

Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project
FERC No. 2016
Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee
Draft MS Teams Public Meeting Summary
April 5, 2022 from 9:30 – 2:30

FTC Representative Attendees:

Travis Nelson	TPU
Anne Baxter	WA Dept. of Ecology
Bryce Glaser	WDFW
James Archibald	NOAA
Bill Sharp	Yakama Nation

Additional Attendees:

Josua Holowatz	WDFW
John Serl	WDFW
Peggy Miller	WDFW
Todd Hillson	WDFW
Matt Bleich	TPU
Eric Shoblom	TPU
Phil Sandstrom	TPU
Tim Hoffnagle	TPU
Ann Weckback	Lewis County
Kyle Wright	USDA FS
Laura Wolfe	LCPUD
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting / Facilitator
Jamie Riche	PDSA Consulting / Facilitator (to facilitate 5/3 meeting)

2022 FTC Meeting Dates: May 3, June 7 (Public Meeting), (no meeting in July), Aug. 2, Sept. 6, Oct. 4, Nov. 1, and Dec. 6 (Public Meeting)

Approval of Last Meeting Summary

The March FTC meeting summary was reviewed and approved with edits and will be posted for public review.

Updates

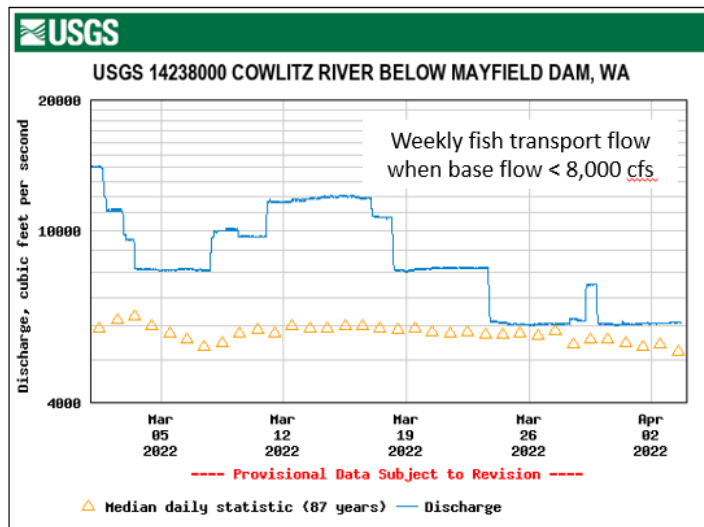
Hydro Operations

Travis provided the Cowlitz hydro status which was prepared on April 3 at the start of a significant early spring rain and low freezing-level snow event. It was emailed out for FTC review the afternoon of April 4. Please check <https://www.mytpu.org/community-environment/parks-recreation/river-flows-lake-levels/> for updated reservoir and flow data.

- Inflows: While February was at 66% of the historical average, inflows for March were at 152% of the historical average. Today Tacoma bumped fish transport flows at Mayfield up to 8K cfs and will drop them back to 6K cfs the end of the week. A major inflow event in early March was followed by more typical flows through the rest of the month. On April 2, the daily inflow was 5,847 cfs.

- Storage: Riffe Lake is right at the long-term average of 733' and above the more recent five-year average of 708.' Mayfield continues to operate in its typical band of 420'-424'.
- Snowpack: While snow water statistics are not available, snowpack at Paradise and White Pass were both below average. Snow melt from warmer weather on April 7 will cause more inflows into the river.
- Outflows: These are close to 6K cfs, just above the median daily statistic over the last 87 years. There was no daytime down ramping below 6K cfs. Nor were there any ramp exceedances or other events.
- 10-Day Forecast: The outlook is for rain through Wednesday, then cooler and drier.

Outflow



4/3 6,130 cfs, Minimum flow 5,000 cfs. No exceedances.

Link to the USGS real-time Cowlitz River hydrograph:

https://waterdata.usgs.gov/wa/nwis/uv/?site_no=14238000&PARAMeter_cd=00060,00065

Water Quality/Monitoring: Anne B. reported she has met with Matt Peter a few times and they are in the process of setting up some site visits. More to come!

Fish Facilities: The CFNSC started collection on March 15 and is operating well. There has not been much debris buildup since the last removal operation. The spillway flume system started up on March 31. Smolt numbers have been low but over 8K coho fry were collected and transported upstream. Temperatures have ranged from 5.8 C to 8.3 C and are currently nearing the lower range again. Discharge past Cowlitz Falls Dam has been steady, ranging between approximately 5,000-7,000 cfs.

The Mayfield Counting House was removed from bypass on April 1 and was run for the first time on April 4th. Tacoma made fish handling improvements to the facility to accommodate the new marking and counting strategies as described in the FHMP Transition Plans.

The Visitor Center opened back up on April 1 for first time since the Covid outbreak.

Approximately 700 fish (mostly steelhead) were handled last week at the separator. There were four spring Chinook last week and one so far this week. In accordance with

the FHMP Transition Plan, steelhead HORs are now being split between Cispus and Packwood sites. Eric noted the first load to Packwood was sent today.

It is still early for spring Chinook collection. Last year they didn't start arriving until late April. All HOR's are currently being retained for broodstock.

Winter steelhead broodstock collection: 148 winter steelhead of each sex were collected between December 15 and March 21, fulfilling the broodstock goal for the lower Cowlitz program. An additional 30 of each sex were also collected for the lower basin program. These will be surplus if not used. For the Tilton and Upper Basin winter steelhead program, they are keeping one NOR for every 9 they send upstream.

The shift in winter steelhead distribution in the Cispus and Upper Cowlitz is in concurrence with the Transition Plans. Bryce noted how pleased he was that we have been able to implement several Transition Plan actions already this year – new marking strategies, new transport to the two Upper Cowlitz sites, genetic screening, etc. Much to celebrate!

Gravel Augmentation: On March 2, Travis sent out the draft supplement to the Gravel Augmentation plan for a 30-day review requesting comments by noon today. WDFW submitted comments on 4/4. No other comments were received. He explained Tacoma intends to do another gravel augmentation operation of 1,000 cubic yards this July, using the same method and in the same location as last year. The contractor last year made better progress than only phase 1. Tacoma is hoping to get the rest of phase 2 and all of phase 3 completed this year. Gravel augmentation will be covered within the HPA. The intent is to accomplish gravel augmentation before the Barrier Dam project is completed this year. Tacoma also plans to monitor gravel movement to evaluate how well it distributes downstream. Drones are a cheaper alternative to aerial flights, WDFW has a drone and pilot on staff that may be able to help. John said WDFW would try to take photos during the lower river redd flights.

Downstream Adaptive Management Technical Work Group: This group is currently wrapping up their review of the draft report for last year's activities. The draft downstream report will be sent out in the next few days to kick off the 30-day review.

FTC Annual Work Plan Approval

Presenters: Travis Nelson

Travis displayed the 2022 Work Plan that had been emailed out on March 24. He noted he added that FTC meetings are scheduled for first Tuesday of each month except around holidays. He also added the Gravel Augmentation Plan and public meetings scheduled for the year. The Work Plan shows the Annual Operating Program (AOP) comes after Annual Program Review (APR). He reminded all the Work Plan will be treated as a living document and reviewed periodically. There was consensus approval of the 2022 FTC Annual Work Plan.

Monitoring & Evaluation Subgroup

Presenter: Phil Sandstrom

Phil reported this group last met on March 16 and started by discussing what to include in the April 21 Cowlitz Science Meeting (AM) and APR Meeting (PM).

Sam Gibbons attended the meeting to discuss 2022-2023 hatchery operations. They went through an exercise on how to proceed with CWT options for spring and fall Chinook and steelhead operations. There was great collaboration between the hatchery group and M&E Subgroup which helped to inform hatchery planning.

Other topics discussed included satellite rearing facilities and biological relevance, potential impacts of rearing NOR fish in facilities, and kelt reconditioning. In his subsequent research, Phil didn't find any stipulations that would preclude kelt conditioning, so this looks like a viable option for the future. Bryce stated WDFW would support the inclusion of kelt reconditioning, as part of the scoping for the current satellite rearing plans. Phil noted that while this wasn't being considered when Tacoma engineers did the site visits, Tacoma respects the idea and looks forward to seeing if it is workable. We will get an update on this at the May FTC Meeting.

There is value in spatial distribution of the populations. Acclimation sites for spring Chinook juveniles would also be a good idea. John noted if/when we get an integrated spring Chinook juvenile hatchery program up and running, doing so in a satellite rearing facility would be a ways down the road. The two species that need help are steelhead and spring Chinook. Coho are doing well in Upper Basin.

Satellite Rearing

Presenters: Phil Sandstrom

Phil started by explaining the presentation of the full specifications for potential satellite rearing sites that was intended for this meeting is being deferred to the May meeting. Of the three site visits with Tacoma engineers, two showed promise. Both had potential benefits that presented different opportunities. The third site at the Cispus Learning Center didn't work out due to ongoing restoration work there, uncertainty of side channels, etc.

The remaining two sites which are not yet being named are:

- Site 1 in the Cispus: There are cold water options and good year-round water supply for rearing fish. Power source nearby for operating pumps, etc.
- Site 2 in the Upper Cowlitz: Spring fed system. Might be temperature issues. The water supply there is not very robust. They are looking at options for providing power.

Feasibility of these sites including a logistical and biological reference framework will be shared in May. They won't exceed 4 cfs. Matt Peter is already working on permitting. Tacoma is looking for dual purpose sites – juveniles and kelts. Bill shared a relevant link <https://critfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/21-05.pdf>

Matt thanked Phil for coordinating so well with so many groups on this and also expressed his appreciation for the kelt reconditioning concept. Bryce reiterated that from a process standpoint, WDFW would support editing the DD to allow for doing the initial scoping through the lens of dual use and kelt reconditioning. The kelt reconditioning concept may be an issue that warrants a separate single-topic workshop vs trying to address it within an FTC meeting.

LCPUD Dam Operations

Presenter: Laura Wolfe

Laura reported the baffle panels were installed on March 22. The TDG monitor has also been installed. Sonar and turbidity sensors will be installed on the Cispus and Cowlitz River at Randle as well as in the forebay this spring. The PUD has been working with BPA to remove built up debris in front of the units and will continue to work toward a resolution. During several high flow events this year, CF was able to open the lower sluice gates help remove sediment from the forebay.

Other project updates:

- CF Maintenance on Unit 2 will begin in late June to early July (flow dependent) and continue through October with various maintenance projects. They do not anticipate having to use a 500 cfs variance this summer to perform the work.
- Inspection of the draft tube seals will happen this month or next in hopes of cleaning the sills manually. If, during the inspection, it is determined that the sills need to be cleaned by divers, a 2-3-hour outage would be scheduled, and spilling would go through spillway 4.
- Replacement of the Rittmeyer angle transducers on the fish flumes will take place after fish collection season. All materials have been procured and since the work will be done after fish collection, there will likely be no impact to fish collection.

Peggy asked if the large drop in flows on March 26 was needed to install the TDG monitor. Laura responded there could be a correlation there, but she was not able to speak to that with certainty. Anne B. asked how much sediment was removed when they lowered the sluice gates. Laura reported they will have a better idea of this after they install the sensors and complete the cross sections.

FHMP Transition Plans

Presenter: Matt Bleich

Since many public comments were received just prior to the last (public) FTC meeting, it made sense to defer approving the DD at that meeting. This allowed time for Tacoma and WDFW to draft responses to those comments before sending them out on March 17 for FTC review and feedback. As no additional feedback was received, Matt asked if the FTC was comfortable with approving the DD at this meeting. The significance of such an action is great as it will mean we are now at the finish line. With the FHMP and the associated Transition Plans complete, there is a clear path forward and it is time to begin to execute these plans.

This was also cause for celebration! Matt noted how much he appreciated the efforts of so many over the last few years. This collaborative success will shape the work of the FTC for the next 10 years. This was a very significant lift, which was compounded by personnel changes, and a bit of a bumpy road as we laid the groundwork for how the Transition plans would be written. Bryce noted we have landed with good strategy and direction for the programs. We are also starting to see implementation of some of these plans. We now get to start implementing those programs. He very much appreciates the effort, staff input, and time.

Matt walked through DD 2022-2 which had been revised based on public comments received. After a brief discussion, it was approved by consensus among attending FTC members and will be sent out to those representatives not attending the meeting for a 7-day approval period.

2020 Annual Program Review (APR) Process

Presenter: Phil Sandstrom

Phil reported APR includes the following process:

1. April 7: Meeting to discuss data gathering
2. April 21: First public meeting including the Science Conference in the morning and the APR in the afternoon. Public comment is welcome.
3. Discuss feedback from the public at the April 21 FTC Meeting.
4. Meet again with the public to discuss any adjustments.
5. Develop a DD that describes the program for FTC review at the May 3 meeting and approval at the June Public FTC Meeting.

Bryce noted it is important to identify clear options for public feedback. Due to the sideboards outlined in the Transition Plans, options especially around spring Chinook are limited.

Action Items:

- Phil: Send Lyn April 21 agenda to distribute to all.
 - Eric: Schedule a meeting with Sam, Matt, and Bryce re options offered to the public. It will be important to remind them that most of the shifts in the transition plan are good for fisheries and responsive to what the public has requested. Also, plan for questions around the FHMP making allowance for chum supplementation. WDFW has received requests for this from the public, including CCA.
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CRR Fund / Habitat and Production (HAP) Subcommittee

Presenter: Travis Nelson

Travis walked through draft DD that was emailed out on March 29. He reminded all the purpose is for the FTC to endorse the development of the HAP Subcommittee, its Charter, members, and which documents (Guiding Principles, proposal evaluation materials, application materials, etc.) should require FTC approval. Approval of this DD is scheduled for the May FTC Meeting.

LCFRB update: Travis reminded LCFRB staff are unable to attend today's meeting as this is the first day of their grant round and virtual tours. They will host five days of virtual tours, which are considered public meetings. As such, FTC members (or anyone for that matter) may attend any/ all of these. Travis sent the itinerary to all on March 29. The CRR projects are scheduled for April 19.

Tuesday, April 19 Webinar Access Only	Webinar Connection: https://meet.goto.com/115833957		Phone: (646) 749-3122 Access Code: 115-833-957	
	Introductions	LCFRB		9:15 AM 9:30 AM
	22-1212 Lower Columbia Barrier Assessment- SRFB	LCEP	Keith Marcoe	9:30 AM 10:00 AM
	CRR_22_01 Upper Cowlitz Culvert Inventory- CRR	LCD	Kelly Verd	10:00 AM 10:30 AM
	Break			10:30 AM 10:45 AM
	CRR_22_02 Upper Cowlitz Tributary Restoration- CRR	CFC	Suzanne Whitney	10:45 AM 11:15 AM
	CRR_22_03 Kiona Creek Restoration- CRR	LCPUD	Laura Wolfe	11:15 AM 11:45 AM
	Lunch Break			11:45 AM 1:00 PM
	22-1273 Cispus-Yellowjacket Phase IV Restoration- CRR and SRFB	CIT	Eli Asher	1:00 PM 1:30 PM
	Wrap Up	LCFRB		1:30 PM 2:45 PM

Note: The HAP Subcommittee meeting which would have occurred on the heels of this FTC meeting was deferred due to the lack of availability of several key members. Protocols call for an additional meeting on the third Wednesday of each month as needed.

Action Item: Travis to work with Melora on date of next HAP Subcommittee meeting – April 20?

Topics for May 3, 2022 FTC Meeting

- Usual Updates: Hydro Ops, Water Quality, Fish Facilities, M&E Subgroup etc.
- LCPUD Dam Operations
- Downstream Adaptive Management Technical Work Group
- 2022 APR Process DD (20 min)
- Satellite Rearing Program (at least an hour)
- CRR Program (40 min) Approve DD
- Gravel Augmentation Timeline
- Preview June 7 FTC Public Meeting topics

Meeting Evaluation

- Efficient meeting hygiene
- Great participation and much to celebrate
- Technology worked well
- Good use of the Chat function, e.g., FHMP >> APR + AOP = FUN
- Josua's quote: "A river cuts through rock, not because of its power, but because of its persistence." James N. Watkins

Closing Remarks

Travis thanked everyone for the excellent and collaborative discussions. He also noted Tacoma is still waiting for an order from FERC re the FHMP. He recently checked with Tacoma's FERC rep and was told the order should be issued by June.

Parking Lot

- Presentation by Tacoma's Power Management Group
- Review Steelhead Recycling Program