

**Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project**  
**FERC No. 2016**  
**Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee**  
**Final Meeting Summary**  
June 6, 2023 from 9:30 – 3:30

**FTC Representative Attendees:**

Travis Nelson	TPU
Anne Baxter	Ecology
Bryce Glaser	WDFW
Jonathan Stumpf	TU

**Additional Attendees:**

Peggy Miller	WDFW
John Serl	WDFW
Sam Gibbons	WDFW
Josua Holowatz	WDFW
Brian Gale	WDFW
Matt Peter	TPU
Scott Gibson	TPU
Eric Shoblom	TPU
Melora Shelton	TPU
Tim Hoffnagle	TPU
Leah Marquez-Glynn	TPU
Laura Wolfe	LCPUD
Russel Page	LCPUD
Steve West	LCFRB
Denise Smee	LCFRB
Bill Sharp	Yakama Nation
Michael Boyles	BPA
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting / Facilitator

**Public Attendees:** Randy LeDuc and Jack Tipping

**2023 FTC Meeting Dates:** (No meeting in July), August 1, September 5 (in person), October 3, November 7, December 5 (in person)

---

**Approval of May Meeting Summary**

The revised version of the May FTC Meeting Summary was reviewed and approved with clarifying edits and will be posted for public review.

---

**Announcements**

- Tim Hoffnagle announced this is his last meeting with the FTC as he is retiring the end of July. We wish him well and appreciate his guidance with FHMP and HGMP.
- Eric announced interviews are underway for the Assistant Manager of the CF Fish Facility.
- North shore access for fishing at Mossyrock Dam: Travis announced the ADA trail is temporarily closed (on the highway side) until safety issues related to a rock slide there have been addressed. Stay tuned.

- Jonathan Stumpf sent apologies for not being able to attend today's meeting as it conflicted with an in-person Seattle City Light Skagit Project relicensing meeting.

## **Updates**

### Gravel Augmentation Plan - Melora

Travis emailed the draft Gravel Plan Supplement to the FTC for 30-day review on May 5. The extended due date is June 9 to allow for questions at today's meeting. The DD describes the coordination and consultation that went into developing the Plan Supplement and requests FTC support for adopting it. The Plan Supplement includes all previous, related decision documents as well as the original Gravel Augmentation Plan and FERC Orders for reference.

The final DD will be presented for approval at the August meeting and filed with FERC as an attachment to the Plan Supplement.

### **Action Items:**

- Melora: Send draft DD asking for support to adopt the Gravel Plan and Supplement.
- All: Review and send feedback on the DD to Melora by July 14.
- Melora: Incorporate edits and redistribute by July 25 for August approval.

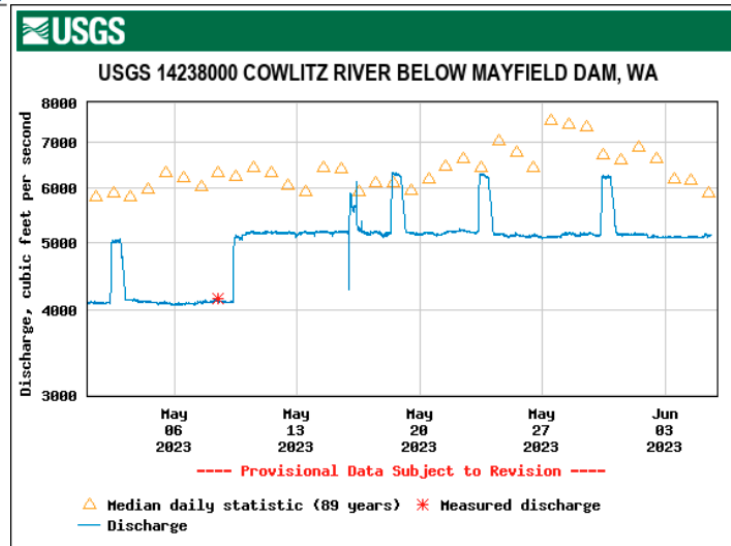
### Hydro Operations – Melora (presentation emailed on June 5)

- Inflows: May inflows were at 124% of the historical average. This was despite very low precipitation and followed unseasonably high temperatures. Runoff peaked in mid-May and was followed by declining streamflow.
- Storage: Riffe Lake has filled 40' since the last FTC meeting (740' on June 6, near average for 2017-2022). This may reflect most of the spring runoff. All Tacoma Power boat ramps reopened by mid-May.
- Snowpack: White Pass melted out the end of May. Paradise is at 67% of average with some high elevation snow remaining higher up in the watershed.
- Outflows: Flow reduction to 4,000 cfs through May 9, then normal operations near minimum flow. There were three exceedances during the plant outage caused by a lightning strike that took all generation at Cowlitz offline. Causes and corrective actions will be included in the annual Article 402 report to FERC.
- Forecast: Initially drier/warmer, then typical temperatures for the next ten days. Inflows should be ~5K cfs, with Riffe Lake remaining fairly stable. The public has been notified that boat access to Riffe Lake has resumed.

Scott Gibson provided an overview on fry standing surveys during the spring flow reduction. The FTC also received emails following each survey. Tacoma conducted fry stranding surveys on Apr. 14, 19, 26, and May 3 at 12 locations from Barrier Dam to just below the Toledo bridge. They observed stranding at five of the sites. Over 8,600 fish were recovered (mostly coho and Chinook fry) using seines and dipnets. Four mortalities were observed, but predation may have occurred prior to salvage. Tacoma also conducted fry stranding surveys on May 17 after the flow and ramp exceedances; no stranded fry were observed. Surveys were scheduled as soon as possible following fish transport flows and the exceedance events.

There was additional discussion on a number of points, including that stranding in general may be a future topic for the M&E team.

## Outflow



Through May 9, flow reduction (4,000 cfs + FTF); starting May 10 5,000 cfs + FTF. Plant outage with flow and ramp events May 15/16 (critical flow 6,000 cfs).

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)

<https://www.mytpu.org/community-environment/parks-recreation/river-flows-lake-levels/>

**Action Item:** Scott: Let Josua know if any of the stranded fish were adipose clipped.

## Water Quality/Monitoring

- Temperature monitoring: Matt reported Tacoma monitors the vertical temperature monitoring arrays on the boat barrier upstream of the barrier dam and at the debris deflector in front of CF dam on an hourly basis. The monitoring is increased to every 5 minutes when doing acoustic 3-D modeling work. They also collect temperature data upstream in the mainstem and in some of the creeks as well. He noted Tacoma did some full transects there five years ago. Gabe's weekly report also includes fish facility (inside the tanks) temperature data at the fish facilities including Mayfield. Peggy asked that the report include specific temperatures in excess of 14 °C rather than just reporting they exceeded that number. Bryce noted another topic for the M&E team would be exactly where the truck drivers measure water temperature.
- Anne asked about the presence of any invasive vegetation. Responses: Fortunately, not much. No big algae blooms. There is some Milfoil at Scanewa. Swafford Pond has a lot.
- North Taidnapam Boat Launch: Tacoma anticipates making planned improvements when the reservoir is sufficiently low. These include making the courtesy dock usable at a lower elevation and putting in a turnaround. Per Randy LeDuc's request on behalf of older fishers, a lower-level parking will ultimately (phase 2) be included; however, it is not part of the first phase. They hope to resolve potential cultural resource concerns there.

## Fishing Boundary

Josua announced WDFW has moved the fishing boundary from the 300' mark to the 100' mark below the Barrier Dam.

## Fish Facilities

Separator:

- HOR and NOR spring Chinook numbers are dropping off as we pass the peak of the run. A total of 1,717 were collected as of June 2, 92% of which were HORs.

- Winter steelhead numbers are also diminishing, with a total of 4,068 (90% HORs).
- Summer steelhead: 163 have been collected to date. Recycling began in late May and will continue this week.

#### Brood Collection:

- Spring Chinook: 382 males, 280 females and 48 jacks so far brood collection is on track.
- Summer steelhead brood collection will begin in July.

#### Mayfield Counting House:

- 137 Chinook were collected last week (similar to the preceding week). The run is expected to peak in the fall.
- Coho numbers are increasing as expected with 4,100 juveniles last week (2,800 the preceding week).
- May was the big month for steelhead. Nearly 2K juveniles were counted this week (nearly 5,000 over the past 3 weeks).

Eric welcomes any questions on these numbers. He will forward the Mayfield weekly report (noting these are preliminary data) to Travis to share with the FTC and the public.

Dredging: Tacoma plans to perform this periodic maintenance at the Salmon Hatchery intake, both Salmon and Trout Hatchery boat launches, and the ladder in Blue Creek the first half of August.

#### CF Fish Facility:

- Over 100K smolts in 2023.
- Steelhead smolt numbers are declining to the point where there may not be enough to get one more tagged group out.
- So far, FCE is 50% for coho and 60% for steelhead.
- Water temperatures have surpassed 13 °C. With warmer weather, flows are expected to increase from 5K cfs to 6.5K cfs.

#### Cispus Release Site

Laura reported LCPUD finished the JARPA permit application and is waiting to hear back. She will keep us posted. Bryce reported the Copper Canyon Creek kayak takeout is being explored as a secondary release site option. Efforts are underway to start some temperature monitoring there. Eric reported he has asked Jamie and Missy to visit that site this week to see if it is viable. Laura noted that the site is still 5' deep even during drawdown. John will keep Peggy apprised of efforts and any issues raised by the public.

#### Monitoring & Evaluation Subgroup

This group has not met for the last three months. Matt reported Tacoma has hired Four Peaks to help with this effort. Efforts are underway to schedule a meeting this month. Bryce reminded all, per FTC protocols, there is a need to establish a charter and have a DD outlining the purpose, etc. He said WDFW would be willing to chair this group as needed. Stay tuned.

#### 2023 APR Process

The same contractor will be assisting with this effort. Bryce will talk with Matt B about how best to support the Science meeting/APR meeting per the Work Plan. Stay tuned.

#### Downstream Adaptive Management Technical Work Group (TWG)

John reported there needs to be an assessment by the FTC of the implications of the variation in language addressing Fish Passage Survival (FPS) in the SA and BIOP. It is noted in various places in the SA and also in the Bi-Op that was issued in 2004.

**Action Items:**

- John: Send the various FPS definitions to Lyn by June 9 to distribute to the FTC.
- Matt B: Check to see if a charter was ever developed for this group, If so, it's time to revisit it to see if it needs to be updated. This, along with the FPS calculation can be discussion topics for this group.

---

**Spring 2023 Minimum Flow Reduction Update****Presenter: Leah Marquez-Glynn**

Leah reminded all that on April 3, Tacoma executed the minimum instream flow (MIF) reduction to 4K cfs with fish transport flows (FTF). They stayed at 4K for almost a month and the refill outlook improved. They went back up to 5K cfs when there was a heat event forecast. Snow melt contributed to 70% refill probability. The reservoir elevation will likely reach 741' based on current forecasts. Inflows were below average from last October to March and are expected to be below normal June - August. Leah anticipates Mayfield discharge from September to October to be 2.4 - 2.5K cfs. She is confident there will be sufficient water in the reservoir to meet MIFs in the fall. FTFs have only a very slight impact on refill probability.

Tacoma uses River Forecast Center models (weather from 1981 to the prior year) to determine refill probability. There is always room for improvement. Tacoma is investigating employing a second forecast. It is clear that climate change negatively impacts the amount of snow we get on average. Tacoma appreciates very much everyone's collaboration and support on this.

---

**LCPUD Dam Operations****Presenter: Russell Page**

Outage: LCPUD plans to take a single unit outage when flows drop sufficiently – likely late July - early August. The unit would be out for a month and then come back and generate in time for the fall runoff.

Debris barrier restoration process: Russell was pleased to report they finally got the permits for this project. He will provide an estimate of the start date at the August FTC meeting.

Sluice gate redesign / retrofit: This project will begin in 2024, in combination with other projects in order to minimize impact to river system.

Generator hatch cover seal replacement project: LCPUD removed Tacoma's #1 and #2 fish flumes and pulled the hatch cover to execute the repairs. They hope to finish the repair and reinstall the hatch cover and fish flumes on June 26. They will verify the seals are holding. The same process will be employed for the Unit 2 hatch cover. The whole project should be complete in the August / September timeframe.

---

**2023 FTC Work Plan/Protocols****Presenter: Travis Nelson**

These will be sent out again for a final review and electronic approval. The Protocols were updated to reflect the FTC's current decision-making process.

---

**Satellite Rearing Decision Document****Presenter: Eric Shoblom**

Eric noted he received a much-appreciated letter of support from CCA. At the last meeting, Eric introduced the DD for the first satellite rearing facility, asked for feedback between meetings and presented it again at this meeting for approval. Eric walked through the document which seeks support to develop a facility at the EN site at Packwood, while retaining the option to use the Tower Rock site as a backup.

After much discussion, there was consensus to hit the pause button and reintroduce the document after some hurdles, including permitting and water quality concerns (with the in-water option), have been cleared and detailed plans developed. Anne noted that Ecology's recommendation to pause and pursue other alternatives including an upland hatchery facility at the stilling basin (vs. and in-water facility) stems from the uncertainty around Packwood Lake's temperature modification activities associated with their Attainment Plan.

Note: The prior DD already gives Tacoma the approval to explore this option.

---

## **Cowlitz Restoration and Recovery Fund / Habitat and Production (HAP) Subgroup**

**Presenter: Melora Shelton, Steve West, and Denise Smee**

Habitat Grant Round: Steve W reported the two Cascade Forest Conservancy habitat restoration proposals previously introduced (Hall Creek Restoration, Upper Cispus Tributary Restoration) were presented to the LCFRB's TAC and some FTC members on May 4 . Final applications are due to the LCFRB on June 26; the Project ranking meeting is July 19. The LCFRB meets on July 28 to review/approve the list of projects for SFRB or CRR funding in 2023.

After some discussion, it was agreed that the LCFRB will present on the two CRR projects and introduce a draft DD at the August 1 FTC meeting and the FTC will vote on that DD in September. This is earlier than the schedule because there is no SFRB match, which allows streamlined process on the LCFRB's side for putting forth a recommendation and initiating award contracting. Bryce noted Peggy will be the designated WDFW proxy at the August meeting.

Cispus Yellow Jacket Phase III Project: Melora reminded all this project is underway with in-water construction scheduled for this summer.

HAP Subcommittee: The subcommittee has identified some challenges and lessons learned for the 2022/2023 HAP grant round, even though no proposals (draft or final) were received in 2023. A big takeaway: It is clear most applicants will need substantial assistance from the subcommittee to propose and ultimately implement these projects. And it is still difficult to articulate exactly what constitutes a "good" project. It was suggested the subgroup identify some target projects or types of projects. Applicant engagement was low despite outreach through workshops and the FTC website. Melora will reconvene the subcommittee before the August FTC meeting to formulate recommendations to the FTC about the best path forward.

Bryce agreed that coming up with a list of potential ideas the FTC could support would be helpful to applicants. Peggy suggested investigating awarding CRR funds to support the creation of this list, rather than relying solely on subcommittee members. Bryce also reminded all there is currently a gap that used to be filled by FOC (Friends of the Cowlitz) that may have led to low participation. He also suggested at the upcoming APR meeting a coho net pen pilot project would be discussed. If successful it could be transferred over to another organization through the HAP process. There was consensus that though there were no applicants for this grant round, it is important that we provide the opportunity and move the process forward for another round.

- **Action Item:** Melora to set up a July HAP Subcommittee meeting to formulate recommendations to share at the August FTC meeting.
- 

## **Public Comment Period #1 - Agenda related (No comments)**

---

### **Topics for August 1, 2023 FTC Meeting**

- Updates incl. Hydro Ops, Water Quality, Fish Facilities
  - Gravel Augmentation Plan DD
  - LCPUD Cowlitz Falls Dam Operations
  - Update on Cispus Release Site
  - Satellite Rearing
  - Downstream Adaptive Management TWG
  - Significance of Performance Metric
  - CRR Fund / HAP Subcommittee Recommendations
  - M&E Subgroup
  - 2023 APR Process
  - Preview September FTC In-Person Meeting topics
- 

### **Meeting Evaluation / Inspirational Quote**

- We weren't able to get into the building until 9:20. Sheesh! Appreciate everyone's patience
  - Appreciated the hybrid option. The Owl worked great.
  - Kudos to Travis for weathering the tech challenges with grace and humor.
  - Great dialogue - Everyone spoke freely.
  - Not enough sauce on the pizza!
  - Good frank discussions. Learned some information that may affect the SR program.
  - Josua expressed appreciation for the polite and considerate communication at the meeting and offered the following quote: "Sometimes people are going to be rude. Instead of responding harshly, keep a calm spirit." Dawn Klinge
- 

### **Public Comment Period #2 – Any Topic**

Randy:

- What are we going to do to improve fishing opportunity? There are many issues that negatively impact the fishery and it seems like the FTC should be working to address them. This doesn't seem to be the case. There are predation issues with pinnipeds and birds. With climate change, there will be a lot more of these problems. Bureaucracy always bogs things down. How can we deal with the situation timely before the damage is done? Hope to see the FTC deal with things in a timely manner. There are always so many delays to the point that nothing changes – or things get worse.
- When the chum enhancement program was proposed by WDFW Randy volunteered his boat and his time. Nothing happened. There are outside resources that are available. People are volunteering to help. They are not being utilized. This is very discouraging. Also, chums are nearly extinct. Something has been neglected. We need a strong ecosystem. Chums had their place in nature.
- Riffe Lake boat launch accessibility issue: Randy is still waiting for information on what can be done on this. He has brought this up repeatedly and has not heard anything back. The older folks are looking for change. They are communicating through Randy and really want to see results. (Travis will follow up.)

- One positive thing: After five attempts, he caught a steelhead. The steelhead recycling program has been somewhat successful.
- Misses the Ad Hoc Meetings that were focused on fishing issues. Attendees used to get projections, returns, and actuals. Would love to see fish being more of the focus at FTC meetings.

Anne: Maybe we can find a way to incorporate volunteers into the HAP funded projects.

Travis: We really appreciate the angling community attending these meetings. For Tacoma the FTC is an advisory group to help them implement their license requirements. The State has made efforts to address marine mammal predation. It is important to continue to hear from the angling community.

Bryce: Thanks for the issues you are bringing up. The challenge is that the responsibility of the FTC is relatively small. The Settlement Agreement doesn't address chum recovery. There is no requirement there. There is overlap, but it is not a major focus of the group. Some of the issues are under WDFW purview. WDFW will share more announcements and information with FTC in the future on these topics. The emphasis of the Settlement Agreement is ecosystem integrity and the restoration and recovery of wild, indigenous salmonid runs, including ESA-listed and unlisted stocks, to harvestable levels. There are places where we can do better at plugging in volunteer groups into the work we are trying to do. HAP projects may be one of the ways volunteers can help.

Anne: Thanks very much for raising these issues including the frustration with bureaucracy. We understand your concerns.

---

### **Closing Remarks**

Travis asked everyone to let him know (email, phone, etc.) how they feel about the value of holding in-person meetings on a quarterly basis. He also thanked everyone for their time and efforts supporting the work of the FTC. Tacoma Power needs everyone working together collaboratively to continue to successfully implement their license.

---

### **Parking Lot**

- Presentation by Tacoma's Power Management Group and/or from Grant PUD re improving SAR
- Review Steelhead Kelt Recycling Program