - Dam passage survival by route
 - LCPUD has concerns
- Need more references to the Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries Plan (CSFP)
- Fall Chinook (moving integrated program out of the Lower Cowlitz to Upper Basin, essentially to the Tilton)
 - How to determine NOR assignment to population (pHOS calculations, etc.)
 - What the plan entail and timeline for implementation
 - Need to improve abundance monitoring for NOR Chinook in the lower river - Next steps?
 - Mayfield FCE evaluation / improvement
 - Tagging that will align with the Recovery Plan/CSFP
- Steelhead
 - Winter steelhead
 - Detail re: Development of plan for winter Steelhead programs
 - List types of issues
 - Transition component

- Steps in developing the plan itself
 - 6-year cycle, goals, etc.
 - Capture interim steps
 - Summer Steelhead
 - No detail is provided
 - What will the program look like? What are the options?
 - How is this incorporated into decision making?
 - Identify Resident Rainbows as component of / contributor to Steelhead population
 - Identify data gaps and potential ways to collect the data
 - Assess Resident Rainbow population and interaction with Steelhead population
 - Use Resident Rainbows to build on an early-run component
 - NOR productivity and impacts of introgression
- APR (Annual Project Review)
 - TPU seeking guidance from FTC on this section
 - TPU to provide a partial draft as a starting point
 - Include Decision Rules?
 - Long-term goals
 - What-ifs
 - Note: Minimum viability targets are *not* the end game
- Coho Transition Plan
 - Moving from segregated to integrated program
 - Final outcome
- Spring Chinook
 - Insufficient detail is provided on hatchery programs
 - Outline decision points to support strategy
- Timing of FHMP Updates (longer horizon?)
- M&E Subgroup
 - Recovery phases and transitions between them
 - How do we get to numbers we can agree on?
 - SAR and TSAR data sets
 - What approach do we use to define them?
 - Start with Spring Chinook and then move on to other species
- Doing 2-3 years of genetic monitoring on fish above Cowlitz Falls Dam
 - Parentage-based tagging

Those unable to attend Feb. 18 Workshop: Travis, Phil, Eric, Tim, Peggy, Paul

Those unable to attend Feb. 26 Workshop: Laura, Tim, Bryce(?), Paul

Note. Paul will be out 2/19 – 3/29, with no one from TU to attend on his behalf. He will attempt to call in for March 3 FTC meeting.

Action Items:

- All: Continue to identify candidate issues for FHMP workshops and let Matt know.
- Paul: Let Travis know how to ensure TU is represented at FHMP workshops.

Review of FTC Protocols

Presenter: Travis Nelson

Travis sent out WDFW's edits to the draft FTC Protocols on February 3. Additionally, on January 31, he forwarded to all an email from Paul with comments for discussion prior to reviewing the edited protocol document.

Paul shared his perception that the FTC was more effective and efficient, with more collaboration and trust with an independent FTC Chair. He thinks the FTC should be able to choose between valid positions and feels like its power to participate in meaningful decision making has been taken away in the past few years. Peggy agreed with Paul's perception, citing, in particular, that the Gravel Augmentation Plan and the CRR Fund processes haven't felt collaborative. All agreed that it is important to work collaboratively.

Travis thanked everyone for their candid feedback. TPU is committed to supporting these meetings and explore collaborative opportunities. The challenge is getting the necessary information out to everyone in a timely and meaningful way. Matt has developed a template for subgroup meeting notes. It has been given to the FTC to review. It has not yet been fully implemented.

Travis allowed that the last four years, the focus has been largely on the FHMP and other issues have been brushed off to the side. The CRR Subgroup transition to the FTC experience comes on the tails of a yet-to-be completed FHMP process. Another complication has been a lack of consistent representation and participation by our federal partners. The USFS has reengaged and NMFS and the Yakama Nation are soon to name new FTC representatives.

He assured all that it's in TPU's best interest to ensure that the meetings are well organized and facilitated. TPU is close to the point of being able to provide a monthly report on what's happening in the various subgroups. Work together to improve the protocols and then sticking to them will also help.

As not everyone had been able to review WDFW's proposed edits, it was agreed to review the track-changes version of the protocols near the start of the March FTC meeting.

Action Items:

- Travis: Send to Lyn the draft of the standardized structure for all subgroups to use to report back to the FTC so she can forward it to all along with the proposed edits to the January FTC meeting summary on Feb. 7.
 - All: Come to the March FTC meeting ready to discuss.
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Approval of Meeting Summaries

The January FTC meeting summary will be approved electronically before the next meeting. And posted to the public website.

Action Items:

- Bryce: Coordinate WDFW edits and email to Lyn by the end of the day February 7.
 - All: Send any other edits to Lyn also by February 7.
 - Lyn: Consolidate edits and send out to all (in track changes) that same day.
 - All: Send any additional comments or note of approval to Lyn so she can finalize for posting by February 14.
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Meeting Evaluation

- Tough comments – remained respectful of other's position

- Appreciated James attending by phone for NMFS.
 - We had fun
 - Quotable Quotes:
 - John: If you work for 5 years on a 6-year plan, that's enough to make anyone cranky.
 - Josua: Don't raise your voice. Improve your argument. (Anonymous)
 - Appreciated the field trip to view first-hand the gravel pile below the Barrier Dam and the current high flows. Would be good to do more of these.
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Potential Topics for March 3 FTC Meeting

- Updates incl. Hydro Ops, Water Quality, Kosmos seep
 - Planning for low water/drought conditions in 2020 (e.g., as for the Nisqually)
 - FTC Protocols
 - M&E Subgroup
 - Alternate Tilton Release Site
 - FTC feedback on topics for this group to address
 - Gravel Augmentation Work Plan
 - Downstream Adaptive Management TWG
 - FHMP Update
 - FERC's Response to EOT Request
 - Debrief of Feb. 18 and 28 FHMP Workshops
 - Cowlitz Restoration & Recovery Fund 2020
 - Report from LCFRB/TPU
 - Recommendations from LCFRB's Upper Cowlitz-Cispus Habitat Strategy Report
 - Satellite Rearing (?)
 - Set topics for the April 7 FTC Meeting
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Parking Lot

- Review Steelhead Recycling Program