

Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project
FERC No. 2016
Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee
Final MS Teams Public Meeting Summary
February 7, 2023 from 9:30 – 3:30

FTC Representative Attendees:

Bryce Glaser	WDFW
Anne Baxter	Ecology

Additional Attendees:

John Serl	WDFW
Peggy Miller	WDFW
Brian Gale	WDFW
Sam Gibbons	WDFW
Todd Hillson	WDFW
Josua Holowatz	WDFW
Phil Sandstrom	TPU
Eric Shoblom	TPU
Tim Hoffnagle	TPU
Matt Peter	TPU
Laura Wolfe	LCPUD
Steve Manlow	LCFRB
Steve West	LCFRB
Michael Boyles	BPA
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting / Facilitator

Public Attendees: Randy LeDuc and Larry Pryor

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

Approval of January Meeting Summary

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

Announcement

- This was Phil Sandstrom’s last day with us as he has accepted a position with WDFW as their Westside Hatchery Monitoring & Evaluation Lead Scientist. His last day at Tacoma Power will be February 16 and he starts with WDFW on March 1. We appreciate his many contributions including his guidance in the M&E meetings, great attention to detail, and his help with all the transition plans. We wish him all the best in his new position.

Updates

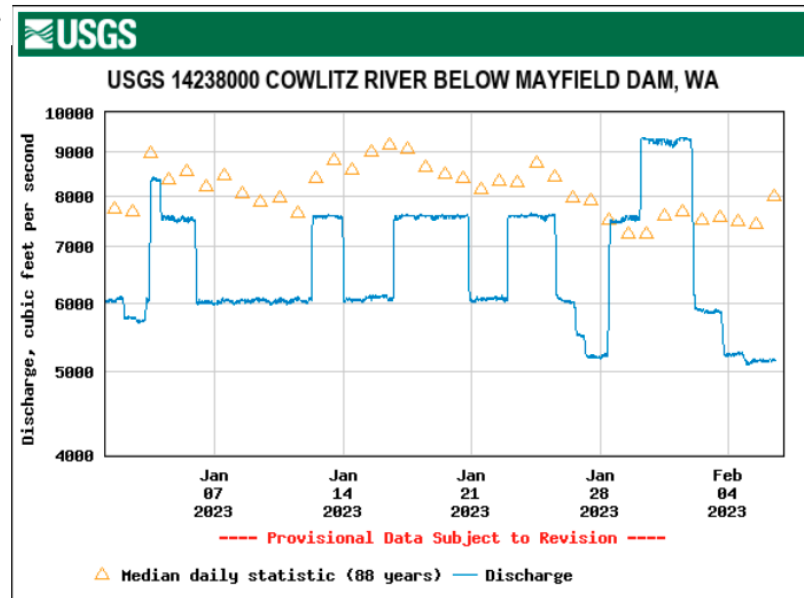
Hydro Operations (presentation emailed before the meeting):

- Inflows: January flows were at 67% of historical average. The NW River Forecast reports January precipitation in the Upper Cowlitz at below 50% of normal.
- Storage: Low inflows plus cold weather and demand for power contributed to the current Riffe Lake elevation of 694’ (down from 705’ on January 17). There hasn’t been access to the Riffe

boat ramp since late November. Mayfield continues to operate in its off-season band (420-424').

- Discharge at Mayfield is just above 5K cfs. Ramping restrictions will change on February 18 to 2" per hour at night and 0" per hour during the day.
- Forecast: Snowpack continues to build but slowly due to low precipitation. It may start building this week with the snow level at 2-4K'. Inflows will come up a bit and Riffe Lake will be close to the current elevation with discharges at close to minimum flows.

Outflow



Minimum flow 5,000 cfs. No flow or ramp exceedances (critical flow 6,000 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 described actions at North Taidnapam Lake to make the area more functional for a variety of folks. Plan to install an ecology block wall to address erosion concerns with material sloughing on the ramps that requires constant cleaning and extending the usability of the courtesy dock. SEPA and DNS is out for review with first public notice to be published February 16th. He also described a culvert replacement project under Cove Lane (which is currently a complete barrier and will be replaced with a bottomless arch).

Gravel augmentation. Tacoma is still trying to get some as-builts done so they can move forward with next steps. They are working to secure permits for areas on the left bank. Peggy reported the draft gravel augmentation plan that is currently undergoing WDFW review will be out soon.

Fish Facilities:

Separator Collections:

- Coho: Eric reported they placed 11.9K HOR coho and 7.4K NOR into the Tilton and numbers are slowing down. They are still collecting coho for brood to compensate for egg mortality issues.
- Winter steelhead: Nearly 300 winter steelhead have returned to the separator since the beginning of December including 117 last week. Eric reminded the group that they started in December instead of February this year and have already over half way to the brood goal!

- Tilton and Upper Cowlitz Stock: they just began winter steelhead broodstock collection this month per the usual schedule.

Ladder Shutdown:

- Eric noted the CSH ladder will be shut down February 15th for its annual inspection and maintenance on the holding pool and crowders.

Mayfield Counting House:

- This facility was shut down for the season at the end of last year. They are currently running 24- to 48- hour blocks on a monthly basis until the official start up on April 1.
- They opened Mayfield last week for 48 hours and had 15 Chinook and one steelhead smolt.

Cowlitz Falls:

- Eric was pleased to report they are now fully staffed with the exception of a 3-month day tech that is currently being advertised.
- Interviews are underway to fill Chris Foster's position.

Cispus Release Site: Eric reported this site is still unusable as flows are below 700 cfs – well below the 4,500 cfs required to use the site. Laura noted she submitted a formal proposal to the USFS at the end of January and is hoping to hear back from them soon. She will share the LCPUD proposal submitted to the USFS with WDFW and Tacoma so they can provide support/help to underscore the need. Discussion:

- What work is already covered by existing permits? Laura indicated that WDFW's Elliot Johnson described a timeline for an expedited HPA. He said it would cover 60 days and cannot be extended or renewed. Ideally, we could get something rolling in the next month or so as March is the peak for winter run steelhead hatchery fish.
- Is a Corps permit required? That would severely impact the timeline. Laura thinks not. They have offered to let Tacoma release fish at the Copper Canyon site – it is closer to the Cispus. That is another option. It is also possible to use WDFW's other truck to help with distribution.

Action Items:

- Laura: Send LCPUD's proposal to Bryce and Travis. Also share any USFS response she gets in the meantime.
- Travis: Add Elliot Johnson (WDFW Area Habitat Biologist) to FTC invite / distribution list.

Downstream Adaptive Management Technical Work Group: Matt P reported this group is getting information on Mayfield and monthly information for the CFNSC. They also discussed the Annual Report. Gabe recently got the report back from the consultant and it is currently under Tacoma internal review. The report will be out to the FTC for comment prior to the March meeting. The TWG review will be concurrent with the FTC. Time is of the essence as the season starts March 15. A Decision Document (DD) will also be coming out soon.

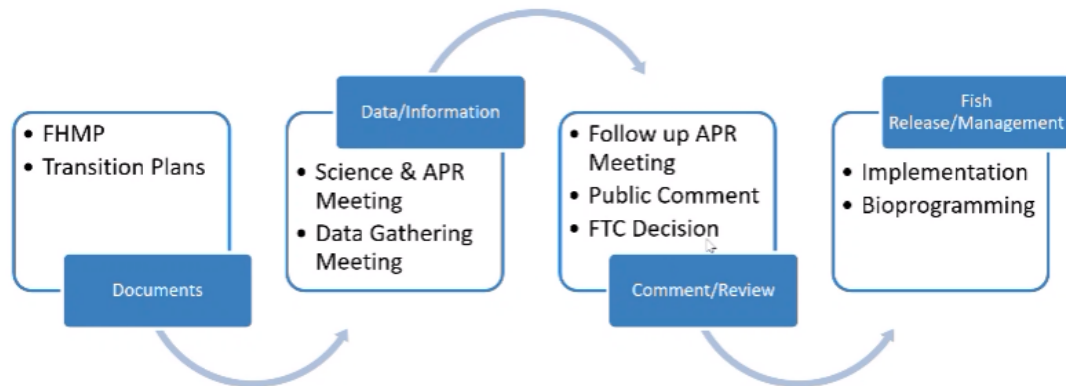
Monitoring & Evaluation Subgroup: Phil reported this group last met on January 18. They have been working hard on the monitoring plan. They have ranked list of suggested studies and are discussing how best to define next steps. The baseline studies are very extensive. Kudos to Todd's work with the Excel file and coming up with a classification system for the prioritization process. They are also working with Tim on the HGMP (developing a take table for monitoring).

2023 FTC Work Plan: In accordance with the 2022 FTC Work Plan schedule, Travis will have the draft 2023 Work Plan out for review by the end of Q1.

APR Process for 2023

Presenter: Phil Sandstrom

Phil explained the 2023 Cowlitz Annual Program Review (APR) will be similar to what Matt, Eric and John did last year. He walked through a PowerPoint presentation that outlines the process, including the guiding documents, Transition plans, etc. The plan is to once again hold the Science Meeting in the AM and APR Meeting in the PM where targets will be set for each program on the Cowlitz.



Phil noted that after we spawn winter steelhead for this year, each of the transition plans will have been implemented. The timeline is tight as the following needs to happen from February to August:

1. Data Gathering Meeting
2. Science / APR Meeting
 - a. Need to include pilot Coho program, etc.
3. APR Public Follow-up Meeting
4. Share Comment/Review to Public and Recommendations with the FTC
5. DD on Proposed 2023 APR Goals

CF Northshore Collector (CFNSC) Evaluation Recommendations

Presenter: Phil Sandstrom

Phil reported on this as Gabe McGuire is on vacation. The initial draft DD on these recommendations was sent out for a preliminary review on December 20. Per his action item, Gabe sent out the revised DD on January 5. He did not receive any feedback or suggestions for further edits. Anne apologized for not providing comments until this meeting. She explained Ecology is working with TP and LCPUD on many issues including turbidity and TDG monitoring for the spill coming out of the collector. There are outstanding Water Quality Protection Plans (WQPP) yet to be approved. Ecology would like to be included in discussions about some of the BMPs for dredged material replacement / debris collection. Phil assured her that Tacoma is ready and willing to work with Ecology on these actions. Phil added Ecology to the list of entities working together to develop the agreement to address debris collection in front of the PUD's intakes and trash racks. Anne has been expecting to have a conversation with Matt Bleich on temperature concerns. Phil assured her Tacoma is committed to ensuring Matt B and Anne have that conversation.

After discussing the intent of this DD and how the theory being tested (that debris buildup in 2022 negatively impacted CE) has to do with flow - not temperature - as the water is merely moved through the upper part of the trash rack and is not held or delayed, it was approved, as edited. It will be distributed for review and approval by FTC voting members not in attendance at this meeting.

Action Items:

- Phil: Send revised/approved DD to Lyn to distribute to all. (Done.)
- Lyn: Send out also specifically to absent voting FTC members to 7-day concurrence. (Done.)

Satellite Rearing (SR) Program

Presenter: Phil Sandstrom

Phil reminded all that DD 2022-07 was approved at the January meeting. He walked through the draft PPT and asked what should be changed in advance of sharing this with the public.

- Current state of salmonids in upper river
- Criteria considering in site evals
- Biological relevance components
- Sited being considered
 - Mayfield Net pens
 - Tower Rick U-Fish
 - Energy Northwest Power Pool (i.e., stilling basin)
- Criteria for each
- Benefits of EN Pool
 - Possibility to include Kelt reconditioning: Anne noted there are significant unresolved temperature issues (16-degree threshold July through potentially October) at the Packwood Hydroelectric Project stilling basin and tailrace.

The Mayfield net pen piece is still on the table for a pilot coho project. Bryce advised being clear about this with the public. Phil agreed and offered to go back to the R2 presentation showing all the potential projects, moving forward one project now, and the potential for the other two projects in the future.

Anne brought up water quality concerns with the Packwood Lake Project, including the potential for sediment buildup and turbid discharge. Bryce noted WDFW has submitted a series of comments on logistical details and have not received a response. This presentation is the step to loop in the public on conceptual designs. The public meeting is the next layer of information sharing that has to occur before approval of the DD. There will also be another DD after the input from the public.

Action Item: Phil - Send to FTC this PPT and APR presentation for 2-week comment period. (Done.)

LCPUD Dam Operations

Presenter: Russell Page

Russell was pleased to report projects currently scheduled e.g., debris barrier restoration, sluice gate, and crane rail extension are all awaiting permits / FERC approval and are scheduled for future years. The hatch cover seal replacement project is scheduled now with a contractor. The work on Unit 1 will start on May 19 and Unit 2 will start on July 14. The entire project is estimated to be complete in early- to mid-August. They will remove one flume collection system from each until as it is being worked on, leaving the other one in place. For the final three weeks of the project, when Unit 1 is in maintenance cycle, the flume collection above that will be in operation for Tacoma.

Lewis County is no longer funding USGS to post the Lake Scanewa elevation data on their website. The USGS reached out to the PUD to see if they were interested in continuing to post that data. Due to cost they declined. Russell has since been working with their IT Department to pull that information out of their SCADA system and post it to their website, which they hope to be able to do in the next month or two. Russell welcomes any additional requests for data they can pull from their SCADA system.

Action Item: Russell to let Tacoma know when the outage schedule has been established.

Cowlitz Restoration and Recovery Fund / Habitat and Production (HAP) Subgroup

Presenters: Matt Peter and Steve West

Matt P reported the HAP portion of Tacoma's website has been updated and grant round is officially open. Tacoma will send out information on workshops and will address questions as they arise. Draft applications are due by noon on April 4. Feedback from Subject Matter Experts (SME) will be provided to applicants by May 15 and final applications are due May 26. The final funding decision for all projects will be made at the October 3 FTC meeting.

Steve W was pleased to announce that as of 3pm on February 3, the grant round(s) are officially open! Included are the LCFRB grant round and two other grant rounds – the CRR, as well as the Storedahl Small Grant, which is exclusive to a polygon in the East Fork Lewis River, Clark County. Virtual tours (site visits) will take place late April – early May.

They are working on contracting for the four CRR projects approved last fall. The Cispus reconnection project at the 2801 Road bridge was discussed, and the Cowlitz Tribe will retain that project through the entire design. All are welcome to go to website for more information.

All projects that have a SRFB nexus are entered via PRISM Online and the Salmon Recovery Portal (SRP), which is the map for the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). All public information is available through RCO's PRISM snapshot via the project number. For CRR, LCFRB staff will wait until all application materials are submitted by the posted due date. There is no mechanism to put the application materials on the LCFRB website as they come in. Steve M noted for this grant round, FTC voting members are invited to attend the virtual tour presentations where they can ask questions and provide comment to the sponsors. All pertinent questions will be included in the Lead Entity feedback, that the sponsor must address in time for TAC scoring.

Yellow Jacket Phase 3: Peter Barber will manage this project for the Cowlitz Tribe. Construction is anticipated to start this summer. There will be an update on this next month.

Public Comment Period #1 - Agenda related

Larry:

- Water Flows – What water flows are good for fishermen? Larry likes 4,500 cfs. Don Glaser preferred 6,500 cfs. In last 30 days water flow went from 9,300 cfs to 5,900 cfs and then down to 5,230. When there is a big crash in flows, that turns off the bite and also strands a number of the small juvenile fish in small pools. A “normal” river doesn't work like that.
Phil: Thanked Larry and noted it is important to consider what fishermen want. Tacoma's Natural Resources Department has discussed the importance of minimizing dramatic swings in flows with the Hydro Ops Group.
- Satellite Rearing: What are the goals? Up-river kelt reconditioning? The Yakamas are doing this as a contained broodstock as those fish don't survive very well. Is Tacoma talking about this? Trout Lodge and others do this type of kelt reconditioning all the time. Why not do kelt reconditioning at the hatcheries?
Phil: Tacoma looks at what they have available. They will reach out to Jeff Hudson of Riverence Brood (leading expert on broodstock management) on his experience / recommendations re kelt reconditioning.
- Mayfield Netpens: Larry understands they have fallen out of favor. A 2015 study showed lots of parasites at Mayfield. Is this still the case?
Phil: Yes, a recently started sampling program shows the parasites are still present. Mayfield Netpens are not off the table entirely but are not currently being considered for satellite rearing.

Randy:

- The Local CCA is in talks with WDFW re introduction of chum into the Cowlitz, specifically, using one of the satellite rearing facilities to have off-channel spawning areas for the chum. Jack Tipping (currently in Antarctica) has more information on this. Randy offered that they can put something together to present on this at the March meeting.
- Phil: Appreciated the suggestion.
- Bryce: Over a year ago, WDFW wrote a comment letter to Tacoma and the FTC regarding the satellite rearing ponds and suggested a chum channel in the Lower River could be one possibility when it is time to consider the other two SR options.

Larry:

- Chum: Willapa Bay raises 450 fish per pound (one gram) each. When they release the chum, they head out right away. SARs for chum are pretty decent.
- Bryce: WDFW is proposing an artificial spawning channel or reintroduction program with egg boxes or something other than net pens.

Topics for March 7, 2023 FTC Meeting – Appropriate to meet in person?

- Updates incl. Hydro Ops, Water Quality, Fish Facilities
- LCPUD Cowlitz Falls Dam Operations
- Update on Cispus Release Site
- Satellite Rearing
- Downstream Adaptive Management TWG
- CRR Fund / HAP Subgroup
- M&E Subgroup
- 2023 FTC Work Plan / Protocols
- 2023 APR Process
- Preview April FTC Meeting topics

Public Comment Period #2 – Any Topic

Larry:

- CRR Funding / HAP subcommittee: Did anyone talk to Randy re the CRR Program and submitting a proposal for funding? (Randy replied he hasn't been approached as of yet – would be happy to be involved.)
Matt P noted Melora has reached out to the same entities as last time – posted on Tacoma's updated website. Eric offered to go over the CRR funding with Randy.
- Any movement on Wild Coho retention? Any movement on the ability of fishermen to retain wild coho on the Cowlitz River?
Bryce: Not much has changed. WDFW is looking at funding to allow for NOR coho retention. They should know more this spring.
- Poor fall Chinook hatchery returns – Only 800 out of 3 Million? Why?
Bryce: This is on the list for the M&E team to evaluate.
Eric: Through the Fall Chinook Transition Plan they tried to improve rearing practices – mainly reducing densities in the rearing ponds. Unfortunately, not much has changed.

Meeting Evaluation

- Hoping to meet in person / possibly hybrid for next month.
- Were only two members of the public again, like last month. Thanks Randy and Larry
- Would be good to advertise these meetings being open to the public on a broader scale.

- The facilitator didn't have access to the Chat.
 - With only 2 voting FTC members, were still able to work through revisions and approve DD.
 - Josua's quote in light of Phil moving from Tacoma to WDFW: "New beginnings are exciting! They become exciting to us because they offer the promise of hope, the anticipation of change in our lives, and the prospect that our dreams will indeed come true!"
- Squire Rushnell
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Closing Remarks

Phil thanked everyone for their time and energy at today's meeting. He expressed appreciation for being able to work together the past several years and wished everyone all the best.

Parking Lot

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