

Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project
FERC No. 2016
Cowlitz Fisheries Technical Committee
Final MS Teams Public Meeting Summary
October 4, 2022 from 9:30 – 3:30

FTC Representative Attendees:

Travis Nelson	TPU
Bryce Glaser	WDFW
Jonathan Stumpf	TU
James Archibald	NOAA

Additional Attendees:

John Serl	WDFW
Peggy Miller	WDFW
Sam Gibbons	WDFW
Brian Gale	WDFW
Todd Hillson	WDFW
Josua Holowatz	WDFW
Matt Bleich	TPU
Eric Shoblom	TPU
Chris Foster	TPU
Melora Shelton	TPU
Matt Peter	TPU
Jenna Davidson	TPU
Laura Wolfe	LCPUD
Russell Page	LCPUD
Steve Manlow	LCFRB
Steve West	LCFRB
Steve Lewis	BIA
Ann Weckback	Lewis County
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting / Facilitator

Remaining 2022 FTC Meeting Dates: November 1, and December 6

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.

Announcements

- Tacoma is hiring for seasonal help at the separator and Mayfield currently. Please let Eric know if you are aware of anyone who might be interested.
 - We were pleased to have Tacoma intern Jenna Davidson attend and provide feedback.
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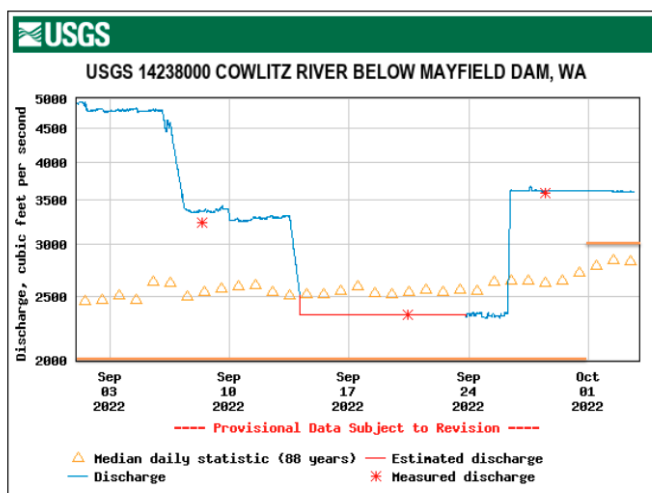
Updates

Hydro Operations (presentation emailed before the meeting):

- Inflows: Inflows dropped from 93% (August) to 70% (September) of historical average. Inflows should rise with if fall rains begin this month.

- Storage: Riffe Lake elevation is at ~717' (4' lower than the average of the last five years). Mayfield Lake operated within the typical off-season band of 420-424'. There is still access to the Mossy Rock boat launch despite the low elevation.
- Outflow: The minimum flow requirement has been 2,000 cfs since the last meeting with no exceedances. The USGS has adjusted the hydrograph to show correct discharge (2,400 cfs) during the Barrier Dam coffer dam deconstruction and reset the stage rating after that was completed. On October 3, total discharge was 3,600 cfs. There was one ramp exceedance (max rate of 1.6 inch/hour) caused by balancing between spill and generation while downramping from spill past Mayfield. Unit 41 ramped up faster than the spillgate closed during the final step taking off spill. This will be included in the annual report to FERC.
- Forecast: Dry with temperatures at/above normal. The freezing level is variable above 12,000'. Inflows are expected to be below 2,000 cfs and Riffe will continue to draft. Outflows are expected to be ~3,600 cfs through the week.

Outflow



Minimum flow 2,000 cfs (through 9/30) and 3,500 cfs. No exceedances.
10/3: ~3,600 cfs

Link to the USGS real-time Cowlitz River hydrograph:

https://waterdata.usgs.gov/wa/nwis/uv/?site_no=14238000&PARAMeter_cd=00060,00065
<https://www.mytpu.org/community-environment/parks-recreation/river-flows-lake-levels/>

Water Quality/Monitoring:

Kosmos: Matt Peter noted the additional four deep-water monitoring wells are scheduled to be drilled in the next month or so. For the next year and likely beyond, Tacoma will monitor for ground water levels and pulling samples.

Leak in Barrier Dam Construction: Matt P noted it 'appears' there was a lack of coordination between this group and what transpired during this incident. This issue should be viewed as a collective FTC issue as it is complex and involves much more than water quality. He would like to see communication be improved for future incidents and/or that additional protocols are in place to eliminate such incidents.

ERTS: The Ecology Reporting and Tracking System protocols will be discussed at the November meeting, with Anne in attendance.

Barrier Dam Repair: Eric reported this dam safety project is now complete, a year ahead of schedule. All in-water work has been completed. They are currently demobilizing operations, including hydro-seeding, repairing pathways, etc. This work should be complete by the end of

October. A question was raised regarding if the repair addressed the second entrance to fish ladder incorporated into Barrier Dam. Matt B noted the intent of the repair was to have two entrances available. After the repair, all the water is now flowing in the same/right direction. There were no changes made to the North entrance (primary location for collection). In the spirit of adaptive management, they will revisit the South entrance as needed. Steven expressed interest in exploring why fall Chinook are not using the South entrance. This may be discussed further at a Fish Passage meeting (which Steven would like to attend).

Fish Facilities:

Separator Collections: Adult numbers continue to increase as expected. Over 2,300 fish were at the separator on Monday and 616 was the total to date. They are releasing in Scanewa and Packwood for the upper Cowlitz. Strong fall rains may make Cispus release site usable. For the Tilton, HORs are being released at Gust Backstrom and NORs at the Bremer Bridge.

Adult Return Summary:

- Spring Chinook: Made brood goals and ended up close to the egg take goal. The HOR return was a little less than the 10-year average. The run timing looks to be later this year. This may be a factor of the large return in 2015. This can be discussed further through the APR Process. NOR spring Chinook returns were over 5K – great news!
- Summer-Run Steelhead: Returns this season of 4K were almost double the 5-year average and on par with the 10-year average. The return dropped off end of September, so we ended up not quite making broodstock goals. WDFW is still confident we can make program goals as they have enough for brood without the normal buffer for adult mortality. Over 3K were recycled this season.
- Coho: So far both HOR and NOR returns are similar to last year. This year there will be one, single integrated coho program. Upstream transports are currently sent to the Tilton, Scanewa, and Packwood. Return numbers are sufficient to get weekly brood, and crews are using AD+CWTs to supplement the 1:3 NOR collection as needed.
- Fall Chinook: We are about half way through the collection season with a month to go for broodstock collection. Although we are collecting 100% of the HORs to brood, it appears we may not make collection goals this season. Fall rain should help the numbers to pick up. Fall Chinook will also be integrated broodstock collection this year.
- John reported that on WDFW's spring Chinook aerial flights they observed a total of 393 redds which is normal for this time of year. They recovered 100 Chinook carcasses that were equally split between HOR and NOR. This year's Cowlitz Fall Chinook return is very poor compared to other watersheds. Even with the NOR return looking close to being normal at this point, the guidance in the Transition Plan shows we are short on NORs and HORs. There is a need to discuss how to implement that Transition Plan.
- Fisheries: Josua reported fisheries remain open for coho, steelhead and cutthroat. The Chinook fishery was closed October 1 and will remain closed until further notice. WDFW reviewed the historical run time for tules. Normally by this time, most have moved out of the mainstem and into the tributaries.
- Cutthroat: Eric reported there is no collection schedule for Hatchery cutthroat so all HORs are being collected for the brood program. Last year was a good year. We are hoping to see another spike in the returns.

Mayfield Juvenile Collection:

- These numbers continue to be a few hundred each week. They are seeing typical numbers. They are also seeing gill parasites as usual for this time of year. John suggested looking into a salt dip for these fish. Eric will follow up.

- They are running the auto-flush for secondary separator weekly.

Cowlitz Falls Fish Facility: Chris reported in prep for the PUD's maintenance on the floating debris deflector, there was a drawdown as planned September 10-15. Next year the PUD will perform the maintenance. Tacoma's fish collection went offline during the drawdown and brought things back online when the lake was refilled. Chris thanked Peggy and others for work on the flow variance which allowed fish collection to continue more quickly. He suggested this could be a useful tool again in the future. The CFFF was shut down last Friday, ending the traditional collection season (which started March 15). They are now into Fall operations using a block schedule (Tuesday - Friday) for each week in October. Fall operations are unique because of variable weather events. Fall collection operations continue to be used for monitoring life history strategy.

Downstream Adaptive Management Technical Work Group: Matt reported they haven't met since the last FTC mtg. They recently sent out seasonal summer update to the TWG to review (part of annual work plan approved by the FTC). Tacoma is working with the TWG and LCPUD to get draft recommendations together to present to the FTC. They are seeing poorer collection this year than the last several years with a wetter, more-prone-to-spill season, also operations related. The PUD's future maintenance and construction projects will/may impact the TWG recommendations for FCE/FGE studies that will be delivered at the December meeting.

Satellite Rearing Program

Presenter: Phil Sandstrom

Phil walked through a track-changes version of the DD 2022-07, noting it does not invalidate the prior DD. He and Chris edited the DD based on feedback from the last meeting. Chris added an updated table with a revised timeline. Temperature loggers are installed at the Energy Northwest (EN) site and at Tower Rock to gather information that may be useful in the future. At the last workshop, participants indicated a preference for the EN site. The DD still calls out the two options (options 2 and 5). Historically, steelhead smolts were acclimated in the spring in netpens at the EN site. Sam suggested since that site is below a hydro system TDG measurements may be important in evaluating water quality there. It was noted The Tower Rock site has also been used to rear fish (coho).

Feedback on Table: We added a new column to the table, so it shows "End Date" in addition to "Start Date." Bryce suggested adding a decision point / strategy selection component when we call out which of the two options to pursue. This wouldn't preclude a secondary option. Peggy noted if this applies to EN Stilling basin, starting construction in May of 2023 seems very ambitious as there would be a need for FERC approval and buy-in from the Agency Resource Committees from the Packwood Project. Matt Peter is working on water rights, etc.

There was support for Phil's suggestion for an additional workshop this month (prior to the next FTC meeting). Workshop participants will confirm the strategy selection component, review conceptual drawings along with temperature data, and discuss how best get feedback from the public. Phil thanked everyone for all the comments and feedback on the DD.

DD 2022-07 was approved, as edited, by consensus of voting members. Travis will email it out for review by absent FTC voting members. If no comments or edits are received, this DD will become final on October 11.

- **Action Item:** Phil to convene a workshop prior to the November 1 FTC meeting to recommend which strategy to pursue at that time, review design drawings, etc.

LCPUD Dam Operations

Presenter: Russell Page

Russell provided the following update on the PUD's many maintenance activities: Reservoir drawdown and outage of transformer maintenance work drawdown went quickly, and they are now back at full pool and spilling 750 cfs. Maintenance is ongoing for the Unit 1 and 2 transformers. They are having to address water entrained in oil issues in the transformers. The Current Transformer (CT) replacement will be delayed until next year. Transformer 1 should be back on line and generating the morning of October 7. Then they will then turn their attention back to Unit 2. Russell hopes the removal of debris from in front of the units will be done in the next couple of weeks. Other maintenance activities have been paused for now.

M&E Subgroup

Presenter Phil Sandstrom

Phil reported the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan discussions have included prioritizing a list of baseline and directed studies as well as updating and standardizing the language for the common tables to ensure a common understanding. Special thanks to Todd Hillson, Scott Gibson, and Trevor Johnson for their work on this. All are welcome to attend these (virtual) meetings the third Thursday of each month from 10-noon.

CRR Fund / Habitat and Production (HAP) Subgroup

Presenters: Melora Shelton and Steve West

Steve W reviewed Decision Document 2022-06 which listed the four projects totaling about \$2.8 million. There were no additional comments since the review of the document at the last meeting. Steve M reported the SRFB met since the last FTC meeting and approved the LCFRB ranked list, as submitted. The Yellowjacket Phase 4 project funding decision was made with funding from three sources, including the SFRB and PCSRF. That was the only CRR project that also requested SRFB Funds. (A total of 19 projects were funded by the SRFB this grant round to the tune of approximately \$19 million!)

DD 2022-06 was approved by consensus of voting members. Travis will email it out for review by absent FTC voting members. If no comments or edits are received, this DD will become final on October 11.

HAP Subgroup

Melora noted the Hatchery Associated Production (HAP) Subgroup has met twice since the last FTC meeting and has finalized the Project Information form for potential applicants to work on project development. They also planned for first virtual workshop which took place on September 27, with one member of the public attending. At their next meeting they will plan for the next workshop scheduled for October 18 from 1-3pm. Discussions will include how to carry forward lessons learned from the initial workshop. The subgroup will also reengage on project application materials and scoring frameworks.

FTC Public Meeting Process Review

Presenter: Travis Nelson

Travis walked through the edited draft of DD 2022-08 based on feedback received at the September meeting. It included edits to the first page and also the Public Meeting Protocols. He noted getting public participation at FTC meetings has been a long journey. Meeting remotely

has negatively impacted the ability of some members of the public to participate. 2023 may include a return to some in-person meetings on a periodic basis. The protocols reflect this.

DD 2022-08 was approved by consensus of voting members. Travis will email it out for review by absent FTC voting members. If no comments or edits are received, this DD will become final on October 11.

Topics for November 1, 2022 FTC Meeting

- Updates incl. Hydro Ops
 - Water Quality
 - ERTS protocols
 - Dredge materials – cleaning of boat ramps
 - LCPUD Dam Operations
 - Fish Facilities
 - Satellite Rearing
 - Downstream Adaptive Management TWG
 - CRR Fund / HAP Subgroup
 - M&E Subgroup
 - 2023 APR Process
 - Preview December FTC Meeting topics
 - Planning for Public Meetings throughout 2023
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Meeting Evaluation

- *6 to mute and unmute phone – Thanks Chris!
 - Despite audio challenges – we persevered!
 - Happy to have Jenna (Tacoma Power intern) join us today
 - She noted this meeting was engaging with inclusion and professionalism
 - Very productive – Approved three DDs!
 - Josua's Quote (thinking about Fall Chinook return, and, as a fisherman is an optimist):
"Urgent optimism is the desire to act immediately to tackle an obstacle, combined with the belief that we have a reasonable hope of success." – Jane McGonigal
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Parking Lot

- Review/Update FTC Protocols to include remote meeting procedures
- Presentation by Tacoma's Power Management Group and/or from Grant PUD re improving SAR
- Review Steelhead Recycling Program