

Habitat Assessment:

A habitat assessment will be conducted to identify high priority restoration or protection projects. Under the direction of the Fisheries Technical Committee (FTC), CRR Funds will be used to hire a qualified professional to conduct a habitat assessment that will guide the location and types of habitat restoration projects and identify high priority locations for acquisition. Tacoma Power will consult with FTC regarding the specific elements that will be included in the request to conduct a Habitat Assessment.

The assessment will be restricted to the Upper Cowlitz and Cispus basins and focus on spring Chinook. Given that projects addressing spring Chinook limiting factors will likely benefit other species, the assessment will describe how identified restoration projects or land acquisitions will also benefit other species.

The habitat assessment should include an analysis that builds upon the limiting factors identified in the Recovery Plan and other previous habitat reviews completed for the upper Cowlitz (e.g. Upper Cowlitz River Basin Reach Characterization Project – Identifying Reaches Suitable for Protection¹). This analysis should incorporate potential future changes in river flows and hydrograph when identifying long term benefits of potential restoration projects or acquisitions. The habitat assessment should also build upon the Recovery Plan assessments regarding the potential change in population performance resulting from restoration or protection activities.²

The habitat assessment will identify specific locations where habitat restoration and/or land acquisition activities provide the most benefit to Upper Cowlitz and Cispus spring Chinook. The habitat assessment should identify whether restoration, land acquisition or both is the most appropriate activity for a given location. When a restoration is recommended then the habitat assessment should identify the type(s) of restoration activity to be implemented and how that activity will address the limiting factors of that location.

The habitat assessment should focus on identifying priority reaches for protection and restoration and identify the limiting factors that need to be addressed in each location. The habitat assessment should focus on the larger scale types of restoration activities to be implemented (e.g. instream structure, floodplain reconnection, riparian restoration, etc....) rather than developing plans that identify location and type of restoration activity to occur at each site.

¹ Upper Cowlitz River Basin Reach Characterization Project – Identifying River Reaches Suitable for Protection, prepared for Tacoma Power by CardnoEntrix, Project Number 4285004, April 2, 2014.

² Washington Lower Columbia Salmon Recovery and Fish & Wildlife Subbasin Plan, Volume II.F – Upper Cowlitz Subbasin (Potential change in populations performance with degradation and restoration ladder diagrams)