

**Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project**  
**FERC No. 2016**  
**Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee**  
**Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery**  
**Final Meeting Summary**  
July 19, 2019 from 1:00 – 4:00

**Attendees:**

Travis Nelson	TPU
Carol Serdar	WA Dept. of Ecology
Nick Chambers	WA Council of TU / TU / American Rivers
Michelle Day, by phone	NMFS
Jim Pacheco, by phone	WA Dept of Ecology
Sam Gibbons	Tech Rep for WDFW
Brian Gale	Tech Rep for WDFW
Peggy Miller	Tech Rep for WDFW
Eric Shoblom	Tech Rep for TPU
Chris Foster	Tech Rep for TPU
Florian Leischner	Tech Rep for TPU
Melora Shelton	Tech Rep for TPU
Steve West, by phone	LCFRB / Tech Rep for TPU
Laura Wolfe	LCPUD
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting / Facilitator

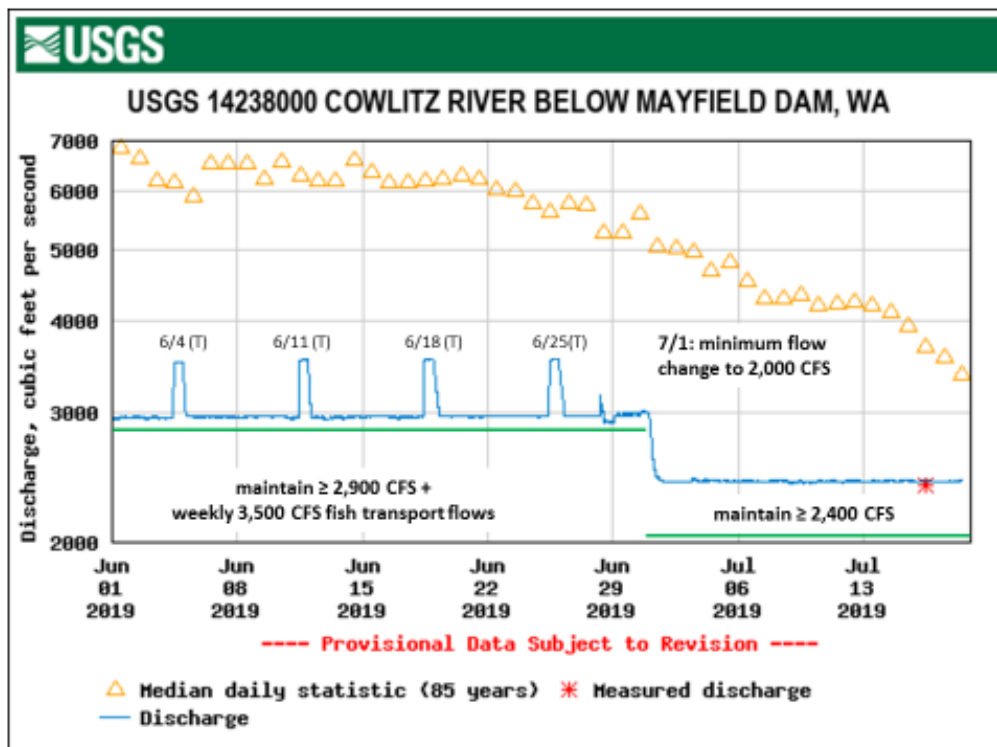
**2019 FTC Meeting Dates:** Aug. 6, Sept. 5 (Thurs.), Oct.1, Nov. 5, Dec. 3 from 9:30-3:00 at Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery unless otherwise specified.

**Announcements**

- Welcome Nick! We were pleased to welcome Nick Chambers who is assuming the position formerly held by Paul Sparks as the official FTC member representing Trout Unlimited. Paul has now assumed the role of TU's Technical Rep. Nick hails from Index and has ten plus years of experience with NW fisheries. He is looking forward to learning more about related hydro operations.
- Hydro Operations: Florian reported that low inflows (less than half the monthly average flows) into Riffe Lake continued in June, with a daily average of 6,400 cfs (historical average is 9,100 cfs). So far in July, this trend is continuing. With such low inflows, TPU was not able to refill the reservoir, though they got as close as 740'. Outflows: The MIFs changed on July 1 from the adjusted MIF down to the regular MIF of 2K cfs. While TPU seeks to stay above 2,400 cfs to support recreation, there is talk about dropping closer to the actual MIK of 2K cfs. This would require public outreach. The construction on the Barrier Dam next summer will require flows of 2K cfs. In the meantime, they are likely to drop flows to 2,200 cfs to help with water and power management as they respond to market demand. TPU also makes every effort to reduce the amount of variation in the reservoir elevation. The 2K cfs MIF in the license remains in effect until Sept. 30 when it increases to 3,500 cfs. Ecology is concerned with impacts on all water life in drawdown situations, not just fish. Freezing levels are currently around 10K'. Inflows are at 1,600-2,400 cfs. TPU will need to start drafting Riffe Lake when outflows exceed inflows.

*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)



- Trout Hatchery Remodel: Eric reported that plans for the remodel are both extensive and expensive. He and his team are continuing to build a case for the remodel to present to TPU upper management for approval. They did an internal storyboarding exercise where they identified the different viewpoints of TPU stakeholders. The idea is to create a comprehensive, inclusive, and compelling message around the need for the remodel which will likely be completed in phases over a period of 5-6 years. Carol advised TPU to apply for one construction permit for the project. Eric explained that the FTC will be extensively involved once TPU gets to the design phase.
- Additional Tilton Release Site: Eric explained WSDOT has approved the conceptual design which is now at the TPU Craft Shop where the design is being taken to a new level of detail. The site development will go out for bid this week or next. Carol noted there is a lot of riprap at the old bridge where the structure will be built and that TPU needs to be sure to protect the riprap before the infrastructure is put in place.
- Annual Project Review: The Science Conference on July 10 served as the kickoff for the APR process. Travis explained that the information coming from the In-season Implementation Tool (ISIT) helps with future planning to determine how the programs fit with recovery goals by way of supplementation efforts. It currently appears that there won't be any significant changes in these efforts through this APR process. Follow-up conversations will be scheduled for the near future. TPU is seeking to improve the way they have been doing this APR, which is part of their licensing requirement.
- FHMP: Travis reminded all that TPU is still operating under the 2011 FHMP until the updated version is submitted and approved by FERC. The Chinook Chapter was sent out last week for FTC and public review with comments due by Aug. 2. The Coho Chapter was sent out during this meeting with comments due by August 9. There will be more opportunities to have conversations about FHMP products in the future, including our August meeting. Nick indicated TU will be sending in some comments.

- Cowlitz Falls MIF: When Peggy talked with Erich Gaedeke of FERC about reducing flows at CF to protect against the likelihood of spill through Cowlitz Falls Dam, he said he had no problem with taking such action for up to four weeks. Laura sent to WDFW a request asking to reduce minimum flows to 500 cfs. WDFW approved the request and it is Peggy's understanding that LCPUD is already implementing this. The strategy is to avoid spill through Cowlitz Falls Dam that might impact fish collection. If it appears the flow reduction needs to be extended beyond 4 weeks, Peggy will have to get approval again from Erich. Chris expressed appreciation for everyone's collaborative and timely efforts on this. He also noted that the spill event through Cowlitz Falls Dam on July 2 was planned by LCPUD to support maintenance activities. All the subsequent events where spill was needed TPU was able to bypass using the Northshore Collector. Chris also reported that there is now daily coordination with LCPD operators for spill / pump-back using the Northshore Collector, together optimizing fish collection. Establishing such protocols now will greatly facilitate taking such actions in the future.
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### **Meeting Summary Approval**

The June 4, 2019 FTC Public Meeting summary was approved with edits from WDFW and LCPUD and will be posted to the FTC public website. The edits are much appreciated.

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### **Gravel Augmentation**

**Presenter: Florian Leischner**

Florian walked through a presentation that explained the history of this SA Article and how there has been no gravel augmentation since 2016. He referenced Decision Document 2019-2 which was approved by the FTC in December of 2018. He explained that at that time there wasn't a full understanding of public concerns with the interim placement location at Mill Creek. Furthermore, there was a permitting delay and a question about the USACE vs. FERC as leads in ESA consultation. TPU is now pausing and considering alternate locations.

Carol asked that this be included in all monthly FTC updates. Michelle suggested that an email be sent out right away (vs. waiting until the next FTC meeting) when there are issues that cause delays as she may have been able to be of assistance. Travis agreed that they will provide such information in a more-timely manner in the future.

Florian showed a photo of a DNR road that has been reestablished down to Barrier Dam, though not necessarily to the location where the gravel would be placed. TPU has easements that don't exactly align with where the road is now. This issue needs to be resolved with landowners. TPU has contacted Forterra who owns property downstream that may serve as an additional site. TPU plans to do some angler outreach and coming up with a new implementation plan that will focus on placing gravel where it is most likely to be mobilized. The sites within the 11-mile study reach have not changed significantly since 2004. The plan should include several sites and not assume the gravel will be mobilized further downstream. It was suggested that, given the above-described complexities, TPU consider hiring a consultant to shepherd this project through to completion.

### **Action Items:**

- Travis: Ask Matt Peter for the USACE contact on this issue and inform Carol and Jim.
- Florian: Touch base with Michelle and Matt Peter re ESA consultation.

- All: Please inform Florian of suggestions of alternative sites.

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## **Cowlitz Restoration & Recovery (CRR) Fund**

### **Presenters: Melora Shelton and Florian Leischner**

Florian explained this group last met on July 12 via phone and WebEx and presented criteria and ranking on how to technically evaluate what is submitted for funding. TPU has shared the final applications received (one each for habitat and hatchery-related projects). The Habitat projects have been reviewed by the LCFRB folks and are posted on their website. They will also be posted on the FTC website. Note: Travis is working on making the FTC website more useable for everyone.

Melora reminded all that the proposed criteria are nothing new as they were derived and refined from the following FTC documents:

- License and FERC orders
- Implementation Plan (2014)
- Implementation strategy (2017)
- HAP Guiding Principles (2018)
- LCFRB 2019 Manual

She walked through a PPT of the currently proposed criteria, scoring, and evaluation framework. As this process leans on LCFRB for technical review, there are some elements under certainty of success and cost that hadn't been defined for hatchery-associated process. TPU worked to ensure that proposed hatchery-related criteria were aligned as closely as possible with those of habitat. They include:

- CRR Program Priorities
- Benefits to fish
- Certainty of Success
- Cost

Program priorities have questions from the Guiding Principles. Priority would be given to projects proposed for above the Barrier Dam and benefiting Spring Chinook. They will also prioritize projects that support current recovery efforts. TPU proposes a simplified scoring system for this initial round of applications. There was discussion around the need for zeros as well as "fatal flaw" zeros, that would be distinct from "low." Ideally the initial screening would catch the zeros and it would be brought to the FTC as potentially ineligible. Zeros will be incorporated into the next version of the scoring. Eric suggested adding how the proposed project might impact fishery programs. He will draft something on this for discussion at the CFF Fund conference call next week. It may be good to include some weighting to the scoring for hatchery related projects.

There remains some confusion about the role of the FTC and the CRR Fund Subgroup and whether a hybrid process, as discussed in the last conference call, will be used for this initial round of application. This will be discussed further at the upcoming conference call.

Next Steps: Melora will incorporate feedback from this meeting into the evaluation criterial and scoring framework. She and Florian will set up a conference call to discuss further the week of July 22. The idea would be to get agreement on the framework and the process before the Aug. 6 meeting where a Decision Document would be presented. It is important to have things clearly defined so as to easily defend any fund/no-fund decision.

The application for the habitat project has to do with expanding net pens at Toledo Sand and Gravel. The hatchery-related application is for the third phase of a project at Yellowjacket Creek which would reactivate the flood plain project using engineered log jam.

**Action Items:**

- Florian / Melora: Schedule a conference call for week of July 22 and send out a draft Decision Document on this by July 30 for discussion and approval at the August 6 FTC meeting.
  - Eric: Send proposed language to Melora ASAP include in conference call discussion.
  - All: Send other thoughts / suggestions on scoring matrix and criteria to Melora by June 24.
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**Possible Topics for Aug. 6 FTC Meeting**

- Hydro Operations
  - MIF Reduction Process
  - Tire Removal at Mayfield
  - Gravel Augmentation
  - Trout Hatchery Remodel Update
  - Cowlitz Restoration & Recovery Fund (Decision Document)
  - Downstream Adaptive Management TWG
  - Additional Tilton Release Site
  - M&E Subgroup Report
  - FHMP Process Update
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**Meeting Evaluation**

- Need to work on our communication during and between meetings.
  - Good attendance for a Friday afternoon meeting in the summer!
  - Was nice to combine the meeting with the Mayfield tire removal field trip.
  - Appreciated Jim's patience with addressing the gravel topic a half hour later than what showed on the agenda
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**Parking Lot**

- Review FTC Protocols
- Steelhead Recycling Program