

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

September 1, 2026 from 9:30am-2:45pm

FTC Representative Attendees

Ecology: Andrew Luymes

Tacoma: Melora Shelton

WDFW: Bryce Glaser

Trout Unlimited: Jonathan Stumpf

Yakama Nation: Bill Sharp

Additional Attendees

Ecology: Anne Baxter

LCPUD: Joe First, Laura Wolfe

LCFRB: Steve Manlow

Tacoma: Shana Barehand, Jenise Bauman, Matt Bleich, Ben Caviness, Sam Gibbons, Scott Gibson, Rem Latimer, Teresa Loo, Sean Luis, Eric Shoblom, Chris Vaughn, Wyatt Wood

WDFW: John Best, Brian Gale, Todd Hillson, Josua Holowatz, Chris Kopack, Peggy Miller, Larona Newhouse, Phil Sandstrom, Kevin Young

Facilitator: Jennifer Arnold, Reciprocity Consulting, LLC

Public Attendees: Greg King (Friends of the Cowlitz), Randy LeDuc (Coastal Conservation Association), Fred Ming (Friends of the Cowlitz), Larry Pryor (NWFE)

2026 FTC Meeting Dates

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

Review of Agenda and Action Items

We reviewed the agenda and action items. With busy summer schedules, M. Shelton and J. Bauman did not send out the M&E and TWG subcommittee invites. They will try to do better in the future.

Action item: M. Shelton and J. Bauman will make sure to send out M&E and TWG subcommittee invites.

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

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.

30-day review periods – WDFW requested an extended review period for the **2025 License Article 409 Annual Lower Cowlitz River Side Channel Monitoring and Use Report** because the current due date falls on Labor Day September 7. Tacoma can provide an extra three days, meaning comments are due at the end of the day September 10. Tacoma has a hard deadline to submit the report to FERC on October 1, and they need time to respond to comments, for internal review, and to complete pre-filing processes.

Action item: Comments are due to Tacoma by COB September 10th on the 2025 License Article 409 Annual Lower Cowlitz River Side Channel Monitoring and Use Report.

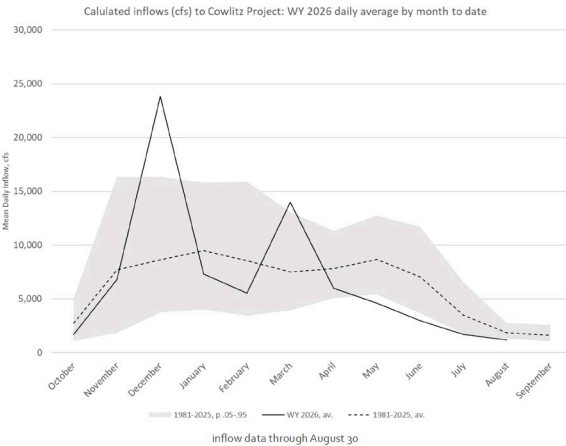
The 30-day review period for the CRR Implementation Strategy closes on September 4. This does not require a FERC filing so there is more flexibility, but no extension was requested.

Action item: Comments are due to Tacoma by COB September 4th on the 2027 CRR Implementation Strategy.

Tacoma restructuring and staffing: M. Bleich introduced Teresa Loo as the new Natural Resources Stewardship Manager, which is a new position Tacoma created as they restructured their staffing. Teresa was formerly Tacoma Power's Wildlife and Lands Manager. She will now have broader responsibilities providing oversight to wildlife and lands, science and research, and water resources teams. He emphasized this new restructuring will allow Tacoma to be more effective with upcoming needs. Everyone welcomed T. Loo.

Hydro Operations Update by Melora Shelton (Tacoma) (emailed 8/31, 20260901-CowlitzFTC-Hydrostatus.pdf)

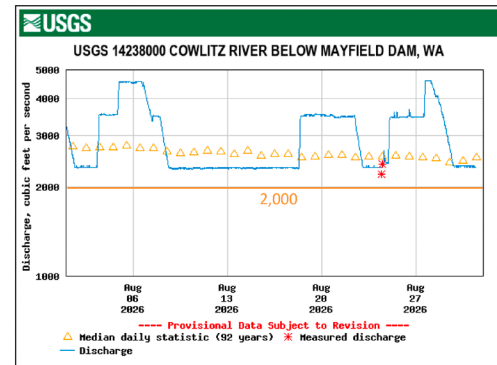
- The streak of extremely low inflows continues (May – August).
- The reservoir drafted about 11 ft.
- There was some increased flow at Mayfield in response to load.
- There was a single ramp deviation during gate testing for dam safety.
- The 10-day forecast is initially cool and wet, then typical.
- The climate outlook tilts dry and likely warm through November.



Outflow

USGS discharge is operational flow

Minimum flow



Current (8/31) 2,340 cfs.

Summer minimum 2,000 cfs. No flow deviations.

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

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

- review and preparation of the transition plan talks, which from now on will occur quarterly at in-person meetings and may highlight one or all of the populations
- quality control for the results from the GREB 1L study to differentiate spring and fall Chinook
- M&E Implementation Plan – identifying annual priorities
- coho Mayfield Net Pens Assessment – enumeration methods for Phase III
- ultrasound implementation plan for spring Chinook sex determination
- prepping data for the Life Cycle Model and
- review of the otolith proposal.

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

TWG Subcommittee Update by Jenise Bauman (Tacoma)

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

- review of the North Shore Collector summary with time for feedback over the next month
- 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
- Extended collection at CFFF, and
- Opercle punching of Chinook fallback from the collector this winter.

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.

CRR Implementation Strategy

The CRR Implementation Strategy is the guiding document that demonstrates how Tacoma meets the requirements of their FERC license. FTC reviewed this at the last two FTC meetings, and the 30-day review period will close on September 4. No one had any questions or comments.

Fish Facilities Update by Eric Shoblom (Tacoma) (emailed 9/4 - 20260901-CowlitzFTC-Fish-Facilities_Separator-Update.pdf)

- Rainbow trout plants occurred March through August, and the 50,000 lbs. target was met.
- At the Mayfield Net Pens, hatchery staff are working on predation prevention plans for the upcoming season.
- All release sites are open except Scanewa due to the typical temperature concerns at this time of year. Releases are occurring at Copper Canyon Creek instead until temperatures at Scanewa are below 18 degrees C again.
- At the Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery, staff installed a new 24" valve on the River Line which will ultimately allow hatchery staff to utilize river water in the trough room. Additional work is needed to make this fully functional, but this was a critical step to facilitate the new water supply, which is needed to address low water during summer months due to reduced capacity of the wells.
- Dredging occurred the first week of August, including the Salmon Hatchery intake to ensure good water supply, the Barrier Dam and Blue Creek Boat Launches to ensure boat access, and the Blue Creek ladder entrance area, just downstream of the weir to reduce the risk of flooding the hatchery grounds. The hatchery remodel will be designed to prevent this.
- The consultant continues to make progress with the Trout Hatchery remodel analysis of alternatives.
- Work is ongoing at the Mayfield JBS.
- For satellite rearing, two debris handling platforms have been ordered for the CFFF with delivery expected in the next few weeks. A new debris handling conveyor has been ordered with delivery expected in early October. CFFF staff will be testing the recirculation system next week, and FSP Engineering is continuing to work on CFFF upgrade designs.

Discussion

- B. Glaser asked where temperatures are taken at the Scanewa release site. He wondered if the temperatures were taken at the water's surface nearshore, they might be warmer than deeper water away from shore and not representative of conditions for fish, which swim away quickly once released. Perhaps the Scanewa site is still useable if the water temperatures deeper down are below 18 degrees C? He asked if the temperatures are included in the weekly report.
- E. Shoblom responded that the temperature is taken at the dam and then the truck drivers take the temperature at the release sites. He responded that he thinks the release sites are shallow and that the water temperatures are similar until much deeper down. The weekly reports include the temperatures at CFFF.
- B. Glaser said he would follow up separately with E. Shoblom on this topic.
- B. Glaser asked when there would be a major update on the Mayfield JBS.
- M. Bleich responded that they are going through a few internal evaluations right now. Tacoma hired a new Project Manager and got approval for the funding, which are steps outlined in the workplan. Tacoma flagged a few topics for further review since the FTC last saw the design. They are working through an internal review process and then will share the design back with FTC, which will probably be a few months from now.
- M. Shelton confirmed that the last DD was related to the 25% design concept, and the next decision point is the 60% design. S. Gibbons confirmed that the 60% design was targeted for the end of 2026 or early 2027. M. Bleich confirmed that Tacoma will provide an update to the FTC after they complete their internal review process.

Fall Fishery Update by Josua Holowatz (WDFW) (emailed 9/4 - 20260901-CowlitzFTC-Fall-Fishery-Update.pdf)

- The Fall Fishery Update looks back over the last several years and is intended to provide a forecast for the coming season and what to expect from this fall's fishery. The Cowlitz is celebrated for providing a diversity of fishing opportunities year-round. Fall is a prime time.
- Fall Chinook forecasted returns show a total return of about 16,000 (NOR and HOR) to the Lower Cowlitz for natural spawning and a deficit of about 600 fish relative to the goal for hatchery brood collection.
- Coho are similar with an estimated escapement of about 20,000. Based on the forecast, there will be plenty for broodstock, upstream transport, and angler opportunity. There will be no need to constrain coho fisheries in either the lower or the upper basin.
- J. Holowatz went over the Lower Cowlitz Fall Season Regulations (see slides).
- WDFW rolled out the new electronic catch record card (eCRC) this year. It is currently optional whether people use the eCRC or the standard paper method. A lot of anglers on the Cowlitz are still using paper. Based on Oregon's experience using eCRC, it will likely take the public a couple of years to adapt. WDFW has identified some bugs in the app that they are working through.

- WDFW expects an increase in coho looking at aggregate NOR and HOR. Based on the transition plan, we would like to come up with separate NOR and HOR forecasts. WDFW is looking at modeling now to try to do that. It is a long-term effort, but they are making good progress.

Annual Review of TWG Charter by Jenise Bauman, Tacoma

The TWG charter was new last year (9 months ago). Following FTC protocols, we will revisit each charter annually to confirm the directives, roles, and coordination and make any adjustments needed. Minor adjustments, such as changes to subcommittee primary points of contact, do not require a new DD. The group confirmed that the decision to continue under the current charter is considered an informal decision that only requires concurrence with voting representatives present.

The FTC reviewed the charter, and there was agreement among voting representatives present to continue operating under the existing charter. A few points were highlighted in the discussion:

- Points of contact – The subcommittee maintains a list of current points of contact, especially if we are not updating the charter to reflect these changes.
 - NOAA has not been able to participate. Should they be asked if it is realistic to keep them on the list of contacts if they really do not have capacity to participate? J. Bauman continues to check-in with them periodically, and they have not indicated that they want to be removed.
 - WDFW will be transitioning J. Best as their point of contact with J. Serl's retirement.
- Decisions – The subcommittee can make some decisions related to in-season implementation, but anything larger will be decided by the FTC.
- Annual priorities – Annually, the TWG Subcommittee will propose a DD to the FTC that outlines the implementation of studies designed to address key issues outlined within the DAMP. This annual list of studies will get layered into the Annual Operating Plan (AOP) along with the M&E Implementation Plan.
- Subgroups of the Subcommittee – The charter reads that a subgroup can form to work on a particular topic within the TWG subcommittee. M. Bleich emphasized care in making sure any subgroups work within the decisions made by FTC and that they bring their work back to the FTC.

Downstream Fish Collection Update (Mayfield and CFFF) by Sean Luis, Tacoma *(emailed 9/4 - 20260901-CowlitzFTC0-Downstream-Collection-Update.pdf)*

S. Luis reported on downstream fish collection since June.

- At Mayfield, smolt abundance is mostly attributed to coho. WDFW noted that numbers reflect raw counts and are not expanded. For those to be expanded, Tacoma would need to use the current estimate of Fish Guidance Efficiency (FGE), but it is unknown how variable that is. If there is variation in FGE, it could

complicate our understanding of true smolt abundance. Tacoma is currently developing coho age classifications. Chinook are below the 5-year mean. Low mortality probably reflects overall low abundance.

- At CFFF, fish collection has dipped below the historical average after earlier-than-usual relative spring abundance. Daily summer counts have been quite low as reservoir temperatures have increased.

Discussion

- What is going on with the roughly 1,000 steelhead adults at the facility? They are mostly fallbacks and kelts. This detail was shared with the TWG and is available by request.
- What about coho parr? At Cowlitz Falls, coho parr are currently passed downstream, while fry are transported upstream.
- P. Miller commented that the cumulative graphs per species would be helpful (similar to slide 11 but for each species). S. Luis replied that Tacoma can use this format to present data in future updates.
- B. Glaser asked why Chinook were lower than the 5-year mean. S. Luis responded that they don't know, but he was pointing this out as context for understanding mortality and parasite loads.
- S. Gibson reflected that the number of fall Chinook adults planted upstream was pretty low. Coho are pretty consistently at Mayfield around 30,000. It is a little lower this year, but not much deviation overall.
- B. Glaser responded that probably coho are seeding habitat every year. For Chinook, maybe they are underseeding. He is not sure. It is something that can be looked at with future modeling.

Separator Fish Collection Update by Eric Shoblom (Tacoma) (*emailed 9/4 20260901-CowlitzFTC-Fish-Facilities_Separator-Update.pdf*)

- The majority of fish currently returning to the separator are spring Chinook and summer steelhead. They are seeing more fall Chinook, coho, and cutthroat trout every week although numbers are still small.
- Summer steelhead broodstock collection ended August 31, and broodstock goals were met. All first-time arrivals were recycled to I-5 until August 31st, and all second time arrivals were sent to surplus. As of August 29, 1,878 steelhead have been recycled. Now, all summer steelhead are sent to surplus since brood collection and recycling are complete for the season.
- Collection for fall Chinook broodstock started August 24 and continues through late December or early January. Already broodstock collection is running behind although it is still early. As of last week, Tacoma wanted to have about 100 brood fish on hand and had only collected less than 10.
- Collection for coho broodstock began on September 1.
- E. Shoblom included a summary slide with season returns compared with 5-year and 10-year means. These numbers include both NOR and HOR.

Comments

- B. Glaser liked the graphs and summary slide. He suggested it would be nice to have a cumulative curve, similar to P. Miller's comments on the Downstream Collection Update presentation (similar to slide 11 but by species).

CRR Funding Determination by Steve Manlow (LCFRB)

S. Manlow reviewed the draft DD 2026-08 for the CRR Funding Determination. This is step 2 of the 3-step DD process, where the DD will be finalized at next month's FTC meeting. He explained that, on August 4, the LCFRB Board approved the funding recommendation from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and LCFRB staff to fund all four project applications totaling \$4.1M with \$2.6M match, which represents good leverage. They included Table 2, which shows how the projects ranked against all LCFRB applications, for the larger context to demonstrate that all of these projects represent good investments.

S. Manlow explained that the coordination is complex with many layers. After FTC formalizes their decision, LCFRB will enter into contracting, define deliverables, administer billing, track deliverables, process any amendments, and produce reports for Tacoma to submit to FERC to show implementation. Coordination between LCFRB, Tacoma, and FTC has been working well. He emphasized the funding of these projects is time sensitive, where matching funding could be lost if there are delays.

Discussion

- M. Shelton noted that she will add the amount of unallocated CRR funding to the DD. None of the funds have been spent since last year, but there is a little bit of interest to include in the most recent total.
- P. Miller asked if the link to the application materials in the DD will remain permanent. If not, we should consider removing the link. The application materials could be attached or referenced elsewhere.
- M. Shelton responded that Tacoma was not planning on archiving the application materials and instead relying on LCFRB to do so. If Tacoma attaches all of the application materials, it would be quite a large file and time-consuming to transition the files to be ADA accessible. S. Manlow confirmed that LCFRB will maintain the application materials in perpetuity. P. Miller, B. Glaser, and others said that would be fine to include the contact information for LCFRB in the DD instead of the link. A statement could be added that "Application materials were available to the FTC during decision-making and can be provided by LCFRB as needed." S. Manlow and M. Shelton will wordsmith something along these lines.
- B. Glaser asked that a sentence or two be included to explain that Kiona Creek is still recommended for funding even though it was ranked low, similar to what FTC discussed at last month's meeting. S. Manlow responded that all of the projects ranked Moderate or High support, and none ranked Low or Concern, which would have triggered additional review. This was not included here but

could be added. B. Glaser felt this was important context because of the lower ranking.

- P. Miller has some wordsmithing for the DD, which she will send to M. Shelton, S. Manlow, and cowlitzftc@tacoma.gov in the next 2 weeks.
- A. Luymes clarified that the draft DD states that all the projects will be funded. If the FTC decides not to fund all the projects, then would the DD need to be changed. M. Shelton confirmed that yes, the what and why would need to change explaining the rationale for deciding on something different from the LCFRB recommendation.
- B. Glaser acknowledged LCFRB for all their work behind the scenes to get to this point of a funding recommendation. M. Shelton echoed that Tacoma is forever grateful for their role and collaboration in evaluating applications and also administering the grants.

Action item: Submit any comments on DD 2026-08 for the CRR Funding Determination by September 14, so that Tacoma and LCFRB have a week to make any changes before sending it back out to FTC a week before the October FTC meeting.

LCPUD Updates by Joe First (LCPUD)

- Unit 2 maintenance has been completed, and it is now available.
 - About half of the baffle panels have been removed so far, and the rest will be removed on September 15 or 16.
 - There will be an outage on the Glenoma transmission line September 21-25 with both units down. The rest of the flow will run through the North Shore Collector.
 - The design of the second adult release site on the Cispus River (left bank) is in its final stages, and LCPUD is looking into the information required for permitting.
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Fish Hatchery Management Plan (FHMP) Update by Matt Bleich (Tacoma) (emailed 8/25 2026-07-DD-CowlitzFTC-FHMP-Update-Proposed Final.docx and 20260825-CowlitzFTC-FHMP-2026-Update-Proposed-Final.docx)

M. Bleich reviewed the context for this agenda topic. This represents the third step in a three-step DD process. 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 worked 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.

WDFW submitted comments to a previous draft update and draft DD 2026-07, and Tacoma sent a proposed final update and DD incorporating those comments.

Discussion

- A. Luymes asked if FERC ever approved the 2020 FHMP. M. Bleich responded no, but that FERC is not required to approve it. Tacoma is in compliance by submitting it. Tacoma requested that FERC approve it because it involved significant actions. However, they are not required to do so. P. Miller added that the last time FERC approved the FHMP it took four years. This time it has been six years without a formal response. Tacoma has had regular informal back-and-forth with FERC, just not a formal response. P. Miller emphasized that FERC is short-staffed and they have a heavy workload.
- B. Glaser emphasized that WDFW is thankful Tacoma is willing to implement the FHMP even without the formal FERC approval.
- M. Shelton thanked WDFW for sending their comments on the draft in the two-week period last month. They sent their comments to the FTC email list. Tacoma sent around a clean updated version integrating their comments.
- M. Bleich highlighted one of WDFW's substantive comments, which has been incorporated now – an explanation of why it took time to finish the M&E plan and also the AOP, including where are we now and what will it take to complete it. Also, Tacoma took the suggestion to move the section on the APR from the Appendix to the main body of the update, now in Section G.
- B. Glaser and M. Bleich reflected that there are a lot of memories that come up when thinking back to all the work that went into the last FHMP and then the M&E plan. B. Glaser added that the biggest piece that still needs attention is the AOP that comes out of the APR process. FTC has primarily been focused on production, but we also need to look at key metrics, trends, and status as they relate to the goals and targets in the Transition Plans. M. Bleich reflected that it took a lot of commitment to move the ship in the right direction, and now we are in a position to keep up the momentum.
- P. Miller asked how the 2026 update should be cited. Is the governing document the 2020 FHMP or will we now refer to the 2026 FHMP. Perhaps the update could include a recommended citation, similar to academic publications. M. Bleich and M. Shelton responded that it will be cited as the 2026 FHMP, which will include the update along with the full 2020 FHMP as one document. This submission will reset the clock for another six years before another update is required. The title and header will be adjusted to match the final wording.

All FTC members present supported this DD with the minor changes discussed.

Action item: M. Shelton will send out DD 2026-07 and the FHMP Update to FTC members not present for a 7-day hold.

Transition Plan Update: Spring Chinook by Jenise Bauman and Wyatt Wood (Tacoma) *(emailed 9/4 20260901-CowlitzFTC-Transition-Plan-Update-Spring-Chinook.pdf)*

J. Bauman and W. Wood thanked the M&E subcommittee for their comments that helped them strengthen the presentation.

They reviewed the transition plan goals for spring Chinook and progress toward those goals.

- Spring Chinook are currently in the recolonization phase with the goal to move toward the local adaptation phase. There are two distinct populations in the Cowlitz and Cispus that are managed together. What triggers the transition from one phase to another? Integrated Population Modeling (IPM) is now being developed for winter steelhead to address this question. We will next use it to look at spring Chinook.
- Currently, Upper Cowlitz spring Chinook populations are above the quasi-extinction threshold (QET of greater than 50 adults in the river for four consecutive years) but below the viability goals identified in the Recovery Plan for Lower Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead (a 5-year mean of 574 combined for both Cowlitz and Cispus compared with an NOR goal in the recovery plan of 1,800 in the Cowlitz and 1,800 in the Cispus). Habitat upstream of the Cowlitz Falls Dam is considered to be of relatively high quality and accessible.
- They reviewed habitat projects funded by CRR, adult disposition, adult NOR and HOR returns, and adult hatchery releases.
- They investigated two questions raised by the public through the APR process and shared their findings:
 - Are there differences in Jack and Minijack proportions among the different release groups? – Yes, increases with larger fish upon release. However, overall SARs are highest at 5 fpp.
 - Fish take four years to return, so Tacoma only has data up to 2021 to examine this question by comparing SARs. They will revisit this in three years to see the results of recent changes. They will continue with their portfolio approach in the meantime of raising fish to 5, 8, and 12 fpp.
 - The SARs calculations were possible thanks to modeling work by Thomas Buehrens, Tim Hoffnagle, and Phil Sandstrom.
 - Should hatchery production size grade and accelerate smaller fish to 5 fpp? Sizes are fairly uniform and well within what would be expected in Spring Chinook hatchery programs, and so no size grading/growth accelerating is needed.
- They also reviewed progress with various studies and efforts: Spring Chinook Passage of Juvenile NORs, including the AT study and WDFW model to estimate FCE, satellite rearing, the GREB1L study to improve separation of spring and fall Chinook, and the use of ultrasound for sex determination of early arriving spring Chinook.

- In summary, 1) In accordance with the FHMP and Transition Plans, Tacoma is continuing to vary release sizes and evaluate SARs in collaboration with WDFW and the M&E subcommittee, 2) Tacoma is in the process of implementing various program improvements to increase adults to recolonize the Upper Cowlitz and Cispus watersheds, and 3) Tacoma is considering options for an integrated program and is not yet ready for implementation.

Discussion

- A. Luymes asked, How do the different HOR release sizes compare with NORs? B. Glaser responded that in general, the NOR spring Chinook in the Upper Columbia Basin are larger yearling smolts, but in the Lower Columbia, they are smaller sub-yearlings. They probably do not get to the larger size before they smolt, which is why we probably see more jacks and mini-jacks. S. Gibson replied that for NORs, they see less than 1% jacks and mini-jacks. B. Sharp added that he has seen at Cle Elum that they have been able to reduce mini-jacks by chilling fish and getting yearlings out on a more natural schedule.
- J. Holowatz asked a question about sex ratios of returning adults by different release sizes at years four and five. J. Bauman responded that they can start answering more of these questions in the M&E subcommittee.
- M. Bleich commended J. Bauman and W. Wood on their presentation and on collaboration in the M&E subcommittee. This level of collaboration and connecting the dots is what the FTC has been working toward. B. Glaser agreed and appreciated the explanation of how all the various efforts connect back to the transition plan.

DAMP Refresh and Implementation with FCE model comparisons by Sean Luis (Tacoma) and John Best (WDFW) (emailed 9/4 20260901-CowlitzFTC-DAMP-Refresh-FCE-Model-Comparison.pdf)

S. Luis reintroduced the context for the DAMP refresh as outlined in DD 2026-01. The DAMP was written in 2014, prior to construction of the CFFF, so the refresh will include descriptions of the current infrastructure and studies that have been done to date. The intention was to leave Section 3 on decision-making as is. S. Luis is dividing his time between this and other work, but if all goes well, he will potentially have a draft by the end of the year for the FTC to review and finalize.

Parallel efforts to the DAMP refresh include J. Best's work to compare FCE calculation methods and a TWG workshop co-led by S. Luis and J. Best to review WDFW model parameters and reach agreement on Bayesian priors to use in the model, modeling different timespans of historical data, and implications for extended tagging windows and associated data gaps.

J. Best walked through a comparison of the traditional model to calculate FCE and the new model that he has developed, which provides an estimate of seasonal abundance in addition to FCE. The new WDFW model provides estimates for both how long before

fish are recaptured and the chances of capture upon arrival. With data estimates on daily time steps, this model also provides insight on co-variates. Some environmental co-variates can't be changed, but other operational co-variates can be adjusted, for example based on learning from the AT study.

Discussion

- B. Glaser commented that FTC doesn't have to fit J. Best's work into the DAMP refresh. We can adjust based on what makes sense.
- M. Bleich responded that he appreciates the value of WDFW's new FCE model for modernizing CFNSC evaluations. However, it's Tacoma's position that the traditional FCE calculation is what is required by the license. He emphasized he is not opposed to evaluating it, but it is important that Tacoma has a consistent way to look back over time for compliance.
- B. Glaser agreed that this discussion needs more time. He emphasized that DAMP was intended to adaptively manage the collector to systematically optimize performance. The FCE question is potentially outside of DAMP. Is there another authorizing part of the license that references FCE and how it is calculated? TWG's focus is how do we best operate the collector.
- P. Miller added that the calculations in the Downstream Plan were originally written in 2005 (referring to the Settlement Agreement License Article 1 Downstream Fish Passage: Riffe Lake and Cowlitz Falls Collection and Passage Study Plan). It probably needs to be amended for anything new, and P. Miller is not sure the traditional method is even in that plan. Since the DAMP was never approved, she is not sure whether FTC recognized the traditional method or whether it was referenced somewhere else.
- M. Bleich agreed that we need more discussion on how FCE is used in a compliance standpoint versus for adaptive management.

Action item: M. Bleich will track down where the traditional method for calculating FCE is formalized with FERC and what might need to be addressed or resolved with the DAMP update or adjacent to it as FTC considers other calculation methods from an adaptive management standpoint.

Public Comment Period #1 - Agenda related

R. LeDuc commented that steelhead recycled the first time are appreciated and encouraged recycling them second time.

Topics for October 6, 2026 FTC virtually on Teams

We reviewed proposed agenda topics:

- Gravel and wood placement
- CRR funding decision (step 3 for a DD)

Public Comment Period #2 – Any topic

L. Pryor emphasized the importance of working hard to address the issues limiting fishing opportunities on the Cowlitz.

Meeting Evaluation

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

- Appreciation for S. Luis and J. Best's work – very helpful and collaborative.
 - The transition talk was great to continue connecting and clarifying all the work we are doing and bringing us back to a snapshot of progress. It provided a recovery perspective.
 - Appreciate being able to revisit the transition plans quarterly using a more flexible format.
 - Members of the public asked if people could speak louder or use a microphone and asked if we could increase the font on the screen for accessibility. They appreciated the time to ask questions informally during the breaks and lunch.
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Josua's Inspirational Quote

““The quieter you become the more you are able to hear.” Rumi