

**PUBLIC INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PLAN**  
**COWLITZ RIVER HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT**  
**FERC PROJECT NO. 2016**  
**TACOMA POWER**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Tacoma Power, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Washington Department of Ecology (WDOE), Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (WSPRC), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), United States Forest Service (USFS), Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC), Lewis County, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (Yakama Nation), Washington Council of Trout Unlimited (TU), and American Rivers reached settlement on August 10, 2000, concerning the operation of the Cowlitz River Project under the terms of a new Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license.

During the course of the relicensing process for the Cowlitz River Project a number of other organizations and individuals were deeply interested in the Project, and many played a key role in defining the terms and actions included in the Final Settlement Agreement (Agreement) and new FERC license, issued and effective on July 18, 2003. In an effort to keep these organizations and individuals engaged in the planning and implementation efforts defined in the Agreement and license, and to provide the public with an opportunity to actively participate in the future of the Cowlitz River Project, the FERC License Order included the following article:

*Article 405. Within six months of license issuance, the Licensee shall file for Commission approval, a Public Information Management Plan that describes how the Licensee will share and disseminate information and solicit public comment on implementing the provisions of the Settlement Agreement. Information to be provided shall include any recommendations and reports produced by the Fisheries Technical Committee and Habitat Advisory Group. The Licensee shall consult with parties to the Agreement and the FTC in the preparation of the plan. The Licensee shall allow the parties 30 days to comment on the plan before filing it with the Commission for approval. The Licensee shall include in the filing to the Commission documentation of its consultation, copies of comments and recommendations made in connection with the plan, and a description of how the plan accommodates the comments and recommendations. If the licensee does not adopt a recommendation, the filing shall include the licensee's reasons, based on project-specific information. The Commission reserves the right to make changes to any plan submitted. Upon Commission Approval, the plan becomes a requirement of the license, and the licensee shall implement the plan, including any changes required by the Commission.*

Tacoma Power, in consultation with the Agreement parties, has prepared the following Public Information Management Plan (the Plan) to comply with Article 405.

This Plan does not replace the responsibility of any of the Agreement parties to provide public information in accordance with any federal, state or local law or regulation as it may pertain to any of the actions taken under the terms of the Agreement or the FERC license. This Plan augments these obligations with additional public information opportunities structured specifically for the Cowlitz River Project.

## II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of this Public Information Management Plan are to:

1. keep the living, working and recreating public in the Cowlitz River Project area informed of Project activities;
2. provide the public with opportunities to review and comment on the plans developed to meet the terms of the Agreement and the FERC license order;
3. provide opportunities to increase knowledge of, and interest in, the Cowlitz River Project and the surrounding environment; and,
4. foster a cooperative spirit and build on good will.

The overall goal of the Cowlitz River Project Settlement Agreement and the FERC license is to mitigate for the effects of the continued operation of the Cowlitz River Project and to provide additional enhancement to the natural and social environments while continuing to provide clean, economical energy to the regional power grid.

## III. REQUIREMENTS OF PUBLIC LAW

1. **Federal Power Act.** The Federal Power Act (16 USC 791a-825r) governs how the FERC discharges its duties during the licensing or relicensing of a non-federal hydroelectric project. All license orders issued by FERC, approving the construction and/or operation of a project, contain articles that the licensee must comply with during the term of their license. Compliance with these license articles is monitored by the FERC.
2. **Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Regulations.** The FERC applied its regulations to the relicensing of the Cowlitz River Project, including among others, 18 CFR Part 4, Subpart F (Application for License for Major Project - Existing Dam) and 18 CFR Part 16 (Procedures Relating to Takeover and Relicensing of Licensed Projects). Extensive consultation is required for both the licensee and the FERC during the relicensing process, although no regulations require ongoing public involvement once a new license has been issued. The FERC does, however, often require consultation with governmental and tribal entities with specific resource responsibilities during the planning and implementation of actions mandated by the terms of the new license. The FERC may also include public dissemination of some project-related information during a license term, especially in the implementation phase, as denoted in License Article 405.
3. **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).** The NEPA requires all federal agencies involved in the permitting of activities affecting the environment to evaluate environmental impacts of the proposed actions and the significance of these impacts. In the course of issuing a new license for the Cowlitz River Project, the FERC performed an assessment of several alternatives for the continued operation of the Project. The Cowlitz River Settlement Agreement was one of these alternatives. The FERC issued a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in June 2001 and a final EIS in November 2001, with distribution to all parties who participated in the relicensing process. Comments received on the analysis of the alternatives contained in these two documents provided guidance to the FERC in their preparation of the terms of the new license. Other federal agencies may have requirements under NEPA to prepare environmental assessments or

provide other public information as they approve, or themselves take certain actions, during the implementation of the Settlement Agreement and license terms at the Project.

4. **Other Federal and State Regulations.** Other federal and state laws or acts may trigger additional public information events during the term of the new license. These may include the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, the Washington State Environmental Policy Act, and the Shoreline Management Program.

#### **IV. FORMS AND NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC INFORMATION**

The Agreement and license call for developing a number of plans, implementing actions, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions, and reporting. Several technical groups composed of representatives to the Agreement or to the existing Cowlitz River Project Wildlife Management Settlement Agreement have been established to assist Tacoma Power in these measures.

Under the terms of the existing Cowlitz Project Wildlife Settlement Agreement (1993), biologists representing the signing parties of Tacoma Power, WDFW and the USFWS have formed the Cowlitz Wildlife Coordinating Committee. This committee meets at least once annually to discuss potential land and species management actions for the coming year and to review the actions and results of the past year. The WDFW, as manager of the lands under the terms of the Wildlife Settlement Agreement, prepares an annual report describing the implementation of its current management plan. This report is, in turn, submitted to the FERC and available to the public by May 1 of each year.

The Fisheries Technical Committee (FTC) was formed as a condition of the 2000 Cowlitz River Project Settlement Agreement to move forward the terms of the Agreement, and was subsequently included in FERC's License Order. The FTC includes one aquatic scientist from each of the signatory parties with fishery-related mandates or interests. The exception is that a single committee member represents the Conservation Groups (TU and American Rivers). As the FTC is a recommending body only, advance notice of their meetings is not included in the Public Information Management Plan. All meeting summaries are posted on Tacoma Power's web site once finalized. All FTC recommendations will be made available for public review and comment in the form of draft implementation or design plans and study or monitoring reports.

The Habitat Advisory Group (HAG) is composed of one representative from each of the signing parties to the Agreement that choose to participate. The HAG's responsibility is to advise Tacoma Power on the development and implementation of a plan to guide the use of the \$3 million habitat fund required as a term of the Agreement and the license. The initial work product of this group, a draft implementation plan, will be available to the public for review and comment.

Each of the above described groups act in an advisory role to Tacoma Power, and each has developed independent rules and operating procedures. Any request to attend one of these group meetings will be handled on a case-by-case basis, according to that group's operating procedures. As stated above, the work products of these groups, as well as other plans and actions not specifically developed within the venue of a technical group but known to be of public interest, will be made available to the public for review and comment periodically throughout the term of the new license. These opportunities for review and comment will be provided through a number of forums, as described below.

1. **Web Site.** Tacoma Power has established a web site at [www.tacomapower.com](http://www.tacomapower.com) to keep the public informed of Cowlitz River Project activities. This site will be regularly updated and may include technical group meeting summaries, draft implementation plans and reports, schedules for public review and comment, and notice of upcoming public briefings. Other signatory parties to the Agreement may also establish web sites to inform the public of upcoming actions related to the Cowlitz River Project.
2. **Distribution List.** For those members of the public who are unable to access the Internet or prefer to receive copies of documents by mail, Tacoma Power will maintain a list of those parties' names and addresses. The draft implementation plans, reports and public briefing notices will be distributed on CD through the U.S. Postal Service's regular mail service, concurrent with listing on the web site, as they become available for review and comment. Tacoma Power will provide documents to appropriate libraries. Paper copies can be made available on written request at Tacoma Power's established reproduction fees.

Tacoma Power will post notices of public briefings on its web site and in local media as appropriate. These notices will include the purpose of the briefing, an agenda, the meeting place and the meeting times.

3. **Public Briefings.** Tacoma Power will hold several public briefings in the Cowlitz River Project area during the first three years of the new license, and thereafter as Project activities, implementation actions, and public interest dictate. The primary purpose of these briefings will be to provide updates on license implementation, present new scientific findings and information, describe progress on the planning process and programs, and solicit input from the public on these actions.

Agencies or other Settlement Parties may schedule additional briefings or public meetings throughout the term of the license to coincide with the release of major planning documents, at significant decision points in the development of environmental measures, and to report on implementation progress and monitoring and evaluation results.

4. **News Releases.** Tacoma Power will prepare and distribute news releases to local newspapers, radio and television stations, industry publications, etc., as appropriate.
5. **Newsletter.** Tacoma Power will continue to publish the *Cowlitz Currents* once a year, at a minimum, during the first three years following issuance of the new license. The *Cowlitz Currents* is distributed to over 30,000 postal customers located in the Cowlitz River Project area. This publication will provide updates on Project planning and implementation activities and describe upcoming activities and public involvement opportunities.
6. **Bulletin Boards.** Tacoma Power maintains bulletin boards and/or kiosks at Mossyrock, Mayfield Lake and Taidnapam parks, and at most Project day use sites and boat launches. Information sheets will be posted at these sites describing some of the implementation activities, opportunities for upcoming comment and review periods or public briefings, and providing instructions for accessing Tacoma Power's Cowlitz River Project web site. Tacoma Power will provide these information sheets to other area recreation providers and will encourage them to post them at their facilities

7. **Tours and Presentations.** Tacoma Power will continue to respond to requests for Project tours and presentations from schools, business and community groups, and other interested organizations.
8. **Open House.** Tacoma Power will continue to host an annual open house at the Project for a minimum of three years following issuance of the new license. The open house affords the general public an opportunity for guided tours of the Project facilities and interactions with Project staff as they view interpretive displays that describe the cultural history of the area, Project operations, the environmental setting and future enhancements planned throughout the term of the new license.
9. **Other Information Sources.**
  - a. Subsequent to issuing a license, FERC monitors compliance with the terms and conditions of the license. When a license article requires developing a plan, or monitoring an action, FERC usually requires that the licensee consult with the agencies and tribes with jurisdiction over, or interest in the resource affected by that plan or action. When plans or reports are submitted to FERC, documentation that this consultation took place must be included. All Project documents and correspondence with FERC that do not include critical energy infrastructure information or sensitive cultural information are placed in its docket and made available for public review on their web site at [www.ferc.gov](http://www.ferc.gov). In some cases, FERC may publish a notice that a document is available on their web site and request comments.
  - b. Other federal, tribal, state and local governments will be responsible for coordinating their public processes for Cowlitz River Project actions with Tacoma Power. Any public notice required by their regulations will be in addition to those described above.

## V. PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

Within the Agreement and incorporated into the FERC license are provisions for the development of a number of plans to establish specific actions to be taken, and the timeframes in which these actions are to be implemented.

The plans or reports required by the Agreement and the license are described below<sup>1</sup>. Any license article that does not require a plan or report, or references information provided by another entity is not listed. Each item is keyed to its corresponding number in the Agreement (SA) or License Order (LO). The timeframes associated with the filing of each plan or report are tied to the license issuance date, which was established by FERC as July 18, 2003, and provide a general sense of the timing of public information opportunities. The various actions to be determined during the preparation of the plans and reports described below may be altered based on the results of monitoring and evaluation of an action's effectiveness, or upon FERC's approval or modification of said plan. This may also cause the type and timeframe of a public information opportunity to change.

SA1. Downstream Fish Passage and Collection at Riffe Lake and Cowlitz Falls. Within six months of the issuance of a new license by FERC, Tacoma Power is to submit a plan that:

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<sup>1</sup> See the FERC License Order for a detailed description and complete terms of each license condition.

- a. describes the results of negotiations with the Lewis County Public Utility District and Bonneville Power Administration toward shared funding of cooperative efforts to improve downstream passage and collection effectiveness at or near Cowlitz Falls Dam;
- b. proposes facilities and measures most likely to achieve the goal of 95 percent fish passage survival at or near Cowlitz Falls Dam;
- c. describes Tacoma Power's support for the on-going operation and maintenance of facilities and measures for downstream fish passage and collection at or near Cowlitz Falls Dam each year for the term of the new license;
- d. proposes a monitoring and evaluation program to determine the combined fish passage survival and test the effectiveness of the existing, proposed, new and/or improved facilities at or near Cowlitz Falls Dam;
- e. presents a construction and implementation timeline for any new facilities or measures proposed in 1.b above that does not exceed 12 months from the date of acceptance of the plan by FERC; and,
- f. within 18 months following construction completion of the facilities described in 1.b above, Tacoma Power will file a report on the effectiveness of these facilities or measures, and if the fish passage survival goal has not been achieved, propose further facility improvements or measures.

SA2. Downstream Passage at Mayfield Dam. Following the issuance of a new license by FERC, Tacoma Power is to:

- a. within six months, submit a study plan or study results that evaluate turbine mortality and the existing louver system effectiveness at Mayfield Dam;
- b. within three years, develop a plan for improvements to downstream fish passage at Mayfield Dam, including a construction and implementation schedule that does not exceed one year from the date of plan approval; and
- c. within 18 months of completion of construction of the improvements described in 2.b above, report on the effectiveness of the modifications and include a plan for further modifications if the 95 percent fish passage survival goal has not been achieved.

SA3. Upstream Fish Passage at Barrier, Mayfield and Mossyrock Dams. Following the issuance of a new license by FERC, Tacoma Power is to:

- a. within six months or as soon as possible thereafter, depending on the availability of marked fish, and annually thereafter, file a report on adult anadromous fish traveling through the Cowlitz River Project;
- b. prepare preliminary designs and schedules for the construction of upstream passage systems for the Cowlitz River Project if during any year following license issuance, up to year 12, studies indicate the criteria specified in the Settlement Agreement for upstream passage will be met within three years;
- c. prepare final designs and schedules for the construction of upstream passage systems once the criteria is met, and construct the systems within one year of approval of the designs; and
- d. prepare a plan for alternative measures to restore self-sustaining, natural production of ESA-listed stocks, if the criteria for volitional upstream passage facilities have not

been met by year 14, and if it is determined by the Fisheries Technical Committee to abandon upstream passage facilities.

SA4. Juvenile Tagging and Monitoring Program. Following the issuance of a new license, Tacoma Power will file annually with the FERC data that estimates the number of juvenile fish arriving at transport facilities, their origin, the number transported, and the number of adults arriving and transported to the upper Cowlitz River Basin.

SA6. Fisheries and Hatchery Management Plan. Within nine months of the issuance of a new license by FERC, Tacoma Power is to submit a plan that identifies:

- a. the quantity and size of fish to be produced at the Cowlitz Hatchery Complex;
- b. rearing and release strategies for each stock;
- c. credit mechanisms for production of high quality natural stocks;
- d. plans for on-going monitoring and evaluation; and
- e. a fisheries management strategy consistent with the objective of maximizing natural production of wild indigenous fish stocks and species.

SA7. Hatchery Complex Remodel and Phase-In Plan. Within eighteen months of the issuance of a new license by FERC, Tacoma Power is to submit a plan that includes:

- a. hatchery design drawings that include decreased rearing densities and innovative practices to replicate historic out-migration size and timing;
- b. construction scheduling;
- c. provisions for hatchery water supply and provides for treatment of up to 10 cfs of additional river water; and
- d. gradual transition to innovative rearing practices.

SA8. Disease Management Plan. Within five years of the issuance of a new license by FERC, Tacoma Power is to submit a plan that defines an acceptable level of risk from *Ceratomyxa shasta* and other diseases, and allows adult fish to be upstream of Barrier Dam. The plan will include:

- a. criteria for determining success or failure;
- b. a review every five years; and
- c. a procedure and schedule for amending the plan if the criterion is not met.

SA9. Large Woody Debris Plan. Within one year of the issuance of a new license by FERC, Tacoma Power is to submit a plan to continue to make large woody debris available for fish habitat restoration project in the Cowlitz River Basin. The plan will include:

- a. a description of the sources of large woody debris;
- b. measures for transporting and delivering large woody debris within the Cowlitz River Basin;
- c. guidelines for the use and disbursement of large woody debris for restoration projects; and
- d. provisions for storage of large woody debris and disposal of unused debris.

SA10. Gravel Augmentation Plan. Within nine months of the issuance of a new license by FERC, Tacoma Power is to submit a plan to augment gravel below the Barrier Dam to enhance salmonid spawning habitat. The gravel augmentation plan will include:

- a. a description of plans to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of gravel augmentation; and
- b. a plan for the discontinuation of gravel augmentation if Barrier Dam is breached, and post-breach monitoring.

SA11. Fish Habitat Fund Plan. Within one year of issuance of a new license by FERC, Tacoma Power is to submit a plan that includes:

- a. a statement of the priority uses and criteria for disbursement of the \$3.0 million Fish Habitat Fund;
- b. a description of Tacoma Power's efforts to leverage the habitat fund through mechanisms such as "matching funds" for other salmon recovery funding opportunities;
- c. plans to coordinate with Lewis County on purchases of land or easements;
- d. procedures for conservation groups and others to request Tacoma Power's participation in restoration projects; and
- e. a statement of what, if any, additional lands acquired through the habitat fund will be included within the Cowlitz River Project boundary.

SA12. Wildlife Settlement Wetland Acquisition Fund. Within one year of issuance of a new license by FERC, Tacoma Power is to submit a report on its efforts to encourage the expeditious expenditure of remaining funds previously allocated in a manner consistent with the Wildlife Settlement Agreement and the overall goals of fish and wildlife habitat protection and restoration.

SA15. Fish Monitoring Plan. Within one year of issuance of a new license by FERC, Tacoma Power is to submit a monitoring plan to evaluate the effects of the instream flow requirements on the fish of the Cowlitz River.

SA16. Instream Flow Implementation Report. Within two years of issuance of a new license, Tacoma Power will submit a report describing the measures taken to implement the new flow regime, as contained in the Settlement Agreement.

SA17. Recreation Development Plan. Within one year of licensee issuance, Tacoma Power will submit a plan for new or expanded recreation facilities at the Project that includes:

- a. a 20-mile non-motorized trail system on Peterman Hill;
- b. a 2-mile non-motorized loop trail near Mossyrock Park;
- c. an extension of the Mossyrock boat launch with mooring dock and seasonal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility;
- d. a low water boat launch at the east end of Riffe Lake;
- e. a fishing platform near Barrier Dam;
- f. 50 additional campsites at Taidnapam Park between years 7 to 12 of the new license;
- g. improvements to the road from Highway 12 to Taidnapam Park;



- h. 50 additional campsites at Mossyrock Park between years 19 and 24 of the new license;
- i. funding to Washington State Parks of \$500,000 for improvements to Ike Kinswa State Park; and
- j. funding to Washington State in the amount of \$100,000 for other unidentified improvements in the Project area.

SA18. Recreation Facility Operation, Maintenance and Safety Plan. Tacoma Power will file with FERC within one year of license issuance, a plan that includes:

- a. Cowlitz Wildlife Area Management Coordinating Committee oversight of trail construction and management,
- b. coordination with Lewis County Sheriff's office to improve boating safety,
- c. an ADA transition plan for existing facilities; and
- d. acquisition, maintenance and operation of Lewis County's Mayfield Lake County Park.

SA19. Water Access Facility Plan. Tacoma Power will file with FERC in years 4, 7 and 13 of the new license term, plans for the expenditure of \$67,000, per time period, for additional facilities to improve water access.

SA20. Recreation Reporting. Tacoma Power will monitor recreation use in the Project area by conducting surveys of one year duration beginning in the fifth year of a new license. The survey results will be filed with the FERC by April 1 of the following year. The survey will be repeated every sixth year thereafter, with the results submitted by the following April 1.

SA24. Wildlife Management Report. Annually, by May 1, Tacoma Power will submit a monitoring report, that incorporates a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife report describing the implementation of the current wildlife management plan.

LO405. Public Information Management Plan. Tacoma Power will file with FERC within 6 months of license issuance a plan describing how Agreement implementation information is shared and disseminated to the public, including recommendations and reports produced by the FTC and the HAG.

LO501. Hydropower Compliance Management Program. Tacoma Power will file with FERC within 4 months of license issuance a plan identifying each action necessary to complete the license requirements, a schedule for the start and completion of consultation for each identified action, and the specific individuals to be consulted for each identified action. A report will be filed annually on the anniversary of the license issuance date describing the progress made toward completion of each identified action.

## **VI. CONTACT INFORMATION**

Comments or questions concerning any of the plans or reports made available for public review, or on any implementation activities associated with the new license for the Cowlitz River Project can be submitted by email to Tacoma Power at [cowlitz@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:cowlitz@cityoftacoma.org).

If direct or written correspondence with Tacoma Power personnel is necessary, such communication should be directed to:

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