

**Cowlitz Fish Technical Committee
Decision Document**

2025-05

Project Name	Monitoring and Evaluation Subcommittee Charter
Date Proposal Summited	June 3, 2025
Date of Requested Decision ¹	August 5, 2025
Requested By	Jenise Bauman
Date of Decision	August 5, 2025

¹ Decision will become final if committee members who were not present at this meeting do not oppose this proposed decision within 7 days

FTC Decision and Justification

The FTC approves the development of a subcommittee to develop the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Charter and the FTC approves the charter included in this decision document.

FTC members present included: Peggy Miller (WDFW, for Bryce Glaser), Andrew Luymes (Ecology), Bill Sharp (Yakama Nation, for Phil Rigdon), Melora Shelton (Tacoma Power).

Proposed Decision for Consideration

The FTC technical representatives listed below ("Membership") recommend that the FTC formalize the M&E Subcommittee and approve the M&E Subcommittee Charter described herein. The Charter formalizes the FTC directive for the subcommittee, defines roles and scope of work, and describes administrative practices.

Background

Directive:

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Subcommittee, at the direction of the Fisheries Technical Committee (FTC), will advise and make recommendations to the FTC on matters related to Tacoma Power's implementation of activities under the settlement agreement (SA) for the Cowlitz River Hydroelectric Project (FERC 2002, 2004). The SA, is intended to resolve "*...all issues associated with issuance of a new license for the Project regarding fish passage, fish production, fish habitat, water quality, instream flows, wildlife, recreation and cultural and historic resources...[It] establishes Tacoma's obligations for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of natural resources affected by the Project...[and]... specifies procedures to be used among the Parties to ensure the implementation of those license articles...[and]... to establish a framework for future collaborative efforts for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of the natural resources of the Cowlitz River basin*" (SA 5.1).

The M&E Subcommittee will follow the Fisheries and Hatchery Management Plan (FHMP) for recommendations required to track Cowlitz River anadromous salmonids population status and progress toward recovery. Under this plan, the M&E Subcommittee will create and implement a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan focused on two areas: 1) baseline evaluations used to inform population progress toward recovery goals and 2) directed studies designed to diagnose problems identified from baseline

information and inform critical data gaps to move a population from one recovery phase to the next. The M&E Subcommittee will develop an Annual Operating Plan (AOP) that details the management goals for the coming season for each population. This is guiding document for all management activities to be conducted in the next year.

The M&E Subcommittee will strive to achieve consensus on their recommendations and facilitate efficient and open flow of information to support FTC decisions and operate within the established FTC Protocols. This will be structured by a monthly meeting open to, and optional, for all FTC representatives, and technical advisors. To ensure regular communication with the FTC, the M&E subcommittee will submit and present meeting summaries at monthly FTC meetings. In the event a subcommittee does not meet, it will be noted in the consolidated report.

Roles:

At the request of the FTC, the M&E Subcommittee will provide technical support with the development, evaluation, and adaptation of objectives, key questions, metrics/indicators, targets, and decision points related to the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (Tacoma 2024). This includes information needed to track population status toward recovery objectives and for the Annual Program Review (APR) decision making process. The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan builds upon previous work elements and descriptions of monitoring and evaluation work in past FHMPs (Fisheries and Hatchery Management Plan; Tacoma Power 2011, 2020), Transition plans, and the Fish Monitoring Plan (Tacoma Power 2014).

Additionally, the M&E subcommittee may also seek review of specific plan components or actions from the Cowlitz Restoration and Recovery (CRR) Hatchery-Associated Production (HAP) Subcommittee and the Downstream Passage Technical Working Group (TWG). A brief description of the roles of these groups is provided below:

Cowlitz Restoration and Recovery (CRR) Hatchery-Associated Production (HAP) Subcommittee: The HAP subcommittee operates as a recommending body to the FTC on implementation of the HAP elements of the CRR program. HAP subcommittee (subcommittee): The HAP subcommittee's role is to develop and/or review materials and provide the FTC with HAP recommendations and rationales for decision making in support of the CRR program.

Downstream Passage Technical Working Group (TWG): The mission of the TWG is to improve the Fish Passage Survival (FPS) of anadromous salmonid juveniles at or near Cowlitz Falls Dam and Mayfield Dam. This includes identifying facility or operational changes that should be implemented to improve smolt FCE and facilitate the successful passage of these smolts to the lower Cowlitz River.

Scope of Work:

The M&E subcommittee will provide recommendations to the FTC on issues where the FTC requests technical review, study design or analysis to assist the FTC in guiding the implementation of various plans obligated in the Settlement Agreement. Specifically, the M&E subgroup will provide technical development and review of the AOP outlined in the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. This includes goals and objectives under the M&E Plan, consider new information, and make recommendations to the FTC to facilitate continued M&E Plan implementation and adaptive management of the AOP. This M&E Plan is

designed to provide the information needed to track population status toward recovery objectives and for the Annual Program Review (APR) decision making process and includes:

- Descriptions of the baseline and directed studies that have been identified to assess the population and management actions in the Cowlitz Basin
- Details regarding the necessary data and analyses required to perform the assessment
- Updated methods, priorities, and work elements to address data gaps
- Characterization of the critical data necessary to assess status and trends associated with the recovery phases of the populations

The M&E subgroup may also review other technical materials requested by the FTC to provide technical recommendations and rationales for decision making.

Primary Points of Contact:

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Primary Contact</i>	<i>E-mail</i>
Tacoma Power	Jenise Bauman, Subcommittee Chair	jbauman@cityoftacoma.org
Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW)	Todd Hillson	todd.hillson@dfw.wa.gov
Lewis County PUD	Laura Wolfe	lauraw@lcpud.org
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	James Archibald	james.archibald@noaa.gov
Department of Ecology	Andrew Luymes	aluy461@ecy.wa.gov
Trout Unlimited	Jonathan Stumpf	jonathan.stumpf@tu.org

Meetings:

M&E Subcommittee meetings will be held monthly and follow procedures and protocols provided by the annual FTC Work plan/protocols. The M&E Subcommittee meetings are open to, and optional for, all FTC representatives, and technical advisors. An email will be sent to the FTC e-mail list with the date, location, time, and purpose of the meeting, one week before the meeting. The core organizations and departments on the M&E subgroup include Tacoma Power, WDFW, Lewis County PUD, TU, NOAA NMFS, Department of Ecology, and Trout Unlimited.

The M&E Subcommittee will meet primarily on a virtual platform and periodically in person, if warranted and decided by the subcommittee. The subcommittee chair will provide an agenda and any materials to the subcommittee and interested FTC representatives, and technical advisors one week in advance of subcommittee meetings. A designee will take notes and prepare a meeting summary utilizing an FTC approved reporting template. Meeting summaries will not be a verbatim record, rather a summary of major ideas, discussions, and outcomes. The subcommittee will review and approve the meeting summary before (preferred) or at the next FTC meeting. Subcommittees will submit and present meeting

summaries at monthly FTC meetings. In the event a subcommittee does not meet, it will be noted in the consolidated report.

Meetings will focus on developing and reviewing technical aspects of the M&E plans, reports, and monitoring strategies or objectives. A meeting agenda will be provided one week prior to the monthly meeting. Attendees are invited to provide edits, alternate meeting topics, and set priorities prior to the monthly meeting. In addition to meeting agenda topics, the M&E Subcommittee may also review special plans, reports, proposals, and regulatory documents as requested by the FTC.

Formation of M&E specialized subgroups:

To develop recommendations on complex or specialized issues, it may be beneficial to form temporary subgroups to the M&E Subcommittee. All specialized groups shall be organized through the M&E Subcommittee, and open and inclusive to all FTC members. The intent of subgroups is to improve overall efficiencies and effectiveness through focused or technical discussions to assist the M&E Subcommittee in developing recommendations for the FTC. Subgroups shall also follow procedures accepted within the M&E Subcommittee Charter and FTC Work plan/protocols.

Recommendation Documentation:

Recommendations, supporting materials, and presentations will be prepared by the M&E Subcommittee and disseminated to the FTC for review and approval, as needed, to support FTC decision making. Materials requiring decision will be provided by the M&E Subcommittee to the FTC within a formal Decision Document request.

The M&E Subcommittee can make in-season decisions to facilitate implementation of approved plans and monitoring strategies outlined by the Transition Plans and the M&E Plan and its associated AOP. However, in-season decisions made by the M&E Subcommittee will be communicated to the FTC and must not contradict the intent or goals of implementation plans or strategies, the Settlement Agreement, FERC licenses, 401 water quality certifications, FTC approved decision documents, or existing Biological Opinions for the Cowlitz River Project. Any decisions contrary to these documents will be addressed and approved by the FTC.

Milestones and measures:

- The M&E Subcommittee will follow the adaptive management process outlined in the M&E Plan. This entails data collection, analysis, reporting, and decision making through the APR or FTC.
- Annually, the M&E Subcommittee will propose a Decision Document to the FTC that outlines the implementation of directed studies designed to address uncertainty or key issues/data gaps that are not addressed by the baseline studies. Identification of directed studies may be outlined by the M&E plan and/or the APR process and assessed through the adaptive management process within the APR or FTC.
- The APR process and associated AOP will be used to identify directed study needs, the relative importance of a study topic, and the level of effort assigned to a directed study topic. Proposals for directed studies topics identified through the APR will be evaluated by the Monitoring and Evaluation subcommittee and approved for implementation by the FTC and documented in the AOP.

- The M&E Subcommittee will follow the adaptive management process outlined in the M&E Plan. This entails data collection, analysis, reporting, and decision making through the APR. Identification of directed studies may be outlined by the M&E plan and/or the APR process and assessed through the adaptive management process within the FTC.
- The M&E Subcommittee will advise updates and revisions to the M&E Plan on a timeline that allows for completion of those updates every 5-years starting with consultation with the FTC and FERC approval of that plan (if required).
- The M&E Subcommittee may discuss changes to program implementation and monitoring activities on a rolling basis and updates to the M&E plan may be made throughout the year as agreed-upon by the FTC.
- The M&E Subcommittee shall make recommendations to the FTC as needed through use of a Decision Document Template using established protocols in the FTC Protocols. FTC recommendations may also be provided at FTC meetings where a Decision Document is not required.

Coordination Need

The M&E subcommittee provides documents, information, and recommendations to the FTC. This subcommittee has one standing meeting scheduled on the third Wednesday of the month. FTC members and technical representatives may participate as interested or be added as a core member at any time.

Summary

M&E Subcommittee is seeking approval for the M&E Subcommittee Charter described herein. The Charter formalizes the FTC directive for the subcommittee, defines roles and scope of work, and describes administrative practices. The intent of the subcommittee is to provide recommendations and guidance to the FTC for decision making associated with the implementation and evaluation of the M&E plan or directed studies that arise from that established plan.