

**Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project**  
**FERC No. 2016**  
**Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee**  
**Final Meeting Summary**  
October 1, 2024 from 9:30 – 2:30

**FTC Representative Attendees:**

Melora Shelton	TPU
Bryce Glaser	WDFW
Jonathan Stumpf	TU
Andrew Luymes	ECY
Bill Sharp	Yakama Nation

**Additional Attendees:**

Thomas Starkey-Owens	ECY
Josua Holowatz	WDFW
Brian Gale	WDFW
John Serl	WDFW
Kris Warner	WDFW
Peggy Miller	WDFW
Kevin Young	WDFW
Todd Hillson	WDFW
Sean Toomey	WDFW
Chris Vaughn	TPU
Ben Caviness	TPU
Eric Shoblom	TPU
Scott Gibson	TPU
Stephen Lewis	BIA
Steve West	LCFRB
Ann Weckback	Lewis County
Michael Boyles	BPA
Laura Wolfe	LCPUD
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting / Facilitator

**Public Attendees:** Larry Pryor and Jack Tipping

**Remaining 2024 FTC Meeting Dates:** Nov. 5, Dec. 3 (Vets Memorial Museum with remote option)

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**Approval of September Meeting Summary**

The revised version of the September FTC Meeting Summary was reviewed and approved with clarifying edits and will be posted for public review.

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**Updates**

Hydro Operations (presentation emailed on September 30)

Melora described the following:

- **Inflows:** Inflows continue to be low. September (lowest inflow month) was 72% of the historical average, with a mean daily flow of 1,294 cfs and only 43% of average precipitation and warmer than usual temperatures.









- WDFW is working to submit a new Fisheries Management Evaluation Plan (FMEP) to NOAA fisheries. Modeling is not yet complete and although hopeful, we are unclear how much opportunity may become available in a non-mark selective fishery.

It is also important to better understand how the proposed program shift is being supported at the CCA statewide level and CCA's response.

WDFW recognizes that current performance of the fall Chinook program is a concern and supports identifying some clear next steps and timelines for evaluating the current program and identifying potential improvement actions. Particularly -

- Understanding the origin (i.e., Tilton vs. Lower Cowlitz) of unmarked Chinook returning to the separator.
- Completing life cycle models (i.e., Integrated Population Models) to better understand key biological reference points, including estimates of capacity and productivity.
- Updating analysis of SARs using a standardized approach and conducting an evaluation of contribution to fisheries.
- Identifying potential limiting factors (both in and out of hatchery) affecting fall Chinook survival and developing directed studies to inform potential management actions.

These will be addressed through the HOM and M&E Subgroup. There is more work to be done. A shift in the future might be warranted. The HOM and M&E groups will return at the 2025 APR process (next spring) with a plan and timeline for adequately evaluating these changes.

**Action Item:** Eric will update the DD as discussed and send it out for official 7-day review/approval by FTC voting members.

### **Public Comment Period #1 - Agenda related**

Jack: Will the public get to review the draft of the M&E Plan? Anglers should get to weigh in.

Scott: The draft version will be reviewed by the FTC. The final will be shared with everyone.

Bryce: There was public input on the FHMP. The M&E Plan is being written in line with the FHMP.

**Action Item:** Melora to check with SA protocols/FHMP re document-specific guidance.

Jack: Are coho being tagged (not mentioned in Chris' presentation on Mayfield tagging)?

Chris: Yes, coho and Chinook are both receiving snout CWTs.

Jack: Can Salmon Hatchery access be extended to 8pm for winter steelhead glow ball fishing?

Eric: it's dark at 4:30 in the winter so glow balls can be used. There are serious security concerns after dark. Five individuals were just arrested poaching in the fish ladder.

Bryce: There will be no change to WDFW permitted fishing hours.

Jack: Got an angry phone call from a guide for cutthroat fishery complaining about no cutthroat. They are currently being raised in raceways instead of rearing ponds where they grow better.

Eric: They understand the advantage and that's why they made the shift to benefit winter steelhead. They hope the remodel allows enough space for all programs to be put into some form of a rearing lake. Brian concurred and noted last year, there was a record number of cutthroat trout returns, and they all came out of the raceways. Currently they are still coming in at a rate of about half of the 10-year average. Josua noted most people are currently fishing for coho. Bryce: We need to better understand the cutthroat fishery. This is identified as a need in the FHMP.

Jack: An assessment has not been done on this program since 1981.

Larry: At the APR, there was much conversation. How does this get entered into the public record?  
Larry: Can coho be better managed with a later run timing? This would benefit harvest. Production numbers are meaningless to him as a recreational fisherman. Releasing 2 million fish and getting back only hundreds is unacceptable. There is a need to manage toward adult returns. How has fisheries participation followed the adult returns?

Bryce: Creel numbers are currently used to estimate mortality of natural origin fish released in the fishery, but don't produce estimates of angler effort.

Larry: How do flows and temps affect parasites (*C. shasta*, etc.) at the intake into hatcheries?

Eric: Per the Science Conference presentation on *C. shasta* at the salmon hatchery intake, dredging has no impact. Temperatures do have impact. The warmer the water the more spores of *C. shasta*. High scouring flows are less conducive to the parasite.

Larry: Has the Packwood satellite rearing site been abandoned as an option?

Eric: No. We will bring a full suite of options for the FTC to evaluate, including some that may be more likely to be successful.

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### Topics for November 5, 2024 FTC Meeting

- Updates incl. Hydro Ops, Water Quality
- Fish Facilities, Satellite Rearing Ponds, Cispus Release Site, Mayfield Downstream Fish Passage Remodel, Coho Net Pen Project, Coho Par Study design alternatives, Trout Hatchery Remodel
- LCPUD Cowlitz Falls Dam Operations
- Downstream Adaptive Management TWG, Monitoring and Evaluation Subgroup
- CRR Fund HAP Subcommittee
- Mayfield Downstream Fish Passage
- Preview December FTC Meeting Topics - at Chehalis Memorial Museum

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### Meeting Evaluation

- Well attended
- Tech issues with access to the Chat and to the Teams meeting
- Very productive - approved 2 DDs!

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### Josua's Inspirational Quote

"Then the trees, after their long silence, began to talk again, in yellow and red. And the days began to shrink under one's very eyes." Hope Mirrlees.

Life is fragile. Make sure to wear your PPE when on or near the water.

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### Closing Remarks

Melora thanked everyone for coming today and being willing to engage with each other including members of the public. There is a lot of serious conflict in the world right now. She is happy we all get to come together to work collaboratively on supporting the resources we care about.

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### Parking Lot

- Presentation by Tacoma's Power Management Group and/or from Grant PUD re improving SAR
- Review Steelhead Kelt Recycling Program