

Project Name	2023 Annual Project Review – Hatchery Production
Date Proposal Submitted	9/22/2023
Date of Requested Decision	10/03/2023
Requested By	Eric Shoblom
Date of Decision¹	10/03/2023

¹ Decision will become final if committee members who were not present at this meeting do not oppose this proposed decision within 7 days

FTC Decision and Justification

The FTC supports the following decision based on the 2023 APR process. Tacoma Power will produce the following programs in the Cowlitz Hatchery Complex for brood year 2023 of Coho, fall Chinook Salmon, Summer Steelhead and Cutthroat Trout. Winter steelhead and spring Chinook Salmon goals will take effect in the 2024 brood year as is typical of the APR process.

- Fall Chinook: 3,500,000
- Spring Chinook: 1,678,000
- Coho: 2,178,000
- Winter Steelhead: 647,000
- Summer Steelhead: 650,000
- Cutthroat Trout: 100,599

Tacoma Power held a public meeting with FTC attendance on August 22nd, 2023 as part of the APR process as required in the 2020 FHMP Update.

At the August 22nd public meeting, hatchery production options were provided to stakeholders. Feedback was requested by September 1st, 2023. Feedback was received and discussed at the September 5th FTC meeting. This document represents the results of the FTC discussion and decision at the public October 3rd FTC meeting.

Members Present: FTC members present represented WDFW, Ecology, and Tacoma Power. This Decision document will be circulated to FTC members not present and become final on 10/10/2023 if no objections are received.

Proposed Decision or Consideration

The 2023 Cowlitz Complex hatchery programs are proposed below (Table 1). The programs are in alignment with FHMP transition plans that have been approved by the FTC (DD# 2022 02).

Program release numbers and sizes at release remain largely unchanged. However, there is one notable change. A portion of the coho program will be reared in Mayfield net pens as a pre-pilot project to evaluate the feasibility of shifting a larger portion of coho to the net pens to create space for additional spring Chinook within the hatchery.

In the APR meeting, the option to increase spring Chinook production within the Salmon Hatchery by shifting a portion of coho production off site into Mayfield net pens was selected. This option increases the total poundage of the Cowlitz Complex beyond Tacoma's responsibilities (i.e. >650k lbs.). To ensure the success of this option, Tacoma will conduct a pre-pilot program where coho survival will be tested in 4 net pens. Success will be measured by comparing in-hatchery coho survival to that of the net pens. If successful, Tacoma will move into a full pilot study where an entire Salmon Hatchery pond of coho will be reared in the net pens the following year. This will allow for space for one additional pond of spring Chinook at the hatchery. This full, pilot program will occur for one year only. After that time, either the coho program will need to be decreased and the net pen program discontinued or another, outside funding source will be required to maintain the program.

Table 1 represents the proposed program goals for the 2023 brood year of Coho, fall Chinook Salmon, Summer Steelhead and Cutthroat Trout. Winter steelhead and spring Chinook Salmon goals will take effect in the 2024 brood year as is typical of the APR process.

Table 1: APR Decision Years for Hatchery Production

Species	Before 2011 FHMP Update	2019 APR Goal	2020 APR Goal	2021 APR Goal	2022 APR Goal	2023 APR Goal
Fall Chinook	4,800,000	3,500,000	3,500,000	3,500,000	3,500,000	3,500,000
Spring Chinook	959,800	1,738,529	1,738,529	1,738,529	1,678,000	1,678,000
Coho	2,835,000	2,178,000	2,178,000	2,178,000	2,178,000	2,178,000
Winter Steelhead	690,000	647,000	647,000	647,000	647,000	647,000
Summer Steelhead	550,000	625,000	650,000	650,000	650,000	650,000
Cutthroat	160,000	100,599	100,599	100,599	100,599	100,599

Background

The characteristics (number, size, integration rate, release date, etc.) of the Cowlitz Hatchery Complex program is determined through the Annual Program Review (APR) process, as described in the 2020 Fisheries and Hatchery Management Plan Update (FHMP).

The 2023 APR was based on data inputs from WDFW and Tacoma Power. During the first APR meeting, proposed hatchery programs were reviewed, and public feedback was received.

The 2023 APR public meeting was held in a hybrid, in-person and virtual format on Tuesday, August 22, 2023, and was recorded. Comments were received at the meeting and via phone or email through September 1st, 2023. Comments were captured and incorporated into the APR process, as possible. These modifications were presented to the public in a second virtual public meeting held on September 5th, 2023.

Coordination Need

Tacoma, WDFW, and the FTC will coordinate around any changing program needs and limitations due to actual adult returns and other limitations. Shortfalls or over production of juvenile hatchery salmonids will be reported to the FTC, as well as the anticipated impacts for adult returns in subsequent years.

The performance of the pre-pilot net pen program will be evaluated by both Tacoma, and WDFW hatchery and pathology staff. This will entail a comparison of coho survival and fish health metrics between the Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery and the Mayfield Net Pens program.

Summary of Potential Impacts

The hatchery programs have remained static for the past several years, with very few changes to release numbers or size at release.

The net pen project may result in impacts yet unknown and will be monitored regularly.