

Project Name	Cowlitz Falls Dam 2016 Evaluations
Date Proposal Submitted	2/28/2017
Date of Requested Decision	3/7/2017
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FTC Decision and Justification

Proposed Decision or Consideration

Create a subcommittee called the Cowlitz Falls North Shore Collector Technical Workgroup (TWG). The TWG will be comprised of one biologist from each Tacoma Power, NMFS, WDFW and one third party contractor as well as one engineer from each Tacoma Power, and NMFS, and one representative from LCPUD. Additional specialists will be called upon intermittently as their expertise is needed and are likely to include hydraulic consultants, statisticians and other biologists. A charter will be created by the TWG within two months of assembly. The draft charter will be submitted to the FTC for review, comment and approval.

Background

The Cowlitz Falls Adaptive Management Plan was drafted in 2014 in preparation with the intention to: 1) address actions that may be taken prior to design, construction and operation of the CFNSC; and 2) address the primary goals of the Adaptive Management Plan by describing an iterative and logical process to evaluate the performance of the Cowlitz Falls collection facilities. This process will be used to tailor the CFNSC configuration and/or operations to optimize performance. The Adaptive Management Plan describes a process that will be used to gather and share information and to specify how the data will be used to initiate and guide future adaptive management actions.

The Cowlitz Falls North Shore Collector is scheduled to complete commissioning and hydraulic balancing in April of 2017. 2017 is scheduled to be a shakedown season in which mechanical and technical challenges are learned and resolved. It is not currently anticipated that adaptive management actions will begin until 2019, after at least one full year of data has been collected. However the formation of the TWG is appropriate in the near term so the data stream, communication and scheduling process can also go through a “shakedown” process. The intent of the TWG is to provide recommendations to the FTC and Tacoma Power for implementation of the Cowlitz Falls passage facilities. It will be important that this group learns and lives the pace of data collection and decision making necessary to making streamlined decisions.

In the interest of efficiency, the Downstream Adaptive Management Workgroup recommended that the TWG be comprised of the smallest group of experts possible who would be qualified to represent the diversity of perspectives necessary to make recommendations. The recommended representatives are comprised of agencies with departments that have a history of experience in the field of fish passage facilities and fish collectors and are therefore accustomed to the type of data required to inform adaptive management decisions. The inclusion of a representative from LCPUD is to ensure close coordination and identification of potential challenges or opportunities for gained efficiency at Cowlitz Falls Dam. A third party biologist is recommended to provide an unbiased perspective for potential data needs and adaptive management strategies required to achieve Fish Passage Survival goals.

Coordination Need

TWG members are anticipated to meet monthly with a combination of phone and in person meetings. Updates of TWG progress and recommendations will be provided at least quarterly to the FTC.

Summary of Potential Impacts

The TWG is designed to provide the highest level of decision making and efficiency in order to meet Fish Passage Survival goals while maintaining an informed and cost effective approach. The implementation of effective downstream fish passage from the upper Cowlitz River is a critical step in the restoration of upper river populations.