

Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project
FERC No. 2016
Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee
Final MS Teams Meeting Summary
May 4, 2021, from 9:30 – 2:30

FTC Representative Attendees:

Travis Nelson	TPU
Bryce Glaser	WDFW
Carol Serdar	WA Dept. of Ecology
Scott Anderson	NMFS
Bill Sharp	Yakama Nation

Additional Attendees:

James Archibald	NMFS
Rich Turner	NMFS
John Serl	WDFW
Peggy Miller	WDFW
Sam Gibbons	WDFW
Josua Holowatz	WDFW
Brian Gale	WDFW
Matt Bleich	TPU
Eric Shoblom	TPU
Phil Sandstrom	TPU
Tim Hoffnagle	TPU
Chris Foster	TPU
Steve Manlow	LCFRB
Steve West	LCFRB
Laura Wolfe	LCPUD
Kate Day	USFS
Ann Weckback	Lewis County
Rudy Salakory	Cowlitz Indian Tribe
Debbie Carlson	BPA
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting / Facilitator

2021 FTC Meeting Dates: June 1 (Public Meeting), July 6 (tentative), Aug. 3, Sept. 7, Oct. 5, Nov. 2, Dec. 7

Approval of Last Meeting Summary

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

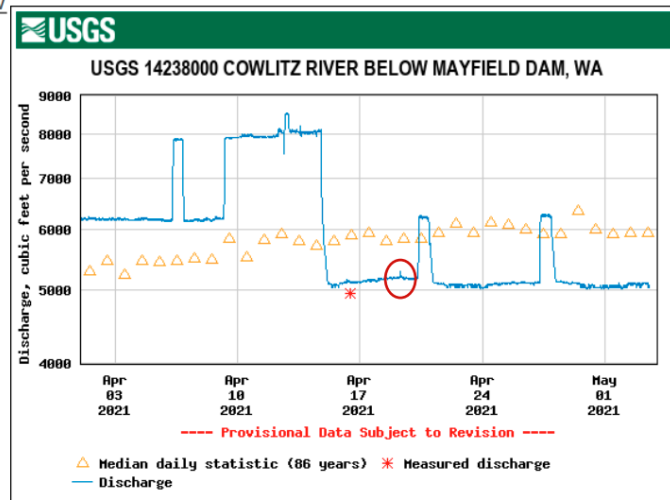
Updates

Hydro Operations:

- Inflows: With cool weather and very little precipitation, March and April inflows were both 78% of the historical average. May inflows are predicted to be 89% of historical average.
- Storage: Travis was pleased to report the elevation at Riffe Lake is finally back up to 708' which means the boat ramp there is usable and will reopen today (May 5).

- Mayfield Outflows: There were no minimum flow exceedances and one ramp exceedance of 100 cfs during annual maintenance on April 19. It was resolved within an hour. Outflows as of May 3 were at just above 5K cfs. Tacoma is continuing to provide pulse flows (fish transport) on a weekly basis and will continue to provide a minimum flow of 5K cfs through the end of June.
- 10-day forecast is atypically dry. Snowpack is still at 122% and is decreasing.
- Mayfield Bank Outage: This is planned for the fall and involves taking a unit out of commission. Planning for this may affect summer reservoir elevations.

Outflow



Ramp restrictions below 6,000 cfs: no daytime ramping, 2 inch limit at night
Daytime exceedance on 4/19

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: Ecology provided approval for the Water Quality Protection Plan (WQPP) for dredging at Blue Creek. Carol sees associated turbidity discharges as likely. With umbrella of WQPP they have a plan to monitor and to report any exceedances and continue to use BMPs to prevent and minimize turbid discharges. Therefore, they have coverage for incidental discharges. She expressed appreciation to Tacoma for putting together BMPs and what-if scenarios for a well-rounded WQPP.

Ecology requests notification if there are to be changes to instream flows due to the Barrier Dam construction activities. It was also requested that fishermen be kept as far from construction as possible. Previously there were fishermen within a few feet of the 300' point of compliance for turbidity monitoring. There is supposed to be continuous monitoring within 300' downstream of the farthest activity. Someone needs to be standing there monitoring for a turbidity plume. At times, the point of compliance will be further downstream than it was before due to cofferdam construction and associated activities.

Carol also asked to be notified prior to debris removal from Mayfield and Riffe Lake, until the WQPP for this activity is approved by Ecology.

Kosmos update: Carol showed a map of the oil ooze and where the contaminated material was removed and stockpile location. She was concerned about contamination eroding into the creek, so Ecology tested a sample and learned the sediment is highly contaminated with diesel (22k ppm) and oil (41K ppm) range of hydrocarbons. This area is exposed to waters of the state when the lake level is up.

She has asked Tacoma to remove what they can along the ledge and then cap it with rock. Tacoma has been very responsive, and Carol noted the FTC should be proud of the actions and reactions.

Fish Facilities: Eric reported that the Barrier Dam contractors should start to mobilize any day now as they finalize the contracts. In-water work starts on July 1 and concludes September 30. This is the first of a three-year in-water work window. Every effort will be made to minimize the number of turbid discharges.

It looks like the winter steelhead broodstock collection is on target. Spring Chinook returns are critically low for this time of year. Broodstock collection is far behind. They have only been able to collect 175 vs. the end-of-week target of 671. 45 NORs have returned to date. Options to address the spring Chinook shortage are currently unclear. The Cowlitz Falls juvenile collector operations started on March 15. There are not many fish moving due to low temperatures and low flows. The situation at Mayfield is much the same – minimal fish collected. Eric expects fish migration to increase as temperatures and flows pick up.

Downstream Adaptive Management Technical Work Group: Matt reported their last meeting was brief. They have been through all the study planning, reporting and are gearing up for the current season. They have released the first two tagged groups of steelhead and one group of coho through the collector to check Fish Collection Efficiency (FCE) which translates to Fish Passage Survival (FPS). They will have more data to report at the next FTC meeting. There has been a slow start to the season. The TWG has reviewed the Annual Report and it will be out this week to the FTC for a 30-day review.

2021 FTC Workplan: This Work plan with edits suggested at the last meeting was sent out on April 29. Travis projected the updated version of the Workplan and welcomed additional comments/suggested edits.

Satellite Rearing: Matt reported that he has drafted a work plan that will be reviewed internally and there will be an update at the June meeting.

Gravel Augmentation

Presenters: Travis Nelson

Travis explained that he and Melora have been working on the outline that he shared at the last meeting which is a supporting document to the DD that was approved at the February FTC meeting. The timeline in the DD for the long-term plan has slid a bit as there is a need to approve the outline before identifying specific sites in addition to Barrier Island. Discussions about access to the Jorgensen property are continuing.

Action Item:

- All: Please send any comments to Travis and Melora on the outline between now and the June Meeting.

M&E Subgroup Report

Presenter: Phil Sandstrom

The M&E Subgroup last met on April 21. They had a lengthy discussion re “The Big Table” of what is known and where there are data gaps, and how best to proceed from short-and long-term perspectives. They decided not to fill out the table annually. Instead, they will populate a spreadsheet that all can access. They didn’t make much progress on the Spring

Chinook Study Plan. This will be integrated into the M&E Workplan and will include what management decisions would come from the work design.

The Analytics meeting will be July 21 from 1-5pm. Discussions will include various analytical techniques and how best to improve M&E efforts. All FTC members are welcome to attend.

Phil reviewed with all the draft DD for the workplan for the Monitoring Workplan that was emailed out on April 30. This DD needs to be approved by the FTC before proceeding with the Workplan which was developed as a supplement to the 2020 submitted FHMP. The DD includes specific language from the FHMP such as defining what kinds of elements need to be included in study design templates, what is needed for baseline conditions, etc. It outlines the review process and the many opportunities the FTC will have to provide comments on the Workplan. Phil imagines providing monthly updates, re: schedule, issues that arise, etc. As Phil walked through the DD, he made edits as suggested by the FTC. He will insert a table showing the timeline from the spreadsheet after pushing the dates back a month. All agreed to the process of reviewing and approving the DD electronically. The M&E Subgroup will meet again in June.

Action Items:

- Phil: Update the DD (insert table showing timeline) and send it out to all along with the Excel Spreadsheet. *(Done on May 4)*.
- All: Review the updated DD and provide any additional comments to Phil by May 10.
- Phil: Incorporate any additional comments and send out for another round of review. If there are no comments, it will be sent out again as Final.

FHMP: Next Steps

Presenter: Matt Bleich

Matt reported that the workshops continue to proceed according to schedule. The last workshop was held on April 28 where they focused almost entirely on completing the Draft Winter Steelhead Transition Plan. Matt will email out the summary documents in the next week. The focus is on Tilton and upper basin Steelhead populations based on the modeling efforts of Thomas Buehrens and Phil who have framed different strategies available and how to proceed with the integrated and segregated programs. It appears there is no “silver bullet” solution. During low SAR years, it is better to increase production strategies without a culling strategy. During high SAR years, it makes sense to keep culling as an option. Now that there is a path forward including how much to increase the program and by what method, Tacoma will fill out an adult brood table in the next month, listing all the options. After technical editing is complete, it will go out for FTC review.

They will review the Draft Spring Chinook Transition Plan template at their next meeting (May 26). They have already discussed a marking strategy and it seems like this will be a relatively simple transition plan with a focus on the abundance phase – not yet moving into the integration phase. The plan will include how to improve hatchery programs – tweaks to improve SAR in the near term. The final transition plan will be for coho. After that, they will do a comprehensive review of all the programs in total. Eric reminded all of the importance of doing a bio-programming exercise at the end to ensure there is sufficient space within the hatchery for all production.

Bryce noted that for the Steelhead they talked about management prioritization – final transition plan trajectory with recovery objectives as primary focus and then trying to

maximize harvest opportunities after that. He also expressed concerned with this year's spring Chinook Cowlitz return which is much lower than in other areas. He suggested the FTC consider brainstorming data gaps / root cause of this decline at the next meeting.

Matt thanked everyone for their time, effort, and expertise in the transition planning workshops. It has been a great effort and the meetings have been highly productive. We all recognize how critical this is and everyone is on the same page about where we want to go.

Annual Program Review (APR)

Presenter: Matt Bleich

Phil is coordinating the science meeting that is being tied into the APR meeting which will be hosted by WDFW and Tacoma. The science side gives regional scientists and the public a chance to see the life cycle and impact to fisheries in general, including hatchery impacts, production, habitat, etc. for this year and how it related to the last five years.

The APR side of things is largely production oriented and includes things such as modifications to the Cowlitz Falls collector. The initial APR meeting will be on May 19 this year and will start with the science and end with recommendations which will mostly be maintaining the status quo with the explanation that we are developing transition plans (will forecast some of the changes per the transition plans). At that point, the public will provide feedback which will be shared at the June 1 FTC meeting. Then, at the June 23 APR meeting, Tacoma and WDFW will restate what they heard at the initial APR meeting and describe how it impacts production plans. They will also share an update specifically on each transition plan and the upcoming schedule including further public involvement.

The formal agenda for APR will go out today. Bryce and Matt will schedule time to prep for the meeting.

2021 CRR Program Update

Presenters: Steve Manlow and Travis Nelson

Steve and Travis reviewed the DD that was emailed out on April 16 and asked for feedback/edits. There was general support for the approach outlined in the DD. The DD was approved by consensus with edits. Carol expressed appreciation and support for WDFW's edits. The hatchery related project component of the CRR process will remain with the FTC for implementation. Discussions on how to kick this off will be forthcoming.

The CRR Program habitat grant round will be integrated into the LCFRB's existing SFRB grant program. The LCFRB also will manage grants administration for habitat projects that are awarded CRR funds by the FTC. Tacoma Power will reimburse the LCFRB for its services to implement and administer the habitat portion of the CRR Program using generation/natural resources/operating funds. Tacoma Power will pay grant award funds for distribution by the LCFRB directly from the CRR Fund. They noted that the CRR Fund will not be used to pay for any of the LCFRB services.

In 2021, the LCFRB may recommend that the FTC fund any project in the grant round that would have been otherwise recommended to the SFRB and that also meets CRR Program priorities. Beginning in 2022, the CRR Program will be fully integrated into the LCFRB's grant round.

Steve M thanked everyone for the opportunity to partner with Tacoma and put funding to work on the ground. He will report back to confirm LCFRB's role after their Board meeting

on May 7. Carol reminded all that Ecology needs to approve any ground disturbing work or in-water work.

- **Action Item:** Travis to send out Final DD to all. (*Done on May 4*).
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Members of the Cowlitz Fishing Community Remembered

Travis announced that passionate anglers, and former Cowlitz River Advisory Group members Bob Reid and Donny Glaser have passed away since the last Public FTC meeting. He invited Stan Bartle and Greg King to say a few words at the June 1 FTC meeting to acknowledge their contributions to the watershed. It was agreed to also announce their passing and express gratitude for their many contributions at the Science meeting which will be better attended.

Potential Topics for June 1 Public1 FTC Meeting

- Updates incl. Hydro Ops, Water Quality,
 - Fish Facilities (10-15 min.) incl. Barrier Dam Project overview
 - Satellite Rearing Update
 - Downstream Adaptive Mgt. TWG
 - 2021 FTC Work Plan
 - FHMP Transition Plans (30 min.)
 - Satellite Rearing Program
 - APR Meeting (60 min.)
 - CRR Program - How to stand HAP up - By year end?
 - M&E Subgroup (Something from APR meeting?) (30 min.)
 - Gravel Augmentation
 - Preview July or August FTC Meeting topics
 - Public Comment Session (30 min.)
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Meeting Evaluation

- Record attendance!
- Good discussion / edits on both DDs
- Josua's quote: "Choose to confide in friends with sunny dispositions who will encourage you to be more positive." Zayne Parker

Parking Lot

- Review/Update FTC Protocols to include remote meeting procedures
- Presentation by Tacoma's Power Management Group
- Review Steelhead Recycling Program