

Cowlitz Fish Technical Committee  
Decision Documentation

<b>Project Name</b>	2015 Summer Steelhead Recycling
<b>Date Proposal Submitted</b>	5/5/2015
<b>Date of Requested Decision</b>	6/2/2015
<b>Completed By</b>	Mark LaRiviere & John Serl

<b>FTC Decision and Justification</b>

<b>Proposed Decision or Consideration</b>
<p>WDFW proposes to recycle up to 3,300 above-hatchery-needs summer steelhead between June 15 and August 15, 2015. This would total 22 loads of 150 steelhead, 2 to 3 per week for this period..</p> <p>This program would follow the procedure used in the 2012-2013 USGS recycling study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fish will be opercle punched,</li><li>• Fish will be released at the I-5 boat launch,</li><li>• Once a recycled fish returns to the Adult Handling Facility, it will be surplused (one time recycling only),</li><li>• Recaptured fish will be looked for and reported at the Adult Handling Facility and lower Cowlitz tributary weirs.</li></ul> <p>Additionally, uniquely numbered floy tags will be placed into all recycled steelhead, the program advertised to encourage anglers to return these tags and collection boxes will be distributed through the lower river fishing areas.</p>

<b>Background</b>
<p>Results from the 2012-13 summer steelhead recycling study conducted by the USGS, based on floy and radio tagged fish, suggested that about half of the recycled steelhead were recaptured at the Barrier Dam adult facility within about one week and about 20% of the fish were reported as harvested. Approximately 30% of the floy tagged fish were unaccounted for. The 30% of radio tagged fish remaining in the main stem Cowlitz were speculated to be unreported harvest, spit tags, mortalities from various causes. It is also speculated, due to the lack of NOR summer steelhead encountered on the Cowlitz River that juveniles produced from any HOR summer steelhead spawning are unsuccessful due to the presence of C Shasta and the 2 year natural life history of steelhead.</p> <p>Over the course of the two year study, 2 radio tagged steelhead entered Salmon Creek,</p>

2 entered the Toutle, and 1 left the Cowlitz River and was detected in the Kalama River. Monitoring at the lower Cowlitz tributary weirs did not recapture any opercle punched summer steelhead in 2014.

**Coordination Need**

WDFW will work Tacoma Power to schedule and fund the transportation of these fish. Tacoma Power will supply the floy tags, advertising for the program and drop-off locations.

**Summary of Potential Impacts**

This program is expanded to approximately double last year's efforts. Recycled fish not caught by anglers or recaptured at the fish facility may stray into tributary streams, leave the Cowlitz River or remain in the mainstream Cowlitz River. The addition of floy tags will help account for any straying this season. We encountered no recycled summer steelhead at the weirs in 2014. This was fewer than expected. The additional fish released this year will provide better information about the fate of recycled Cowlitz River summer steelhead.