

Project Name	Postponement of annual gravel augmentation for 2017. Settlement Article 10: Gravel Augmentation.
Date Proposal Submitted	8/31/2017
Date of Requested Decision	9/07/2017
Date Decision was Approved	9/07/2017
Completed By	Florian Leischner

FTC Decision and Justification

The following voting members were present for this decision: WDFW (Tom Wadsworth), TPU (Travis Nelson), NMFS (Michelle Day), WA Dept. of Ecology (Carol Serdar), WA Chapter of TU (Paul Sparks).

The FTC supports the postponement as described in this document to meet the intended objective of augmenting gravel below Barrier Dam.

Proposed Decision or Consideration

Approve the postponement of the annual gravel augmentation until a different site and/or deployment strategy is developed. If this is not done by December 31, 2018, then we will revert back to placement at the current location. The 500 cubic yards (yards³) of gravel placement required for 2017 will be made up in 2018; therefore the 2018 augmentation will total 1000 yards³.

Background

As per Settlement Article 10 of the Cowlitz license. Tacoma must annually place 500 yards³ of gravel sized ½-inch to 4 inches near the river downstream of the Barrier Dam. Gravel was augmented annually since 2006 and placed on the right bank (looking downstream) downstream of the barrier dam for natural recruitment to the channel. Due to insufficient magnitude and frequency of high winter flow events that can transport a majority of the material annually, gravel has been accumulating on the bank faster than being transported downstream.

The gravel has been placed on the right bank in an area of low hydraulic energy. In contrast, the left bank is where the main thalweg of the river is located. Efforts are underway to re-establish driving access to the left bank through WA State Department of Natural Resources forestry land.

It is assumed that access for gravel trucks to unload material on the left bank will be available by spring of 2018.

In addition, alternative placement strategies are being developed such as in-stream rather than bank placement and alternate locations downstream. Drafting of such alternatives and approvals will occur over the next nine months and are not ready for 2017.

Placing the majority of the material on the left bank, and/or changing the placement strategy altogether, should increase the dispersion rate of spawning material to downstream locations where they can benefit the naturally spawning salmon.

Coordination Need

The FTC will be updated on the progress of re-establishing driving access to the left bank and any alternative strategies.

Summary of Potential Impacts

No placement of gravel along the Cowlitz River bank near Barrier Dam for 2017. Make-up will occur in future years, to account for years lost (500 yards³ per year).