

**FTC Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project**  
**FERC NO. 2016**  
**Fisheries Technical Committee**  
**Final Meeting Summary**  
August 4, 2009 from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM  
Mayfield Office, Silver Creek, Washington

**Members Present**

Michelle Day	NMFS
Brett Swift	American Rivers
Pat Frazier	WDFW
Mark LaRiviere	Tacoma Power
Brad Caldwell	WDOE

**Other Attendees**

Ed Meyer	NMFS
John Serl	WDFW
Julie Henning	WDFW
Mark Johnson	WDFW
Andy Appleby	WDFW
Tom Martin	Tacoma Power
Bill Iyall	Tacoma Power
Tom Santee	Insight Northwest
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting
John Barr	John Barr Consulting

**2009 FTC Meeting Dates (first Tuesday of each month)**

September 1 (field trip following the meeting to Mayfield counting house and hatchery separator), October 6, November 3, December 1

Default time: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM; Default location: Mayfield

**Announcements**

All are invited to attend the WDFW Commission meeting that will include a briefing on Cowlitz scheduled for September 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> in Olympia. Go to <http://wdfw.wa.gov/commission/meetings.html> for details about this event.

Tacoma has filed comments with FERC re LCPUD's Cowlitz Falls Dam Biological Opinion. They commented on the Reasonable and Prudent Measures and suggested some additional RPMs including strongly supporting the formation of a formal Fisheries Committee. LCPUD will be filing a response to these comments by September 4.

Mark announced the annual Upstream Fish Passage and Side Channel Monitoring reports have been filed with FERC. This fall two 5-year roll-up reports from annual research activities will be posted for FTC review. They are due to FERC before the end of the year and are: Article 15 - Instream Flow Monitoring Report, and Article 9 - Lower River Large Woody Debris Report.

WDFW is predicting an all-time record return of coho salmon to the separator this fall. All indications are that the forecast is accurate. We may get over 100,000 adults returning this year! We got our first coho back to the separator last week – very early!

The revision to the Mayfield Downstream Collection Plan (distributed at the July FTC meeting) has been posted on the FTC website for review and comments.

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## **Agenda Item: Public Outreach Protocols**

**Presenter: Tom Santee**

Tom S distributed a draft protocol for addressing issues raised at public meetings. To date follow up on such questions has been handled on a fairly casual basis. We want to formalize this process so nothing falls through the cracks. Going forward, Tom suggests the following:

- Stage 1: Tom S will chart issues and questions raised during the meeting and then circle back at the end of each meeting and verify which require follow up. He will let the requestors know that answers will be posted to the website within a month.
- Stage 2: Tom S will discuss with Mark L who is to draft answers to the questions. The goal is to have all questions answered within 3 weeks.
- Stage 3: Tom S will post the questions and answers in a special cowlitzfish.net section for public meeting follow-up and let FTC members know they have been posted. Answers will include who answered each question, and if they have answered on behalf of the organization they represent.

Tom will add to Stage 2: Notification to FTC members of what questions have been assigned to whom.

Tom S also shared a list of all the ways the public can interact with the FTC. They are:

- Phone, write, or email individual members
- Attend a public meeting
- Submit a question or comment using the feedback link at cowlitzfish.net.
- Use the Cowlitz@cityoftacoma.org email link posted at Tacoma Power's relicensing website and promoted in the *Cowlitz Currents* newsletter
- Invite a FTC member to a local meeting as a guest or presenter

Since there isn't time before or after FTC meetings to allow for public presentations, Tom suggested setting up webinars as an additional form of public outreach. We could use this technology to solicit questions or topics that the public suggests we address at the webinar. This would be a way to reach out and encourage people to communicate what things the public would like to know more about. The nice thing about the webinars is that if members of the public aren't available to attend at the time the webinar is held, they could dial in later at a convenient time to hear it.

The FTC agreed to give these protocols a try. We look forward to getting feedback from the public about the effectiveness of these in ensuring they have a voice and that their questions are answered in a timely fashion.

**Action Items:**

- All – Give Tom S information of interest to the public so he can post it on the cowlitzfish.net website.
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**Agenda Item: AHA Subcommittee Report**

**Presenter: John Barr**

John Barr, Andy Appleby, Mark LaRiviere, Rich Turner, Chuck Huntington, Kevin Malone, and Pat Frazier have been active participants on this team, working to design hatchery programs using HSRG criteria for primary and contributing populations. They ended up with a set of options that are worthy of consideration. In some cases they follow the criteria closely.

John distributed a handout that included solution tables for all the populations. Mark sent the solution tables individually to each FTC member last week and they were posted on the FTC website.

Note: The Lower Columbia Salmon Recovery Plan sets forth criteria required to achieve recovery of listed species. John explained that all of the proposed alternatives (other than the current program) meet those criteria.

John explained that the purpose of the work being done by this team is to achieve the goals and objectives described in the Settlement Agreement and the Lower Columbia River Salmon Recovery Plan. We reviewed the solution tables for lower Cowlitz spring Chinook, lower Cowlitz fall Chinook, lower Cowlitz coho, lower Cowlitz winter steelhead, upper Cowlitz coho, upper Cowlitz steelhead, and Cowlitz sea-run cutthroat.

FTC members expressed appreciation for all the hard work by the subcommittee. Several of the alternatives have consensus support by subcommittee members.

Mark suggested that program size at release could change in the future and could affect total poundage. We need to keep in mind that hatchery operations in the future may not be the same as in the past. We want to shape our hatchery programs to mirror what is happening in the natural environment to the extent possible / appropriate.

**Action Items:**

- John will update the table and make it clear for which species the subcommittee has reach consensus. He will also update the titles.
- FTC members will get feedback from their organizations on the tables and send any questions to John and / or Andy.

- Mark L will send out a table that shows the poundage associated with each alternative.
  - The subcommittee will continue to review the two most recently added options (sea run cutthroat and upper river coho) and summarize research on size of fish at release and make recommendations accordingly.
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**Agenda Item: Construction / Operations Update**

**Presenter: Mark LaRiviere**

Mark explained that Tacoma Power continues to be on track with the construction which is scheduled to be complete in early 2010. Production is being maintained during construction. The hatchery will re-open to visitors in June of 2010.

The improvements to the Mayfield downstream facilities continue to be on track for completion in early fall of this year.

**Action Items:**

- Mark will provide another update next month.
  - Mark will schedule another walk-through of the counting house and hatchery separation facilities after the September FTC meeting.
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**Agenda Item: Downstream Fish Passage Process Improvement at Mayfield**

**Presenter: Ed Meyer**

Ed distributed draft NMFS comments on the proposed revisions to the Mayfield Downstream Fish Passage Improvement Plan. The comments were centered on debris management and hydraulic improvements.

**Action Items:**

- Tacoma will review NMFS comments and send out a response prior to our next meeting.
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**Agenda Item: Supplemental Collection Report**

**Presenter: Mark LaRiviere**

Mark reported that the last month's collection reports have been posted on the FTC website. In July we were able to fish both the Merwin traps and incline plane traps. Seining in Riffe Lake continues. Collection has been primarily Chinook. Total supplemental smolt collection to date is approaching 10% of the CFFF smolt collection this year.

The weir box at Cowlitz Falls Dam seems to be working reasonable well. Some of the test group FCEs were high – up to 92%. The weir box seems to work better at lower flows.

Total fish transported from supplemental collection efforts for the season are about 15,471, 8,083 of which were smolts (immediate mortalities are subtracted out).

Fish collection efficiency for coho at the Cowlitz Falls fish facility is about 33% this year. Weighted by passage the total FCE for coho is about 21%.

FCE for steelhead this year averages 37%. Chinook averages 38%.

**Action Items:**

- Mark L will include information on all mortalities included in the report.
- Mark L will include seining data (not included in July report because little seining was done).
- Mark L will account for the other fish that were caught (and released) in Tables 2 and 3.
- Tacoma will provide another update at our September meeting.

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**Agenda Item: FHMP Schedule Update**

**Presenter: Mark LaRiviere**

FERC requires us to update the FHMP every 7 years. We want to standardize the update process to make it more effective and efficient over time. Tacoma wants to meet the FERC schedule that calls for the update being sent to FERC by March 1, 2010.

In the meantime, the FTC and public need to review the draft and provide feedback that we would then incorporate into the FHMP. The FTC discussed the current timeline and suggested some changes working within the current FERC filing deadline to accommodate adequate public review of the draft FHMP. FERC will also be providing the public a chance to review and comment on the FHMP.

Andy suggested coming up with a set of biologically neutral hatchery program alternatives that are species centric and ask the public to provide comment. We need to be able to flag how productivity testing would affect each option. We could meet with them and give them an update on how likely we think recovery is for each of the species. We could also share some harvest data including where the fish were caught.

After we give them the opportunity to provide input on the hatchery programs, we could then provide a separate opportunity for them to comment on the other aspects of the FHMP update.

**Action Items:**

- Mark will come up with a revised draft schedule for FTC review and send it out prior to our next meeting.
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**Agenda Item: Productivity Testing Discussion****Presenter: Pat Frazier and Mark LaRiviere**

Mark reported that he and Debbie have been working with Pat on this to bring a starting point for discussion to the FTC. Tacoma's latest proposal is something that Pat supports, with some concerns. Mark distributed and explained a copy of the proposal that contained four scenarios based on testing with late winter-run steelhead in the Tilton River and upper Cowlitz River basin starting in winter of 2009/2010 and concluding in 2020. The scenarios use the abundance figure of 500 adults as set by NMFS. Note: July 18, 2003 is the official FERC license issuance date. June of 2019 is when we would get our first 5-year rolling average.

Concern was expressed at cutting off the testing in 2020 after only two 5-year rolling averages. Ed reminded us that we need to keep in mind the time required for design prior to construction (need at least 3 years for this). Other concerns: inclusion of upper Cowlitz River steelhead for productivity testing and proposed decision making with regard to Tilton. We want to investigate how appropriate the 500 number is for the Upper Cowlitz and Tilton.

Michelle distributed a copy of Table 4 from Appendix E, Chapter 12, page 31, of the latest draft Lower Columbia Salmon Recovery Plan. She reminded us to keep in mind that recovery goal is not the same as the abundance number. She explained that NMFS looked at the lowest number for the moderate (highest) risk range and that's where they determined the 200 (not 250 as previously stated) for steelhead. Michelle will try to track down the source of the table.

**Action Items:**

- Mark will update description under Action column of table of Tacoma's proposal to include settlement agreement language.
  - All will conduct legal review of License Article 3 language requirements.
  - All will come to the September FTC meeting prepared to discuss productivity capacity (e.g., EDT, one or both basins, species, timeline, etc.).
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**Agenda Item: Update Status of July Meeting Action Items**

- All Action items were complete with the exception of Mark providing the numbers on fry collection during winter months. He has collected these data and will check on their status and let us know.
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**Agenda Item: Approval of July 7, 2009 FTC Meeting Summary,  
Set September 1 Agenda (See last item below)**

We reviewed and approved the July 7 meeting summary with minor edits. It will be posted to the public website.

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**Agenda Item: Meeting Evaluation**

**Well Done:**

- AHA presentation
- Good focused discussions, particularly on productivity testing

**Do Differently:**

- Improve technical connections
  - Missed Tim and George
  - Got a little cranky during productivity testing
  - Bring chocolate
  - Try to be out by 2:00 to make time for field trip to hatchery
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The meeting was adjourned at 2:53 pm.

**Meeting Handouts**

- Agenda for August 4, 2009 FTC meeting
  - Draft July 7, 2009 FTC meeting summary
  - Public Outreach Documents dated August 4, 2009
    - Protocol for questions/issues raised at public meetings requiring follow-up
    - Discussion of expanding methods in which the public can interact with the FTC
  - 2009 Cowlitz River Project Supplemental Juvenile Salmon Collection Monthly Report: June 27 – July 24, 2009
  - Draft NMFS Comments on the proposed revisions to the Downstream Fish Passage Improvement Plan: Mayfield, dated August 4, 2009
  - NOAA Fisheries comments dated July 20, 2004.
  - Appendix E, Chapter 12, latest draft Lower Columbia Salmon Recovery Plan
  - AHA Solution Tables
  - Productivity Testing – Tacoma Power Proposal dated July 22, 2009
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**Topics for September 1, 2009 FTC Meeting**

Welcome / Review Agenda / Check-In  
Public Outreach Protocols  
Productivity Testing Discussion  
    NMFS abundance figure

AHA Subcommittee Report  
Construction / Operations Update  
Supplemental Collection Report  
Mayfield Downstream Fish Passage Improvement Plan  
    Tacoma response to NMFS comments on hydraulic improvements and debris  
    management  
FHMP Schedule Update  
Approval of August 4 Meeting Summary  
Meeting Evaluation and set October 6, 2009 Meeting Agenda

Immediately following the meeting:

Potential Field Trip to Mayfield counting house and hatchery separator.