

**Cowlitz Fish Technical Committee  
Decision Documentation**

<b>Project Name</b>	Coded Wire Tag Strategy – Cowlitz Basin
<b>Date Proposal Submitted</b>	3/25/2014
<b>Date of Requested Decision</b>	5/6/2014
<b>Completed By</b>	Matt Bleich

**FTC Decision and Justification**

The Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee (FTC) agreed by consensus that all juvenile steelhead and cutthroat captured at Cowlitz Falls Dam and transported downstream will be marked with coded wire tags (CWTs) bearing the WDFW agency code (063), and that coho will be marked with individual coded wire tags during 2014. The FTC will revisit this decision annually. This fulfills the need described in FHMP Update Table 2-10.

***Proposed Decision or Consideration***

All coho, steelhead and cutthroat captured at Cowlitz Falls Dam will be marked with coded wire tags bearing the WDFW agency code (063) during 2014.

**Background**

In 2010, the coded wire tag marking of steelhead smolts was moved from the Mayfield Facility to the Cowlitz Falls Fish Facility (CFFF). This was associated with the initiation of the productivity test. This mark is used for determining the appropriate location to transport adult steelhead returning to the Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery separator facility. The most recent Fisheries and Hatchery Management Plan Update (FHMP), submitted to FERC in November 2011, proposes moving the CWT marking of the remaining species from the Tilton River populations to the upper Cowlitz River basin populations.

Since 2012, all steelhead, coho and cutthroat captured at the Cowlitz Falls Dam were marked with coded wire tags bearing the WDFW agency code (063). During the March 6, 2014 FTC meeting Tacoma Power presented the outcome of discussions with WDFW database managers for coded wire tag data. Tacoma and WDFW recommended continuing to use agency code until a study is designed that warrants tracking unique group(s) from the upper Cowlitz River basin.

Further communication with WDFW provided additional clarification that steelhead and cutthroat will be marked with WDFW agency code (063), and coho will be marked with individual coded wire tags in 2014.

**Coordination Need**

The FTC will revisit the decision to use agency only marks for steelhead and cutthroat, and individual coded wire tag marks for coho annually.

**Summary of Potential Impacts**

There is potential to gain additional, out of basin, information for the coho fishery from CWT fish originating from the Cowlitz. This will be limited to out of basin harvest records for Cowlitz origin fish.

If future study designs were developed to differentiate in-basin groups it would result in additional processing of fish at the adult sorting facility. At this point the questions that would be answered from future study designs are not well developed. The additional information does not warrant the added time and expense of processing.