

Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project
FERC No. 2016
Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee
Final Conference Call/GoToMeeting Summary
September 1, 2020 from 9:30 – 2:30

FTC Representative Attendees:

Travis Nelson	TPU
Bryce Glaser	WDFW
Carol Serdar	WA Dept. of Ecology
Paul Sparks	WA Council of TU, TU, American Rivers

Additional Attendees:

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

2020 FTC Meeting Dates: Oct. 6, Nov. 3, Dec. 1 (public meeting?)

FHMP/APR Meeting Date: Cowlitz River FHMP and Annual Project Review Virtual Meeting: Aug. 12 from 4-6pm. For agenda, meeting materials, meeting link and call-in number go to MyTPU.org/Cowlitz.

Approval of Last Meeting Summary

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

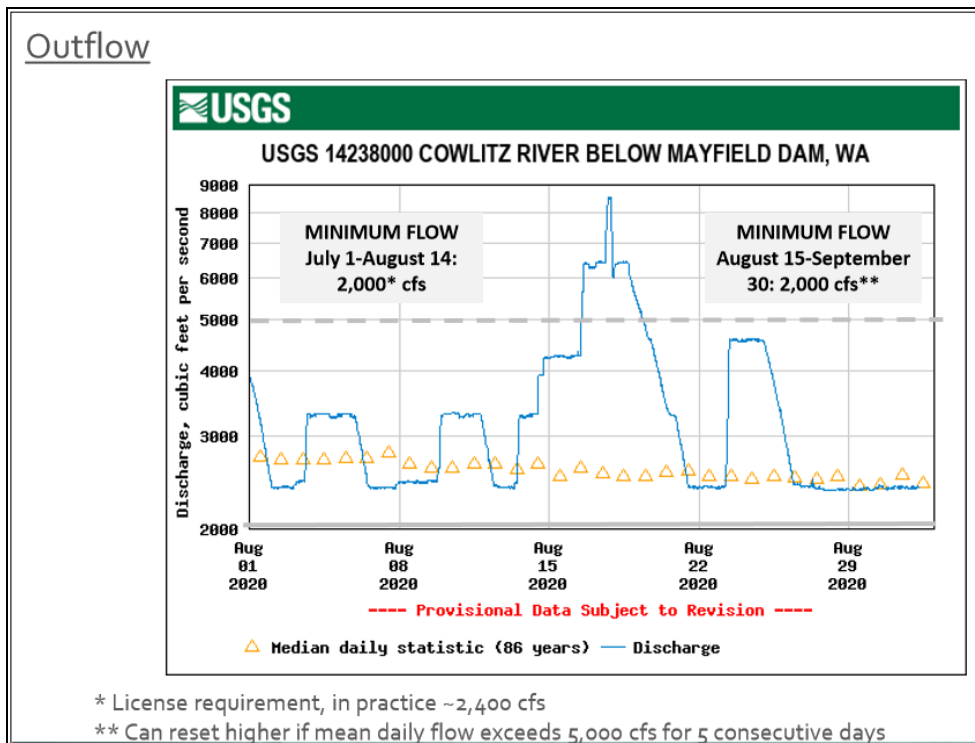
Updates

Hydro Operations:

- Inflows: Melora reported that inflows have been below the historical monthly average for the summer, dropping from 90-75%.
- Storage: There has been a slow and consistent draft at Riffe in August. The current elevation is just below 734'. By contrast, Mayfield has continued to show its usual dynamic elevation fluctuations between 421' and 425'.

- Outflows: These have been running around 2,400 cfs. From August 15-September 30 the minimum flow can reset above 2K cfs if Mayfield releases meet or exceed 5K cfs for a consecutive 5-day period (daily mean flow). Melora noted the bump above 5K cfs during the third week in August lasted only three days.
- Forecast: Dry and hot without precipitation. Freezing levels are above 10K'. Inflows are expected to be below 2K cfs for next 10 days while outflows are likely to increase from 2,400 cfs to above 5K cfs. For semi-weekly river flow / lake level data forecast: <https://www.mytpu.org/community-environment/parks-recreation/river-flows-lake-levels>

WDFW constituents have expressed concern about flow fluctuations and have reported stranded fish in the Longview/Kelso area. Phil will follow up with Josua with “tidbit info” on daily temps for the river below Mayfield.



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: Carol has received reports there are still some residual contaminated soil issues at Kosmos. She thinks this may require a construction stormwater general permit as well as a WQPP.

Downstream Adaptive Management TWG: Matt reported they are continuing to work toward recommendations for the adaptive management strategy for the upcoming season. The TWG will discuss this further at their next meeting as they work on the recommendations.

Fisheries Essential Operations: Eric reported inspections for erosion issues at Barrier Dam concluded on August 31. Tacoma Power has decided to forgo dredging at Blue Creek this year. They plan to dredge the Barrier Dam boat launch September 14 and 15.

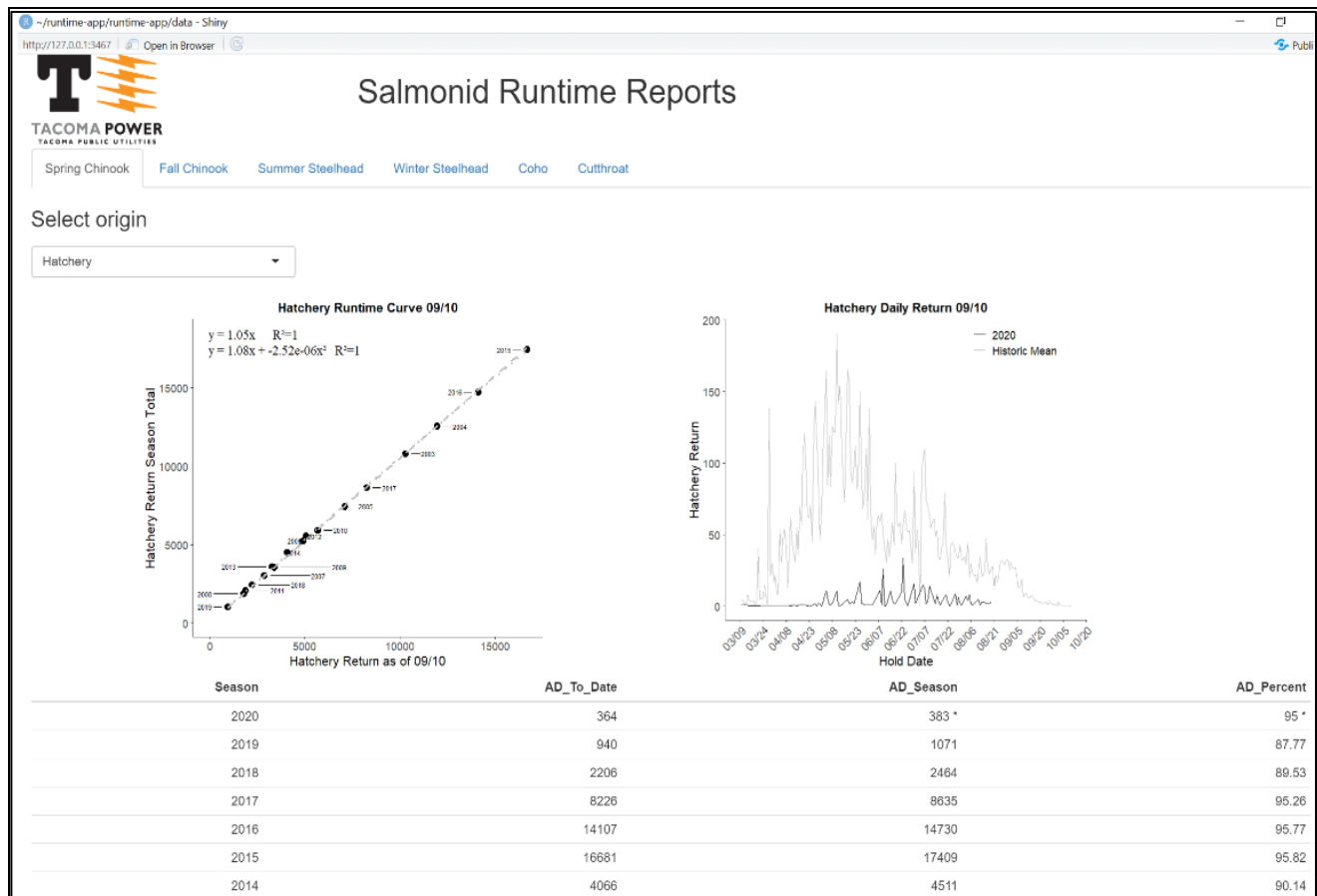
CRR: Bryce noted the need to get the RFP process up and running in time for the 2021 process. Travis agreed and will provide an update at the October FTC meeting.

Tilton/Coal Creek Release Sites: Eric reported Tacoma Power is still exploring the potential of establishing a release site at Coal Creek. Meanwhile, the Tilton site is now up and running. Phil reported the Cowlitz FTC M&E sub-group's preferred options for 2020 are:

- Transport all NOR fall Chinook and NOR Coho to the new site and all HOR fall Chinook and HOR Coho to Gust Backstrom Park (GBP). WDFW will identify a closed fishing area around the new site.
 - Implement this strategy from the beginning of the season until sustained adequate flows (likely about 150cfs) allow for natural distribution to occur (generally mid-October), at which time a combination of both NOR and HOR fish could be released at GBP for efficient transportation and additional distribution of NORs.
- Split NOR and HOR steelhead between the two sites equally throughout the entire season.
- Release all NOR sea-run cutthroat trout at the Bremer Bridge release site to reduce angler encounters at GBP. (The new Bremer Bridge site is operational and has been used for NOR Fall Chinook Salmon for the last two months.)

Next steps include making sure Adult Handling Protocol represents the same disposition.

M&E Subgroup: Phil reported this group continues to meet the third Wednesday of each month. They are developing a template to assess hatchery management performance using CWT data. They will build in download and export capabilities. Next steps include making the language consistent with what is in FHMP and making this tool available to the FTC to see if there are any red flags. Below is a screen shot of the runtime app for salmon returns:



Sam suggested sharing week ending run timing so broodstock collection curves are consistent and will send Phil an example.

At the last M&E meeting they also discussed protocols for the Tilton Release Site. WDFW has proposed changes in how Fall Chinook will be marked this year, in response to the available budget. Discussions with hatchery staff will occur September 2 regarding the total number of CWTs needed. WDFW plans to submit the purchase order next spring.

FHMP / APR Update

Presenter: Matt Bleich

Matt reported public feedback has included appreciation for the new structure of the FHMP document. The virtual public APR meeting on August 12 went well. There was a total of 25 participants, 10 of whom were members of the public. Public comments during the meeting also included topics such as flow management from Cowlitz Dam and satellite rearing. September 15 (9-noon) has been announced as a placeholder date for a final FHMP workshop to discuss incorporating public comments and then filing the FHMP with FERC. Bryce asked how to address the Fall Chinook collection broodstock need. There is currently no plan to collect broodstock in the lower river. Phil agreed to add this topic to the agenda of the next M&E Subgroup meeting.

Gravel Augmentation

Presenter: Travis Nelson

Travis reminded all that the Barrier Dam inspection and subsequent repairs provide an opportunity to use the gravel to fill supersacks. Within a 3-year timeframe, Tacoma Power intends to treat three different sites. They will do so while being mindful of long-term risks including flooding and recreational impact. Given that, the Jorgensen gravel bar site has several hurdles to cross. Tacoma Power has evaluated the following alternative sites that seem to be good candidates for gravel placement in the next two years:

- “Barrier Island” just below Barrier Dam. Supersacks would be filled with qualifying gravel (4' minus washed rock mix) for water diversion. When the project is complete, with the crane still in place, the gravel would be released there.
- Brim bar has a wetland complex intended for rearing of salmonids, There is still an access road there.
- Downstream of the intake for Blue Creek Hatchery along the bar on the right bank. There is a need to survey this site to ensure there would be no negative impacts.

Depending on the success of the initial treatment, it may make sense to use these sites long term as well. Travis reminded all this is just phase one.

Discussion: Sam and John noted that the area from Barrier Dam down to Baker Rock is the most gravel starved and would really benefit from gravel augmentation. Peggy prefers the Jorgensen property which is on the long-term list. The supersacks would be 4" gradation down to about ½" and would be washed, rounded rock. This would be included in the WQPP.

Tacoma indicated they have no immediate plans to move the current pile of gravel at the Barrier Day. There was a question about if the supersacks could be filled with gravel from that pile.

Travis will send out a decision document about treatment at these three sites prior to the next FTC meeting and will update the work plan accordingly. The first augmentation would take place in 2021 in concert with the Barrier Dam repair.

USACE permitting process: Tacoma Power has approached the Corps about getting a broader nationwide programmatic agreement in place. Matt Peter is researching this. Carol suggested it include the possibility of engineered log jams or other ways to hold gravel in the reach. Bryce suggested that if a gravel augmentation subgroup were set up in the future, it would explore options including LWD placement.

- **Action Item:** Travis – Send out decision document for three short-term sites prior to the October FTC meeting.

Satellite Rearing

Presenter: Matt Bleich

There has been little discussion of this since the June FTC meeting, as the focus has been on the FHMP along with HGMP components. Since then, Matt reported TPU, along with R2, has worked through the objectives and design criteria. Next steps included sideboards and locations. He walked through a Satellite Rearing PowerPoint presentation that listed the goals as increasing fitness and using the facilities to simulate natural fish or harvest compatibility with recovery. Paul expressed concern that our Steelhead are not producing as many smolts as anticipated. Is there a strong interaction between NOR/HOR fish? Which are most productive. Why are there so many kelts this year?

Program objectives are many and include assisting with NOR stock recovery, increasing reproductively isolated populations, facilitating imprinting and adult returns to the upper basin, all while minimizing the risk of disease and negative genetic effects.

Matt added the highlighted line to the Satellite Rearing Workplan / Schedule:

Task	Responsible	By When
Present Workplan/Next Steps to FTC	Bleich	9/1/20
FTC Generated Program Concepts (include Spawning, Egg Incubation, Rearing, Finish/Acclimation, Release and location for each rearing phase)	FTC	9/15/20
Present Workplan/Next Steps to FTC	Bleich	9/1/20
Develop draft concepts and conceptual sketches and incorporate into Satellite Rearing Facility Plan	R2	10/6/20
Discuss Concepts	FTC	10/6/20
Review and Comment	FTC	10/6/20 – 11/3/20
Incorporate Comments	R2	11/6/20 – 11/15/20
QC	Tacoma	11/15/20 – 11/21/20
Public Review	Public	11/21/20 – 12/21/20
Finalize Satellite Rearing Facility Plan	Tacoma/R2/ FTC	1/31/20

R2 is developing concepts for various locations in the Upper Cowlitz Basin that provide sufficient adaptability and flexibility. Satellite Rearing program concept may include use of facilities for spawning, incubation, and rearing to release size. These examples align with the objectives previously agreed-on by the FTC. Matt assured all there will be ample time to review and provide input into the plan as it is developed.

Action Item: All – By September 15, email comments on concepts to Matt and Travis.

FTC Protocols | 2021 FTC Work Plan

Presenter: Travis Nelson

Travis began by extending many thanks to Bryce, Peggy, and Paul for their work on these protocols. He also acknowledged that COVID has made collaboration on this document all the more challenging. Travis reported his concern that including “partners” in addition to representatives and technical advisors in the protocols may cause confusion. Peggy noted that SA signatories, while not being able to vote, should be able to attend FTC meetings without being a technical advisor for Tacoma. In discussing this issue, Travis added language to clarify that signatories could attend the meetings on behalf of the organizations they represent without having to be technical advisors to TPU, so that it doesn’t look like they represent TPU’s interests.

There was a consensus decision to approve the protocols as edited during the meeting. Lyn reminded all that the protocols are a living document and there will continue to be annual reviews by the FTC to ensure they reflect how we work together.

2021 FTC Work Plan: Travis will present a draft 2021 Work Plan at the next meeting.

Action Item: Travis – Send out the edited document to all along with a decision document for final approval within a week, as per the protocols.

Out-of-Basin Broodstock for Spring Chinook

Discussion of this item, which had been scheduled to occur under Updates, revealed a disagreement between WDFW and Tacoma Power regarding the timing and opportunity to comment as WDFW engaged in discussions with NOAA about the possibility of supplementing this year’s low return of Spring Chinook to the Cowlitz with excess Kalama Spring Chinook. At the last FTC meeting Tacoma Power expressed concerns around their risk points and asked to be brought into the discussions with NOAA in a timely manner so they could adequately evaluate their risk points, including impact to their hydro license, Bi-Op, and operations. WDFW indicated they had been clear and transparent throughout the last several months regarding this issue, including providing opinions expressed by all parties, identifying next steps and clarifying why WDFW needed to meet independently with NOAA fisheries to discuss the Kalama River Spring Chinook program, which operates under the Mitchell act with NOAA funding and ESA authorization.

Paul expressed concern about the potential issues with using Kalama stock to increase the recreational harvest opportunity and suggested the FTC vote on the issue. Bryce reviewed the WDFW proposal purpose, which is to supplement future harvest opportunity and described the intent to differentially mark the fish brought in from the Kalama to minimize biological risk to the Upper Cowlitz spring Chinook population.. WDFW had a follow-up conversation with NOAA to discuss how use of Kalama broodstock may or may not be

appropriate as it pertains to federal funding and ESA compliance. While NOAA indicated some concerns, WDFW is prepared to move forward with the transfer and is interested in sharing this option with Tacoma to supplement next year's release in response to the broodstock shortage in Spring Chinook at the Cowlitz Hatchery.

WDFW agreed to consider including Tacoma in future discussions at the appropriate time on actions that could impact conditions of the Tacoma Power Bi-Op for Cowlitz River Hatchery operations. Next steps: Eric, Matt, and Bryce will follow up about further discussions with NOAA and how best to move forward.

Meeting Evaluation

- Still some technical glitches, especially with phone connections
- If a topic is moved from Updates to a regular agenda item, that entity/presenter should be notified ahead of time.
- When evaluating the meeting, ask if we adequately covered the most important topics – call them out on the agenda. Try this at the next meeting and evaluate.
- Appreciated the presentations
- Happy to get the protocols approved!
- Got out a few minutes late
- Quotable Quote: “Out of clutter, find simplicity. From discord, find harmony. In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.” Albert Einstein

Documents Shared at Today's Meeting

- Hydro Status Cowlitz 9-1-2020
- Draft Tilton Fish Release Strategy 2020
- Satellite Ponds FTC 9-1-2020

Potential Topics for October 6 FTC Meeting

- Updates incl. Hydro Ops, Water Quality
- 2021 FTC Work Plan
- FHMP Update
- M&E Subgroup
- Gravel Augmentation Work Plan
- Satellite Rearing
- Downstream Adaptive Management TWG
- Cowlitz Restoration & Recovery Fund 2020
- Set topics for November FTC Meeting

Parking Lot

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