

**Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project
FERC No. 2016
Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee
Meeting Summary**

August 4, 2026 from 9:30am-1:15pm

FTC Representative Attendees

Ecology: Andrew Luymes

Tacoma: Melora Shelton

WDFW: Bryce Glaser

Yakama Nation: Bill Sharp

Additional Attendees

BPA: Michael Boyles

Ecology: Anne Baxter

Lewis County: Ann Weckback

LCPUD: Joe First, Laura Wolfe

LCFRB: Steve Manlow, Steve West

Tacoma: Jenise Bauman, Matt Bleich, Ben Caviness, Sam Gibbons, Scott Gibson, Sean Luis, Eric Shoblom, Chris Vaughn, Wyatt Wood

WDFW: Brian Gale, Todd Hillson, Josua Holowatz, Chris Kopack, Peggy Miller, Larona Newhouse, Matthew Siskey, Sean Toomey, Kris Warner, Phil Sandstrom, Kevin Young

Yakama Nation: Joe Zendt

Facilitator: Jennifer Arnold, Reciprocity Consulting, LLC

Public Attendees: Randy LeDuc (Coastal Conservation Association)

2026 FTC Meeting Dates

Sep 1 (in person), Oct 6, Nov 3, Dec 1 (in person)

Review of Agenda and Action Items

We reviewed the agenda and action items.

Approval of Last Month's Meeting Summary

FTC members reviewed and edited last month's FTC Meeting Summary for clarity. It will be posted on the public website.

Updates

Announcements

Yakama Nation Voting Representative: B. Sharp introduced J. Zendt, who will be the new Yakama Nation Voting Representative as B. Sharp transitions to retirement in October.

FERC Additional Information Request (AIR) report: Tacoma has prepared their AIR report to FERC related to the reduced spring flow. Once it has been reviewed internally, M. Shelton will send it to the FTC voting representatives as an informational item. There will not be time to comment on it before it needs to be submitted. All the information in the report has been shared with FTC already.

Action item: M. Shelton will share the AIR report with FTC voting representatives for their information.

Context for Public Participation in FTC Business Meetings: M. Shelton read the following statement to provide context for opportunities for the public:

For members of the public joining today, thank you for attending this FTC business meeting. As a reminder, the FTC is a technical advisory body created to support the implementation of the Cowlitz River Project FERC license.

Since 2019, the FTC has opened some regular business meetings to the public to provide opportunities to observe FTC business, and to ask questions and provide feedback during specific sessions. This was intended to provide visibility and access in addition to requirements laid out in Tacoma's FERC-approved Article 405 Public Information Management Plan. That Plan includes requirements that Tacoma post FTC meetings summaries on its website for public review and make certain draft FTC plans and reports available for public comment. A recent example was the 2020 FHMP and the Annual Program Review. The Plan does not require that the FTC opens business meetings to the public, that the FTC takes public comment at these meetings, or that the FTC responds to comments received.

The FTC formalized the public invitation to its monthly business meetings in 2022 and adopted protocols that were attached to Decision Document 2022-08. That practice evolved from a single comment period to two separate comments periods, and the protocols were annotated by Tacoma in 2025 to reflect this. The current practice generally is aligned with those protocols, which includes that FTC may respond to questions or comments, which could occur during or after the meeting. Tacoma Power and the FTC may revise these protocols in the future for clarity, to help set expectations around this opportunity, and to help maintain the focus of FTC business meetings on FTC business.

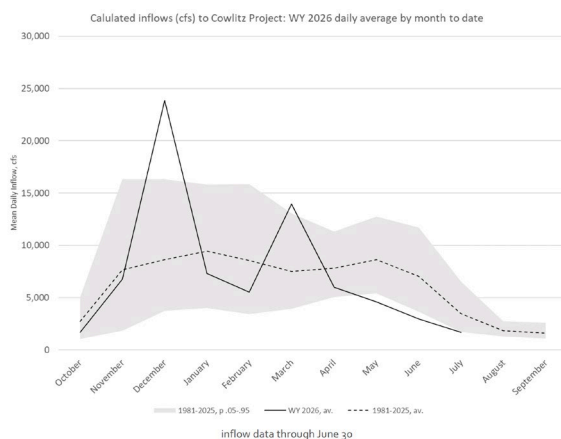
Today there will be two public comment periods near the close of the meeting. Please hold any questions or feedback on FTC business until that time. The first period will be for comments on today's agenda topics. The second period will be for comments on other FTC topics that are not on today's agenda. For each

period you can use the chat function to let Jennifer know that you have a question or feedback or raise your hand at the beginning of the session. Additional feedback can also be provided in the chat. The ground rules and public comment expectations will apply.

As noted last month, Tacoma cannot comment on topics related to ongoing FERC allegations of non-compliance. Those topics will be addressed through FERC's processes.

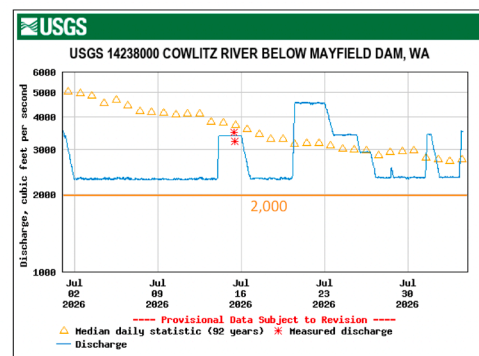
Hydro Operations Update by Melora Shelton (Tacoma) (emailed 8/3, revised slides 8/10 20260804-CowlitzFTC-Hydrostatus-Revised.pdf)

- A streak of extremely low inflows continues (May – July).
- Reservoir drafted about 7 ft.
- Some increased flow in response to load
- No flow or ramp deviations
- 10-day forecast is initially hot and dry.
- Climate outlook tilts dry and likely warm through October.



Outflow

USGS discharge is operational flow
Minimum flow



Current (8/3) 3,520 cfs.
Summer minimum 2,000 cfs. No flow or ramp deviations.

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Subcommittee by Jenise Bauman (Tacoma)

The M&E subcommittee meets monthly and is working on the following topics:

- coho Mayfield Net Pens Assessment – enumeration methods for Phase III
- ultrasound for spring Chinook sex determination – now in review with WDFW, and
- fall Chinook directed studies: GREB 1L, otolith proposal, and Limiting Factors framework.

They are also tracking these priority topics:

- Life Cycle Modeling – working through data formatting with consultant
- M&E Implementation Plan – Outlining 2027 priorities
- Cowlitz Falls Satellite rearing, and
- Trout Hatchery Release Update.

More information is covered in the subcommittee meeting summaries distributed monthly to the FTC.

J. Bauman thanked WDFW for their review of the various projects.

B. Glaser asked if other FTC members can also review materials. J. Bauman and M. Shelton clarified that many of these topics are in the early stages of development where early conversations shape an outline or framework to guide further development. At this stage, they are not ready to share broadly although other FTC members can attend subcommittee meetings to learn more. Once the work products are more complete, Tacoma can let FTC members know and provide an opportunity for review.

M. Shelton apologized that with the busy summer season, she had forgotten to coordinate with J. Bauman to send out calendar invites to the M&E and TWG subcommittee meetings. In the future, Tacoma will let people know the topics for each meeting agenda so that people can join when they are interested.

Action item: M. Shelton and J. Bauman will make sure to send out M&E and TWG subcommittee invites. They will notify FTC members when work products from the subcommittees are ready for review.

TWG Subcommittee Update by Jenise Bauman (Tacoma)

The TWG subcommittee meets monthly and has been discussing the following topics:

- Operational Updates from Cowlitz Falls and Mayfield
- Coho Parr Assessment – determining how many samples are required to detect PIT tagged fish downstream
- Downstream Adaptive Management Plan (DAMP) refresh
- Fish Collection Efficiency (FCE) models – how to continue developing John Best's model and proceed with future estimation and reporting
- Acoustic Telemetry Study – Equipment has been deployed and treatment blocks will continue until demobilization in late September.
- Juvenile Coho Aging – Collection is in the third sampling window and on track to meet goals.
- Opercle punching of Chinook fallback from the collector.

More information is covered in the subcommittee meeting summaries distributed monthly to the FTC.

Hatchery Associated Production (HAP) Update by Melora Shelton (Tacoma)

The HAP subcommittee has not met and has nothing to report.

Fish Facilities Update by Eric Shoblom (Tacoma) (emailed 8/10 - 20260803-CowlitzFTC-Fish-Facilities-Update.pdf)

- Fish currently returning to the separator are fall Chinook, spring Chinook and summer steelhead. The last winter steelhead arrived July 14.
- All release sites are useable, except Scanewa. Fish are being released at Copper Canyon Creek as an alternative.
- For the Cowlitz Trout Hatchery Remodel, Tacoma continues to work with the consultant on a series of draft technical memos. This month they worked on final memos for the Pollution Abatement (PA) pond and rearing pools and a draft memo for outfall structure. Tacoma also prepared a Draft Advanced Project List for internal review, which lays out a proposal to begin some infrastructure upgrades associated with increased water supply and quality ahead of any other improvements.
- For the Mayfield Juvenile Bypass System, no major updates to share.
- For satellite rearing, Tacoma received bids for debris handling platforms at the CFFF and bids for a new debris handling conveyor. FSP Engineering is continuing to work on designs.
- For the Mayfield Net Pens, all fish are marked and tagged. The M&E subcommittee is outlining steps for inventory enumeration methods.
- Dredging is occurring this week (August 3-7) near the weir at Blue Creek, each of the boat launches and the Salmon Hatchery intake. Tacoma typically dredges sometime during the first two weeks of August. They are permitted to remove 50 cu yd and typically remove close to that. The spoils are deposited above the high-water mark at each hatchery. E. Shoblom apologized that he forgot to announce last month that this was upcoming.
- J. Holowatz shared a fishery update that the fall management period has begun, which is now closed to Chinook retention. They have also moved the fishing boundary below the Barrier Dam down to 400 ft. until further notice.

Questions

- B. Glaser asked about WDFW's feedback from last month that the information presented in the fish facility update is a lot to process verbally. He asked if it is possible to present a summary slide with the returns. WDFW can provide comments on what would be helpful to include. WDFW would also be interested in hearing about any transport deviations in the update.
- E. Shoblom responded that based on the feedback last month, he stripped out the numbers from his presentation and would like to direct people to the numbers that staff put together for the weekly updates that are emailed out.
- M. Shelton added that FTC has shifted to more in-depth fish facilities updates quarterly with briefer updates during in between months to make time for other agenda topics. She recognized that this month's agenda was light, but that this was the general thinking behind the shift, especially when we were discussing the transition plan topics.
- J. Arnold asked if people are reading the weekly updates and finding them useful. P. Sandstrom, J. Holowatz, B. Glaser, and A. Luymes responded that they do and they find them useful. P. Sandstrom noted that he saw some issues with the latest Mayfield weekly update.

- P. Sandstrom offered that he would be happy to lend a hand with code or script to create an automated process to summarize the data. He appreciated staff's work to get it to this point and suggested that with a little more processing, the data presentation might be even more useful to FTC.
- In response to the Fish Facilities report continuing to portray increased separator collections as always being a positive, B. Glaser reflected that in an ideal world, once summer steelhead broodstock was collected, the rest would be harvested. If we are seeing high returns at the separator, maybe that is not necessarily a good thing. We want to ask ourselves why those fish aren't being harvested. Broader context around program goals is important to convey.
- E. Shoblom responded that it would be nice to have a harvest update at every meeting if that type of harvest data would be available.
- B. Glaser responded that up until this point, WDFW has only had catch record cards that provide delayed estimates of harvest and creel reports, which are not designed to develop an estimate of total harvest, just impacts to NORs handled during fisheries. The new electronic catch record card (eCRC) is a gamechanger. In the next year or two, it will provide a real-time estimate of harvest, which WDFW could provide as a regular update.

CRR Funding Determination by Steve West (LCFRB)

S. West presented an overview of the four projects that were submitted for CRR funding:

- Yellowjacket Phase 5a with Cowlitz Tribe as the applicant,
- Kiona Creek Phase II with LCPUD as the applicant,
- Lower Woods Creek with Cascade Forest Conservancy as the applicant, and
- Dark Divide on North Cispus Restoration Phase I, where the USFS is the applicant on USFS land.

He also presented the process used to evaluate the proposals. All four projects were recommended for funding by both the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and LCFRB staff. The LCFRB Board will meet this month to formalize their funding recommendation to FTC.

B. Glaser noticed that Kiona Creek scored lowest out of all of the ranked projects, including CRR and SRFB funding sources. He asked why Kiona Creek scored moderate for benefit to fish and yet was still recommended for funding. S. West explained that the TAC ranked any design projects lower with respect to benefit to fish because by definition a design does not have immediate benefit to fish. He also acknowledged despite this detail in how the TAC scored projects that LCFRB prefers design projects over design-build projects because it allows the applicant to incorporate comments before moving to construction. He confirmed that the TAC and LCFRB staff consider Kiona Creek to be a strong project that is recommended for funding.

CRR Implementation Strategy Update by Steve Manlow (LCFRB) and Melora Shelton (Tacoma)

S. Manlow presented a summary of the proposed updates to the CRR Implementation Strategy. The proposed updates were a product of collaboration among S. Manlow (LCFRB), M. Shelton (Tacoma), and P. Miller (WDFW).

The presentation of these proposed updates is the first step in a three-step DD process. M. Shelton will send out a clean version of the updated CRR Implementation Strategy for a 30-day review. If anyone would like a track changes version, please contact M. Shelton. There will be time to discuss any questions or comments at the September FTC meeting.

B. Glaser asked about the change removing eligibility for private landowners. He emphasized that we want to be careful about the language used so that landowners are not discouraged from participating, just that they are guided toward finding an appropriate applicant to work with. S. Manlow emphasized his agreement that it is important to be encouraging with landowners. He explained that they are proposing this change because private landowners are often not well-positioned to fulfill expectations with respect to due diligence, contract management, insurance, etc. LCFRB does get phone calls from interested landowners from time to time and refers them to other entities, such as the Cowlitz Tribe, Cascade Forest Conservancy or others depending on the specifics, to explore the potential to work together on a project.

M. Shelton explained that they considered linking to specific reference documents or adding contact information for specific staff, but decided not to include those details so that there is not the need to make updates as those specifics change over time. Their goal was to make an “evergreen” document that does not require frequent updating.

Action item: M. Shelton will send out a clean version of the updated CRR Implementation Strategy for a 30-day review.

Gravel and Wood Augmentation Update by Ben Caviness (Tacoma)

Gravel augmentation is scheduled for September 1-4 with the goal of augmenting 500 cu yds. Tacoma’s contractors will use the slinger to get the gravel to the middle of the riverbed. As of last year, Tacoma caught up with its goal for gravel augmentation, so this number represents the annual target.

Large wood is scheduled for staging near the Blue Creek Boat Launch on August 10 and placement on August 11. Tacoma will report on how it goes at the September FTC meeting.

LCPUD Updates by Joe First (LCPUD)

- Cowlitz Falls Unit 1 is running at 3 MW to accommodate the Acoustic Telemetry study at the North Shore discharge gate.
- Unit 2 maintenance will continue through the end of August or first few days of September.
- Tacoma and PUD staff will complete design of the second adult release site on the Cispus River (left bank) in the next few weeks.

Fish Hatchery Management Plan (FHMP) Update by Matt Bleich (Tacoma) (emailed 6/30 - 2026-07-DD-CowlitzFTC-FHMP-Update-Draft.docx and 7/10 - 2026-07-DD-CowlitzFTC-FHMP-Update-Draft2.docx)

M. Bleich reviewed the context for this agenda topic. Tacoma submitted the FHMP in 2020 with a request to FERC to change the cadence for updating it from six years to 10 years. FERC staff have been supportive informally but have not provided an official response. To stay in compliance and maintain the focus on continuing the important work outlined in the current FHMP, Tacoma is working with their consultant to prepare the most efficient update possible to submit to FERC by the deadline of October 1. FTC voting representatives have supported this approach when it was discussed in previous meetings.

M. Bleich scrolled through the draft update and explained that their proposed approach takes the form of a cover sheet that highlights a short summary of the commitments from the 2020 FHMP and the status of each element as of 2026. It will be attached to the 2020 FHMP. FTC members in attendance expressed support for this approach.

M. Bleich confirmed that with this approach the 2020 FHMP will remain the controlling document to work from and reference. By submitting this update, Tacoma will explain to FERC in their cover letter that they are withdrawing their request for a 10-year update and will consider this the six-year update, which means that the next update is not due until 2032. Tacoma will include this detail on timing in the DD for clarity.

After this meeting, M. Shelton will share the proposed update and DD with FTC voting representatives for their review. Tacoma is requesting an expedited two-week review so that they have one week to integrate any comments and then can share it back with FTC one week before the September meeting. The goal is to arrive at the September FTC meeting with a decision-ready document so that the FHMP update can be finalized and submitted to FERC by October 1.

B. Sharp will coordinate with J. Zendt to get him up to speed as the incoming Yakama Nation voting representative.

Action item: M. Shelton will send the draft FHMP update and proposed final DD for a 2-week review period. Tacoma will integrate any comments and share revised documents one week before the September FTC meeting.

Public Comment Period #1 - Agenda related

No comments.

Topics for September 1, 2026 FTC Meeting in-person with a virtual Teams option

We reviewed proposed agenda topics:

- Fish collection update (Mayfield, CFFF, separator)
 - WDFW Cowlitz fishery update
 - Gravel and wood placement
 - Transition plan update for spring Chinook
 - FHMP update (finalize DD 2026-07)
 - CRR funding decision (step 2 for a DD)
 - CRR Implementation Strategy update (potentially for October)
 - TWG charter (potentially for October)
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Public Comment Period #2 – Any topic

R. LeDuc shared a comment from L. Pryor about unusual algae growth miles below the trout hatchery, which seemed notably heavy this year. He asked if anyone on FTC is aware of this or has looked into this. A. Luymes responded that he received a similar comment from L. Pryor. A. Luymes invited FTC members to contact him about it if they have concerns or information.

R. LeDuc asked if there is an update on the chum program. He was also asked about the possibility of a spring Chinook program on the Toutle. He wasn't aware that this is a historic population for the Toutle, but he was excited and interested to hear more. He shared that over 30 years of fishing on the Toutle, he has only caught a spring Chinook once and it had a big yellow tag.

B. Glaser shared that historic records show that spring Chinook did spawn in the Upper Toutle into Spirit Lake prior to eruption. Spring and fall Chinook were not regularly transported before then, but recent efforts are in motion to change that.

T. Hillson responded that they are in phase 2 of developing a chum program. Phase 1 was completing a desk exercise to identify potential sites, then phase 2 includes prioritizing sites for further assessment, such as ground water testing, in coordination with landowners, like Tacoma and the Cowlitz Tribe. They will be increasing sampling in

side channels to identify where chum are currently and what type of habitat they are using. Once sites are selected, then the program will move into the design phase.

Meeting Evaluation

What went well? What can we change or improve in the future?

- Technology worked well.
 - Appreciation for collaboration and willingness to pitch in on work products
 - Excellent facilitation
 - Appreciation for flexibility as we adjusted agenda times
 - Appreciation for what bring people joy and satisfaction at work
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Josua's Inspirational Quote

"We never forget that anticipation is an important part of life. Work's important, family's important, but without excitement, you have nothing. You're cheating yourself if you refuse to enjoy what's coming." Nicholas Sparks