

**Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project**  
**FERC No. 2016**  
**Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee**  
**Veterans Memorial Museum, Chehalis**  
**Final Public Meeting Summary**  
September 5, 2019 from 9:00 – 3:30

**Attendees:**

Travis Nelson	TPU
Tom Wadsworth	WDFW
Carol Serdar	WA Dept. of Ecology
Paul Sparks	WA Council of TU / TU / American Rivers
John Serl	Tech Rep for WDFW
Bryce Glaser	Tech Rep for WDFW
Sam Gibbons	Tech Rep for WDFW
Brian Gale	Tech Rep for WDFW
Peggy Miller	Tech Rep for WDFW
Eric Shoblom	Tech Rep for TPU
Phil Sandstrom	Tech Rep for TPU
Florian Leischner	Tech Rep for TPU
Melora Shelton	Tech Rep for TPU
Ann Weckback	LC / Tech Rep for TPU
Laura Wolfe	LCPUD
Steve West	LCFRB
Debbie Carlson	BPA
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting / Facilitator

**Remaining 2019 FTC Meeting Dates:** Oct. 1, Nov. 5, Dec. 3 from 9:30-3:00 at Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery unless otherwise specified.

---

**Cowlitz Restoration & Recovery (CRR) Fund: 2019 Grant Round Process**

**Presenters: Florian Leischner, Melora Shelton, Steve West**

Florian walked us through the Decision Document 2019-8, outlining the CRR Program, screening and scoring materials. While TPU received email approval from some of the FTC members prior to this meeting, Florian and Melora thought it important to offer additional discussion, clarification prior to requesting approval at this meeting. After further discussion, and corresponding edits, Decision Document 2019-8 was approved.

Decision Document 2019-9 was reviewed at the August FTC meeting and approved at this meeting. It outlines how to use the scores to evaluate the process and make funding decisions. All participating entities will use these questions to score the proposed projects and, by September 20 send “draft scores” to Travis, copying Melora, so she can collate the scores into a single spreadsheet for review at the October FTC meeting. At that meeting, there will be a candid line-by-line discussion of the scores from each entity. The actual funding decisions will be made at the November 5 FTC meeting. Both decision documents will be circulated to the FTC for a 7-day period to allow comment by members not present at the meeting.

Melora walked through the process to access all the CRR-related documents which are stored in a single location for easy access on the FTC website. She offered to assist anyone

having difficulty with accessing the documents (contact info follows). Following this meeting, there will be a 2-week process for participating entities to review the proposals, complete scoring worksheets and return them to Melora by September 20.

Steve explained the current LCFRB rating and scoring process for projects. He displayed charts of the LCFRB process and results for habitat projects ranked during the SRFB/CRR round. He also explained other considerations including habitat units which tie to certainty of success, cost, etc. For certainty of success the LCFRB considers scope and approach, coordination sequence and constraints, and qualification. After walking through the complexities associated with the ratings, he announced that the LCFRB will be changing / streamlining the process for next year. An overview of the LCFRB rating and scoring information is included in the CRR-related review documents on the FTC website.

**Action Items:**

- Melora: Have Travis send out the scoring worksheets and instructions to all.
- All: If you need assistance accessing any of the CRR-related documents, contact Melora: 253-441-4994 (office); 253 820-7665 (cell); mshelton@cityoftacoma.org
- All: Email draft (preliminary) scores from your organization to Travis (copy Melora) by September 20 so she can collate the scores into single spreadsheet for all to review at the October FTC meeting. Ensure there is a designated point of contact for your organization for Melora to contact if there are any issues.

---

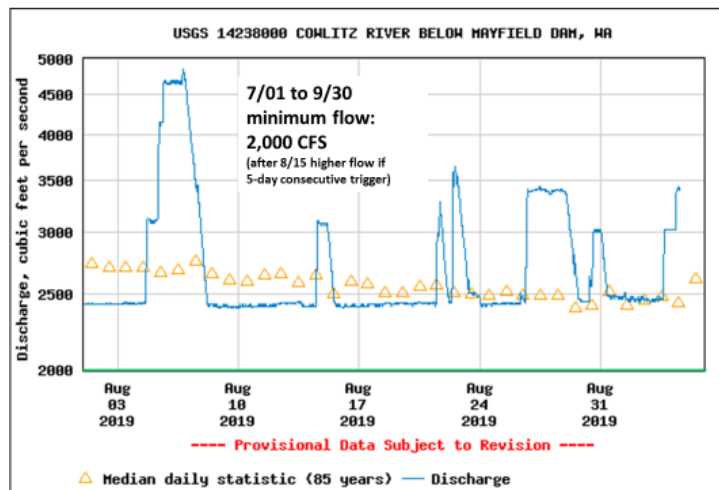
**Meeting Summary Approval**

The Meeting Summary from the August 6, 2019 FTC meeting was approved with edits and will be posted to the FTC public website.

---

**Announcements**

- Hydro Operations: Florian reported average daily inflows for the month of August are currently at 75% of normal, with an average inflow of 1756 cfs. The reservoir is slowly declining (at 728’ after a high of 745’). The new allowable refill is 749’. TPU was able to keep the swim beaches and boat launches open throughout the summer. Outflows are at 2,400 cfs except when TPU needs to increase flows to accommodate high power demand (2,000 cfs is the current minimum flow). TPU ramped at less than 2” per hour August 21-23 (as per Decision Document 2019-6) for commissioning and testing of Unit 41. Light precipitation is forecast with inflows into Riffe Lake of 800-1,400 cfs. The plan is to return to 2,400 cfs outflows September 6 and increase to 3,500 cfs minimum flow October 1.



*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)

- Activities during Mayfield Drawdown: Florian explained that initially the drawdown was to extend to 410', with a plan to spill the excess water. TDG risks caused TPU to shift the elevation to 415' by using generation units (415' is the floor at which the units can safely operate). TPU has employed a contractor to use an aqua barrier to allow work on the boat ramps to proceed. They are coordinating the boat ramp work with the marina and State park. Both these boat ramp projects can be performed at 415'. They anticipate starting the drawdown on September 15 and it should be complete by September 26 with the reservoir returned to its current level. Tire removal at Mayfield is also set to occur during the drawdown. The tires are adjacent to the Mossy Rock Trout Hatchery. The removal will be done with hydraulic excavators on September 16. The refill at Mayfield should not impact Riffe Lake.
  - **Action Item:** Florian to email hydro status charts to Carol and Lyn. *(Done.)*
- Gravel Augmentation: Florian explained they conducted a couple of site visits recently and are planning to do more. TPU engineers are currently evaluating how to get gravel to the alternate sites (Forterra and DNR). They will need a decision document if they do not place gravel anywhere this year.
- Trout Hatchery Remodel: Eric reported his team is still working on preparing an internal presentation to TPU senior leadership (including several new leaders). After getting approval, they will expand the presentation to include technical details to share more broadly. The Trout Hatchery Remodel Master Plan itself has not changed. Changes may include phasing and certain design elements. WDFW would be concerned if changes included any production decreases during construction. Such discussions would need to occur as early as possible.
- M&E Subgroup: Phil reported they are still working with WDFW to get the annual status update report out. Hope to get this by the end of September for review to allow for a 30-day FTC review. The M&E group has been discussing a coded-wire-tag (CWT) marking strategy for the Cowlitz Basin. They are drafting a decision document (to be distributed prior to the October 1 FTC Meeting) to propose marking NOR Coho collected at Mayfield Dam with a CWT (in lieu of marking fish at Cowlitz Falls). Mayfield is better suited for TPU to handle the number of juveniles that would be moving downstream.
  - **Action Item:** Phil to ensure a decision document on this is sent out a week prior to the October meeting.
- Downstream Adaptive Management TWG: Matt explained this group has been discussing a marking program for the Cowlitz Basin. They started with Cutthroat and Steelhead and would like to complete a marking strategy for NOR Coho before collection for this year which will end up being the best-ever at Cowlitz Falls. They have learned much from building out the CF Northshore Collector. There has been great coordination with WDFW, LCPUD, and Ecology which has contributed to such success. While they have made the most progress over the years with Chinook, there is still room for improvement. Steelhead are performing above 75% and Coho are approaching 90%. In November or December there will be a decision document with recommendations for moving forward. This will be preceded by the annual meeting where subgroup recommendations will be discussed with LCPUD. Modifications from that meeting will be consolidated into the decision document. These will include:

- How to better characterize Spring Chinook life history challenges - late in collection season we start to see Chinook struggle with the entrance efficiency.
  - Improvements for the coming year e.g., steelhead.
  - Apply adaptive management further into the Collector to maximize collection during spill events.
- 

### **Additional Tilton Release Site**

#### **Presenters: Eric and Bryce**

Eric showed photos and design drawings of the site, including the release structure and explained that TPU is currently reviewing contractor bids. The contractor has 60 days to complete construction. The work could start as soon as mid-October and conclude by mid-December. TPU is engineering the metal flume. The contractor will do site prep including retaining wall, ecology blocks, ensuring the grading is correct, pouring the cement concrete block with a hole for the post to secure the flume section and installing gates. Carol cautioned there is a need to watch / survey the riprap near the site as high flows are likely. Asked about commissioning, Eric responded there will be a few days to test the structure. There is a possibility to incentivize early completion for the contractor to move more quickly, weather pending.

2019 Tilton River Salmon and Steelhead Transport Management Plan: Bryce explained that the purpose of this plan is to identify the preferred option for transport of salmon and steelhead into the Tilton River for 2019, near river mile 10. This additional site will provide redundancy and minimize impact of anglers and/or handling stress in NOR fish. It will also allow for continued recreational harvest of HOR fish. Objectives of the plan include:

- Disperse NOR fish into as much available habitat as possible.
- Accommodate fish releases under a larger range of river flows.
- Protect NOR fish in low flow conditions while maintaining a fishery through spatially separating HOR/NOR fish, particularly separation of NOR fall Chinook from HOR Chinook and Coho salmon.
- Provide a secondary release site to avoid any release site failures – always have a release site available.

The annual adult handling protocols determine where fish are distributed. WDFW has taken the lead in developing options for-how fish would be released at this site, while TPU took the lead on engineering, permitting and construction. The aim is to disperse NORs into as much habitat as possible, accommodate fish releases under a large range of flows, and to protect NOR fish from angling impacts in low-flow conditions. WDFW worked with the M&E Subgroup to develop a list of options for how the site might be used this year. The sub-group will have to work on some contingency options for this year since completion of the secondary site construction is delayed. Bryce reviewed the following preferred options recommended by the M&E sub-group:

- Option 1b: Transport all NOR Chinook and Coho to the new site and all HOR fall Chinook and HOR Coho to the Gus Backstrom Park (GBP). Identify a closed fishing area around the new site. Implement this strategy from the start of the season until sustained adequate flows (~150 cfs) 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. Note: While this may be a moot point this year if the site is not complete in October, it may serve as a kick-off point for next year's operations.

- Option 8: Split NOR and HOR Steelhead between the two sites equally throughout the entire season.
- 

## **FHMP Update**

**Presenter: Matt Bleich**

Matt reminded all that when TPU asked for an EOT (Extension of Time) from FERC, they didn't get the full extension requested. The 9-month extension granted by FERC was to October 18. While the entire document will not be complete by then, Matt believes there will be a substantial enough work product to demonstrate to FERC that good progress is being made. This should result in FERC granting an additional EOT. FERC has already been alerted that we need extra time for an entire document review including a public review process, so they are expecting an additional EOT request. The order says we need written concurrence from NMFS and USFWS indicating full support for an additional extension.

They also need supporting documentation from the FTC. It is important to create a decision document to demonstrate that support and explain fully why the extra time is needed and how the additional time will be used. Bryce noted that it would be wise to allow for additional time to resolve any outstanding comments or areas of disagreement, and that it would also be important to have a contingency plan in case we aren't granted the extension. He sees two issues: Waiting for the final document review to get an idea of how close we are; and federal partner engagement. How do we get concurrence on some of the more contentious issues? Matt assured everyone that he has been working offline to ensure good alignment with federal agencies. The decision document would state that we are continuing to operate under the existing plan until we get approval of the EOT from FERC. Paul expressed concern that the priority on recovery that resides on the current FHMP is missing from the draft FHMP as it is being addressed. He would like to see a premise for recovery strategy for each population and how they arrived at the decision they are using. Matt agreed this is the intent of the entire document, that hatchery programs are part of the intent for recovery.

- The Chinook Chapter comments were due on August 2. This has been fully revised by the consultant and should be sent out for review on September 6. While all public comments will not be included, there will be discussion about how to address these in a response matrix.
- The Coho Chapter comments were due August 9.
- The Steelhead Chapter is running late. They plan to send it out September 6 (will include all population chapters). September 25 will be the new date for comments. Then TPU will take a week to process these after which will be the public review period.
- The Cutthroat and Chum Chapter have been through FTC review and will be out September 6 for public review (on schedule).
- The M&E Chapter has been through discussions with the M&E team. FTC can expect to receive the draft chapter on September 9 with comments due September 25.
- The APR Chapter is two weeks late. This summarizes triggers and hatchery plans for programs. This should be out September 13 with comments due October 4. Public review would follow.
- Introductory Chapters 1 and 2 are being reviewed by the consultant for consistency. These will be out as part of the whole-document review which will be around the second week of October, assuming FERC grants an additional EOT.

- Matt thanked all for comments on the document structure. The consultant is working on the structure which will be out for FTC to review the week of September 9 or 15.

#### Action Items:

- Matt: Send out table with updated FHMP review schedule to all ASAP.
- Matt: If possible, get M&E Chapter comments to Phil by September 6 so they can be incorporated in the version that is sent out for FTC review the week of September 9.
- Matt: Contact federal FTC representatives and begin drafting the decision document for FTC review before making additional EOT request of FERC.

#### Public Comment Session (*FTC responses appear in italics.*)

Steve Bagley: Only had eight days to fish the last two years due to high water at Gus Backstrom Park. The second release site should give more opportunity for Coho – this will be a big advantage to fisherman. Wants the NOR Chinook to be released at the mouth of the river if the alternate release site isn't available. When barriers are removed, there are always fisherman who are illegally snagging fish, dragging them sideways. But within a couple of days of fishing there, things settle down. Those people are very friendly.

Greg King: Trout Hatchery Remodel - If TPU keeps delaying this, it will just cost more in the end. It is a requirement of the Settlement Agreement. Re: Fall Chinook. The Kalama manages nice returns of Fall Chinook. Why not here? *Starting to investigate what is happening to our Fall CH. Perhaps the C. shasta here is a limiting factor? Sam noted the Kalama currently produces 7 million (twice as many as on the Cowlitz). Do genetic testing to show that these are truly NOR fish? Paul doesn't see this happening at the new Tilton Release site. TPU sees genetic testing as one of many tools in the toolbox. Don't put NORs there or if you do, be sure to include no fishing zone. The no fishing zone is included.*

Jack Tipping: M&E Subgroup - Concerned that wild juvenile Chinook at the Mayfield migrant trap will not be tagged. This is a basic fish management action that is needed to one day allow sport harvest on wild fish in the lower river, would help identify wild production sources in the lower river, and help to develop a locally adapted stock in the Tilton River. *The M&E Group will continue to discuss this, and it is in the Fall Chinook Chapter of the FHMP. It will be included in the marking strategy that the M&E Group drafts – earliest would be late 2020.*

Larry Pryor: Fall Chinook: Why Tules? *This is the historic stock that was present in the Cowlitz and it is part of the recovery plan to recover that stock.* Withdrew CRR Proposal – conservation hatchery to support the Upper Cowlitz watershed. Fisherman fish for adults – not smolts. There has been a lot of lost opportunity over the years. How does the FHMP define areas of success? According to the HSRG, the gage of success is adult returns. Do you have adult return goals? If so, what are they? Everyone wants to bring back wild fish to the Cowlitz. He hears TU is in support of building up to harvestable levels. What are those goals? It would be good for the FTC to share the adult return goals and what constitutes harvestable levels, so everyone is pulling in the same direction. *In the FHMP there are triggers that relate to program shifts. There is recognition that each program drives toward a recovery goal. Some of these have phases. The broad goal is recovery. The FHMP is a stepwise goal to achieve that recovery. There are many steps taken toward recovery and these are measured along the way.*

Sometimes there is a discrepancy between HSRG goals and LCFRB goals. *HSRG is a set of recommendations. The LCFRB has recovery goals that are defined by NOAA.*

**Meeting Evaluation:**

- Did well moving through the many and varied topics
  - Lots to process
  - Pizza was good as were the chocolates
  - Facilitation was helpful to stay on time
  - Acoustic issues remain - Could use an additional wireless microphone
  - Suggestion from Larry (public): Have two public comment sessions - your public is waning)
  - Dove chocolate wrapper quote: Every moment matters, including this one!
- 

**Possible Topics for October 1 FTC Meeting**

- Usual updates incl. Gravel Augmentation and Alternate Tilton Release Site
  - Cowlitz Restoration & Recovery Fund
    - Scoring Review, FTC score review, 2020 process discussion
  - M&E Subgroup Decision Document
  - FHMP Process Update and Decision Document
- 

**Parking Lot**

- Review FTC Protocols / Steelhead Recycling Program