

Project Name	<i>Tilton River Adult Coho Salmon Disposition</i>
Date Proposal Submitted	11/4/2020
Date of Requested Decision	11/4/2020
Completed By	Tacoma Power and WDFW

FTC Decision and Justification

This Decision Document updates and supersedes Decision Document 2020-03 and is effective immediately. This is a minor increase to the previous numbers of Coho Salmon transported to the Tilton River.

The following Fisheries Technical Committee (FTC) members were in attendance at the 11/4/2020 meeting: TPU, WDFW, NMFS, and WA Dept. of Ecology. No opposition was expressed in the FTC on this proposed update.

The FTC supports the decision to continue transport of adult Coho into Tilton River throughout the 2020/2021 adult return year with the understanding that the previously negotiated FHMP cap of 6,000 fish may be exceeded to a cap of 9000. This action is intended to provide additional abundance for recovery efforts and harvest opportunity.

Update 11/4/2020: The FTC supports the decision to continue transport of adult Coho into Tilton River throughout the 2020/2021 adult return year with the understanding that the previously negotiated FHMP cap of 6,000 fish may be exceeded to a cap of 12,000. This action is intended to provide additional abundance for recovery efforts and harvest opportunity. This additional increase will also allow opportunity to evaluate the Tilton's resulting juvenile production response, which may provide greater insight into carrying capacity which could have future management implications.

Proposed Decision or Consideration

The FTC supports increasing the existing 6000 adult Coho transport cap to the Tilton to 9000 to increase angler opportunity. This proposal is a one-year perspective and future strategy options will be defined and captured in the FHMP Tilton Coho transition plan. The proposed action is listed below:

- 1) Transport additional adult Coho beyond the 6,000 segregated HOR Coho Salmon guideline into the Tilton River basin until a new cap of 9000 adult Coho is reached or transport capacity must prioritize Upper Basin programs.

Update: Transport additional adult Coho beyond the 9,000 segregated HOR Coho Salmon guideline into the Tilton River basin until a new cap of 12,000 adult Coho is reached or transport capacity must prioritize Upper Basin programs.

Background

The 2011 FHMP caps plants of hatchery-origin adult Coho Salmon in the Tilton River at 6,000 fish. This was a level set by professional judgment based on previous practices for this Stabilizing population. In 2019, the FTC (through Decision Document 2019-12) extended the transport of Coho adults to the Tilton beyond 6000 with no cap. This decision was based on similar justification within this document. This season's forecasted population is much greater than last season and therefore setting a cap on transport is prudent. The number of adults transported to the Tilton River will be reexamined in the 2020 FHMP Tilton Coho transition plan. To date, approximately (8286) hatchery and approximately (1291) NOR Coho adults have been released to the Tilton River this season as of 10/31/2020.

The recovery objectives for a Stabilizing population are to maintain conditions no worse than current at the time of listing. The Tilton Coho population is currently in a recolonization/abundance building phase.

Given the current population phase, number of NOR transports and considerable angler effort on HOR's, the biological risk of the proposed increase is likely very small.

As an important note, transport actions will be prioritized as follows: Transport of NOR to their respective watersheds, transport of HOR to the Upper Basin, transport of HOR to the Tilton.

Coordination Need

WDFW and Tacoma Power will need to coordinate the surplus of HOR during the season to optimize fishery opportunity and utilization of the resource.

Total number of Coho Salmon adults transported to Tilton River basin will be communicated to FTC at the end of the season (*anticipated to be March 2021*). (2019; 6509 Coho adults to Tilton)

Summary of Potential Impacts

Positive impacts

- Increases adult abundance in the basins above Mayfield.
- Provides immediate harvest opportunity in the Tilton
- Increase the return timing diversity of transported Coho offspring.
- Increased juvenile production from the upper basin areas should increase the number of NOR adults returning more rapidly moving us out of an adult abundance-building phase and into a local adaptation phase.
- Provides additional nutrient enhancement.

Negative impacts

- Has potential to increase the pHOS rate in the Tilton River stabilizing population.