

**Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project**  
**FERC No. 2016**  
**Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee**  
**Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery**  
**Final Conference Call/WebEx Meeting Summary**  
April 7, 2020 from 12:30 – 4:15

**Attendees:**

Travis Nelson	TPU
Bryce Glaser	WDFW
Carol Serdar	WA Dept. of Ecology
Rich Turner	Tech Rep for NMFS
James Archibald	Tech Rep for NMFS
Jim Pacheco	Tech Rep for Ecology
John Serl	Tech Rep for WDFW
Peggy Miller	Tech Rep for WDFW
Brian Gale	Tech Rep for WDFW
Sam Gibbons	Tech Rep for WDFW
Josua Holowatz	Tech Rep for WDFW
Matt Bleich	Tech Rep for TPU
Florian Leischner	Tech Rep for TPU
Melora Shelton	Tech Rep for TPU
Eric Shoblom	Tech Rep for TPU
Phil Sandstrom	Tech Rep for TPU
Tim Hoffnagle	Tech Rep for TPU
Chris Foster, by phone	Tech Rep for TPU
Steve West	LCFRB
Laura Wolfe	LCPUD
Debbie Carlson	BPA
MaryLouise Keefe	R2 Resource Consultants
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting / Facilitator

**Remaining 2020 FTC Meeting Dates:** May 5 (conference call/Webex?), June 2, July 7, Sept. 8 (Sept. 7 is Labor Day), Oct. 6, Nov. 3 (Election Day), Dec. 1

- **Action Item:** Travis: Update next or next few meeting invites to show that they are conference calls (to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus).

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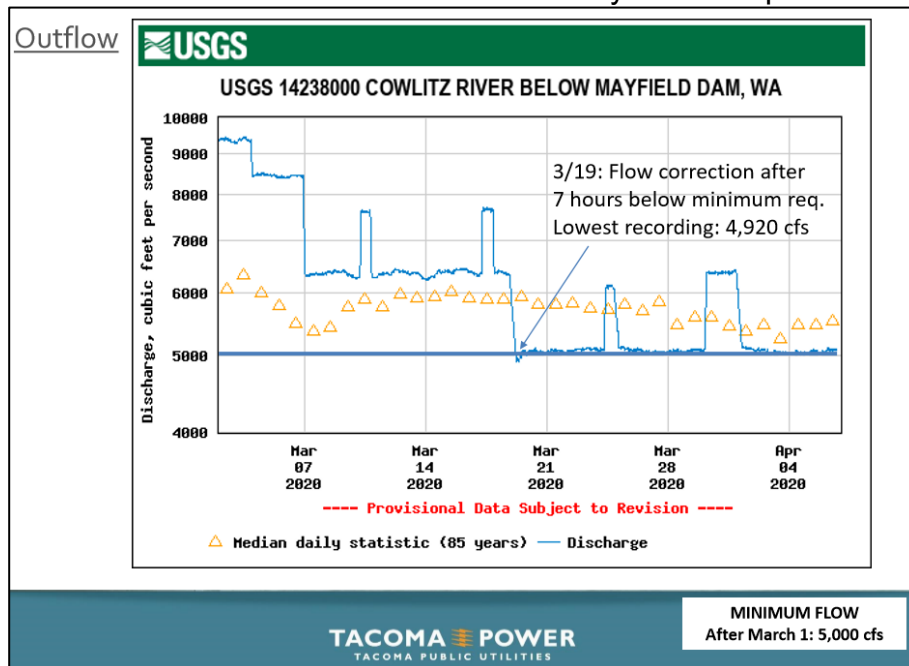
**Announcements**

- **Retirement:** Congratulations to Ruth Tracy who has retired from the USFS. JD Jones will continue to attend these meetings as the USFS technical rep. Best of luck Ruth and looking forward to continuing to work with you JD!
- **NMFS Representatives:** Since our last meeting Scott Hecht has been assigned as the NMFS voting member relative to FERC issues and Scott Anderson will be his alternate. Scott will be assuming Michelle Day's Project lead role (FTC Member, etc.) This does not change Rich Turner's engagement with the FTC.
- **Stuck in Paradise:** Paul Sparks intended to participate in this call, but technical difficulties interceded. He and his wife are staying safe and doing well, still in Hawaii due to the Corona virus.

## Updates

### Hydro Operations:

- Inflows: February inflows were at 16K cfs (nearly twice as high as the historical average). In contrast, March inflows were only 4.7K cfs, much lower than the historical average of 7.7K cfs.
- Storage: The highest refill was 761' on February 10. Since then TPU has been draining Riffe Lake which is currently at 725'. Snowpack looks good – at 103% of average in snow-water equivalent at lower stations and 130% of average at the higher elevation station.
- Refill Projections for Riffe: 82% probability of refilling to 749' by this summer based on weather years 1981-2019. As things can change very quickly, TPU is taking the conservative approach of running at slightly above minimum to provide storage capacity at Riffe. Stable flows are fish friendly flows.
- Outflow: On March 19 there was a flow correction after 7 hours below the minimum requirement. The lowest recording was at 4.9K cfs. The minimum flow after March 1 is 5K cfs. The forecast is dry and warm with storage in Riffe staying steady and outflows between 5K and 6K cfs. This includes weekly fish transport flows.



Link to the USGS real-time Cowlitz River hydrograph:

[https://waterdata.usgs.gov/wa/nwis/uv/?site\\_no=14238000&PARAMeter\\_cd=00060,00065](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/wa/nwis/uv/?site_no=14238000&PARAMeter_cd=00060,00065)

**Water Quality:** In early February, as TPU began to remove contaminated soil stockpiles, some of this material was further stockpiled at the boat ramp until it could be disposed of at landfills. Carol reported there were no inspections of this area as per the Water Quality Protection Plan. There is uncertainty around how long the ooze ran down the boat ramp. Tacoma is now in the process of cleaning up the soil lodged between the concrete slabs. This will likely be listed as a contaminated site. Proper clean-up must be based on clean samples. It is not clear at this time how the cleanup will occur. Ecology has not received a request for an amended or new WQPP approval.

**Low Flow Planning:** Florian announced that Melora will do a presentation on TPU Low Flow Planning / Climate Change Impact at the May 5 FTC meeting.

Downstream Adaptive Management TWG: Matt shared how this subgroup used the “Meeting Summary Report” template to report on the topics covered during their March 24 meeting along with next steps. At that meeting, discussions included the 2019 Report (applying lessons learned to 2020 activities); response to COVID-19 (halt of all non-essential activities); CFNSC Operations Update (no changes in operations); loaning the Behavior Guidance Structure (BGS) to the Bureau of Reclamation; and FCE definitions.

CRR Fund: Florian reported a meeting on April 16 has been scheduled with the LCFRB to discuss their future involvement with the CRR Fund. Peggy express concern that time was running out for the 2020/2021 grant round. If updates and the development of the habitat review process doesn't happen soon, we will not be able to meet our goals. Tacoma is concerned as well. Bryce inquired about the reconvening of a CRR subcommittee.

Fisheries Essential Operations: With current COVID-19 guidelines, Eric reported that, for the most part, hatchery staff have been deemed essential and have been able to maintain most normal operations. Mass marking, however, has been difficult due to social distancing requirements. He expressed appreciation to WDFW for defining how best to delineate work groups and ensure the marking crew has minimal interaction with the hatchery staff. So far, the system, which includes back-up teams, changing crew shifts, and cross training to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus seems to be working. Chris reported that while they are still on track for M&E work including FCE evaluations, it may become necessary to scale these activities back as fish numbers start to pick up. This would be done in a way that prioritizes staff health. In summary, passage and hatchery facilities are currently fully functional. Staff is participating in weekly coordination calls to address issues as they arise.

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## **Satellite Rearing Projects**

**Presenter: MaryLouise Keefe, R2 Resource Consultants**

Matt reminded all MaryLouise Keefe's (R2 Resource Consultants) last visit with the FTC on August 6, 2019, where the focus was brainstorming objectives and criteria, technology, and possible locations within the upper Cowlitz River Basin for satellite rearing facilities.

MaryLouise walked through a PPT presentation that was sent out to all the morning of this meeting. The presentation provided a preview of R2's draft report on satellite rearing. This report will be sent out to the FTC for 30-day review later today. After feedback has been addressed/integrated into the final draft report this June. At that point, TPU and the FTC will move forward with the conceptual design and plan implementation.

She reviewed the programmatic goals for this program, with the primary goal of increasing the abundance of Spring Chinook above CFD. Important to consider facilities that have flexibility to accommodate other species as well. After reviewing ten years of literature, scouring the internet, and made calls throughout the PNW inquiring about different satellite rearing programs, R2 came up with a list of five different types of facilities. In so doing, they made assumptions about production capacity of the different types of facilities to help with comparisons. Facilities including mobile, circular ponds, earthen ponds, off-channel/side channel rearing habitat, and reservoir net pens. They also looked at location options and a rearing framework show possible components for rearing, i.e., spawning, egg incubation, rearing and release.

Discussion: Sam stated that we need a quantitative target (i.e., number of adults produced) in order to evaluate the hatchery infrastructure necessary to achieve the programs goal.

Need to define this as a group to facilitate the review of infrastructure options presented in the draft report. Matt invited him to please make a recommendation.

Bryce expressed concern about this unexpected 30-day timeline which overlaps with the FHMP review. Matt assured all that while the work plan hasn't really changed, R2 is delivering this report later than expected due to conflicting priorities. He acknowledged there may be a need for more time to work through this.

Next steps: The draft report will be out today. All comments are welcome. For example, should we aim for 25 fpp instead of 40? R2 also welcomes feedback on locations, programmatic elements, etc. They will incorporate comments and expand sections accordingly. Eric suggested it may be helpful to focus on minimum requirements of the various facilities due to limitations due to available flow, location of the facilities, etc. Bryce suggested the review should include whether the objectives are still valid. Maybe we say yes to the guiding principles but no to quantitative goals. Peggy reminded all that this is a conceptual report and that specific goal setting would come later. MaryLouise asked all, when reviewing the draft, to keep in mind that rearing options may include existing facilities which would be reprogrammed.

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## **FHMP Update**

**Presenter: Matt Bleich**

Matt began by thanking everyone for all their hard work in identifying and resolving outstanding issues and reviewing the draft documents. He sent out the most recent update package on March 20. In the fourth FHMP workshop this morning, they worked on the M&E Chapter including transitioning the existing M&E plan to the new one in the FHMP. They also identified the need for a white paper on how to characterize the interim plan for Fall Chinook Broodstock selection. MaryLou will draft this white paper which will be appended to the FHMP. They expect to finish reviewing work products from the technical editor by the end of May. TPU will then consolidate comments received into draft final FHMP the end of June at which point it will go for public review.

Mayfield Intake Cleaning: TPU is required to clean the Mayfield intake annually, as per FERC license. Normally, the cleaning occurs this time of year. Unfortunately, they have to forgo doing this operation this year due to staffing changes in response to social distancing guidelines. Fortunately, camera surveillance doesn't indicate any major problems. Flows last year were not sufficient to clog the intake system.

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## **M&E Subgroup Report**

**Presenter: Phil Sandstrom**

Tilton Release Site: Eric reported the site is basically ready to be fish tested. This will be done after COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

M&E Subgroup: The only WDFW M&E action currently occurring on the Cowlitz is operating the three of the four tributary weirs. These were determined to be essential to collect hatchery NOR broodstock. John reported operating the three weirs that historically collected most of the steelhead. With water levels low, they are not seeing a lot of fish. WDFW is still discussing with Tacoma on how broodstock can be delivered to the hatchery while ensuring the isolation of hatchery staff through no contact.

At their last GoToMeeting/conference call, they used the new Meeting Summary Report template. Phil is looking into getting a consultant to help with notes from these meetings. In the meantime, he welcomes any feedback / suggestions on how best to use the form. In addition to reviewing the status of previously assigned action items, they discussed the Spring Chinook SAR Project. They want to be able to assess different programs, size at release, to get to a single data set. They are currently developing a work list – a schedule of when certain topics should be addressed. After Phil finishes compiling this list, he will send it to the M&E Subgroup for comments. He will incorporate the comments into the list he sends to the FTC for comment. He is committed to include items according to FTC priorities.

**Action Item:** Phil to send draft work list out for FTC prior to the May 5 meeting.

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## **Review of FTC Protocols**

**Presenter: Travis Nelson**

Travis thanked WDFW for their time and attention in editing FTC protocols. He walked through their proposed edits including detail around technical representatives. Those who are also signatories to the SA can be technical reps to their organization(s). Others (e.g., LCFRB) must be nominated by an official FTC rep with concurrence by the FTC.

Meeting Summary Report: Matt explained that this report has been used by the Adaptive Management TWG to record their meeting activities. A copy was sent out to all. It appears to be working well. Other subcommittees are encouraged to also use the template. At the last meeting the FTC agreed to use this form from April – May, evaluate how well it meets the goal of improving communication with the FTC, and then improve it as needed.

### **Action Items:**

- Travis: Talk with Paul about how best to capture his concerns with FTC Technical Advisors as described in the SA.
  - All: Come to the May FTC meeting ready to further discuss / approve the protocols.
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## **Gravel Augmentation**

**Presenter: Florian Leischner**

Florian explained the “2020 Draft Gravel Augmentation Work Plan” that was sent out on March 13 represents a high-level timeline for the actual plan. A full work plan will be developed once a site is selected.

Just prior to this meeting, Travis sent out the updated Excel spreadsheet of the alternatives analysis that included feedback from FTC members. Florian explained they would like to finalize the sites based on the alternatives analysis.

Discussion: Include photos and/or a map of the locations. WDFW folks agree that a gravel distribution metric is key. Josua explained the edits offered by WDFW, including water depth, flow velocity during placement, during average flows and if the proposed locations had other habitat restoration opportunities. WDFW had questions around how the existing high/medium/low metrics would be used. How would the success of this application be measured? By whom? How and how often? Florian explained the – high/medium/low ratings would be based on professional judgment. Bryce suggested it would be helpful to supplement the ratings with a short explanation, especially if not doing hydraulic modeling. Add current state of substrate? Florian suggested combining flow velocity and water depth

as both have to do with gravel movement. WDFW's suggestion of "Other habitat restoration opportunities" asks if more efficiency could be gained?

Next steps: Instead of getting consensus on parameters prior to this meeting, Florian explained the goal is to finalize the site location selection in late April. He will complete the Alternatives Analysis spreadsheet based on recommendations received and email it to the FTC for additional review / comments. The aim is to finalize site locations at the May FTC meeting. He assured all there will be hydraulic modeling during the design process.

#### **Action Items:**

- Florian: Update high-level timeline for the work plan.
- Florian: Write up assumptions about placement within the channel, complete the Alternatives analysis spreadsheet and send out to FTC by April 28 for discussion at the May meeting. See about putting together a Decision Document on next steps.

Note: Just after the meeting, Travis emailed out a Google Earth map showing the location of each of the ten sites.

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#### **Approval of Last Meeting Summary**

The March FTC meeting summary was approved with edits and will be posted to the FTC public website.

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#### **Meeting Evaluation**

- Great attendance!
- Using the chat box to queue up to speak worked well.
- Meeting ran late.
- Need more time for agenda topics.
- Need to be sure we are spending the most time on the most important topics.
- Much appreciation to all for putting up with the frustration of technical difficulties.
- Quotable Quote: *Happiness cannot be traveled to, owned, earned, or worn. It is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace and gratitude.*

– Denis Waitley

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#### **Potential Topics for May 6 FTC Meeting**

- Updates incl. Hydro Ops, Water Quality, Kosmos seep
  - Presentation on Kosmos Seep (Jessica)
  - Presentation on Planning for low water/drought conditions in 2020 (Melora)
  - FTC Protocols
  - M&E Subgroup
    - Alternate Tilton Release Site
  - Gravel Augmentation Work Plan
  - Downstream Adaptive Management TWG
  - Cowlitz Restoration & Recovery Fund 2020
  - Satellite Rearing
  - Set topics for the June 2 FTC Meeting
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#### **Parking Lot**

- Review Steelhead Recycling Program