

FTC Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project
FERC NO. 2016
Fisheries Technical Committee
FINAL Meeting Summary
July 7, 2009 from 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Mayfield Office, Silver Creek, Washington

Members Present

Michelle Day	NMFS
Tim Romanski	USFWS
Brett Swift	American Rivers
Pat Frazier	WDFW
Mark LaRiviere	Tacoma Power

Other Attendees

Ed Meyer	NMFS
John Serl	WDFW
Marc Wicke	Tacoma Power
Debbie Young	Tacoma Power
Tom Martin	Tacoma Power
Steve Fischer	Tacoma Power
Tom Santee	Insight Northwest
Sean Murphy	Congressman Baird's Office
Mike Kohn	LCPUD/BPA
Debbie Carlson	BPA
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting

2009 FTC Meeting Dates (first Tuesday of each month)

August 4, September 1, October 6, November 3, December 1

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

Announcements

Mark announced that the draft FHMP update will not be released as scheduled on August 1. The FERC filing deadline is March of 2010. When we get the new schedule we will discuss how best to accommodate the public's review of this. We will get an update at our next meeting.

The AHA subcommittee meets July 9 in Olympia. We will get an update at our next meeting.

Reminder to all that comments on the annual Upstream Passage Report are due July 16 and the annual Side Channel Monitoring are due July 30. All are asked to get their comments to Mark L. These reports are due to FERC July 19 and August 1, respectively.

USGS-CRRL made a request to run 8-10Kcfs flow in response to a gauging issue at Cowlitz Falls Dam. This is not spill, it is generation. It has to do with flow measurements. It has nothing to do with fisheries evaluations that the USGS is doing with Tacoma. It is to be a one-hour test. Mike will provide Debbie Young with additional information.

At our September meeting we will review the construction schedule for the Downstream Team recommendations. All comments will be addressed.

**Agenda Item: Report on June 23 Public Meeting,
Discussion of Morton City Council Letter**

Presenter: Tom Santee

25 people attended the meeting. It was a very productive meeting. The presentations were very well received. Tom Martin gave a presentation about what is happening with the Downstream Team. Mark gave an update on the hatchery construction. There were great discussions and both topics seemed to interest to the public.

We reviewed a list of specific issues/questions raised at the meeting. We want to give these issues their appropriate due. Tom S will suggest a protocol for answering questions that are not dealt with at the meetings. When discussing the Morton letter, it was asked if a member of the public could give a presentation to FTC members prior to or after one of our FTC meetings. One of the aims of the public meetings we are holding is to allow the public a chance to voice their concerns. Are these meetings not accomplishing that goal? Not all FTC members are able to attend the public meetings; however, a summary of the information from those meetings is discussed at the following FTC meeting. Our primary duty is to complete our work as a committee. Our work is implementing the Settlement Agreement. Our work is not political by nature. Members of the public wishing to make a presentation to the FTC are invited to contact Tom Santee who will work with them on a case-by-case basis to find the appropriate way to share the information. An option would be for them to write a letter that would be attached to the agenda.

Stan Bartell faxed to Mark the letter from Mayor James Gerwig and the Morton City Council and asked him to share it with the FTC. The letter expressed concerns about down-scaling of hatcheries. The sport fishery has an economic impact on the town and they are also feeling the economic impact of these difficult times. As we implement the Settlement Agreement we are trying to strike a balance between our recovery obligations and support of fisheries. Tacoma will send a response letter.

Action Items:

- Tom S will suggest a protocol for addressing issues raised at public meetings.
- Tom S will also create a protocol for members of the public wishing to make presentations to the FTC.
- Tacoma Power will send a response, on behalf of the FTC, to the Morton City Council.

Agenda Item: Construction / Operations Update**Presenter: Mark L**

Mark expressed appreciation for all the excellent help and cooperation provided by WDFW on the new hatchery. He explained that we are on track with the construction which is scheduled to be complete in early 2010. The new facility provides for a physical separation of adults and juveniles. We are maintaining full production during construction.

Mark pointed out where the new Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery Visitor Center will be located and explained how the length of the raceways will be doubled. We will have the ability to deliver pathogen-free water to the ponds and raceways.

The improvements to the Mayfield downstream facilities should be complete by this fall. We are continuing to collect downstream migrants with support of WDFW. The rebuild of the counting house will result in less handling of the fish.

Action Items:

- Mark will provide another update next month.

Agenda Item: Supplemental Collection Report**Presenter: Marc Wicke**

Marc reported that the May 23 to June 26 reports have been posted on the FTC website. The inclined plane traps have been problematic and we lost about 29 days due to debris and flow. Low velocities have been an issue. Crews have been focusing efforts on beach seining. They deployed Merwin traps in Lake Scanewa this week. The goal was to have these traps in by July 10th. They should start fishing on the 9th.

Supplemental collection fish totals for the season are about 8,600, of which 1,100 were smolts. They have caught coho fry, Chinook, and a few steelhead smolts.

This last week flows were such that LCPUD and Tacoma personnel were able to move the debris barrier at Cowlitz Falls Dam. The FCE for coho at the Cowlitz Falls fish facility has gone from 10% prior to the weir box going in to 44%. John reported that catches jumped up (caught 5,700 smolts – mostly Chinook yesterday) since the debris barrier was removed. The acoustic camera footage and radio tags should help us understand reasons for this change.

Agenda Item: Productivity Testing Discussion**Presenter: Debbie Young**

Debbie explained that Tacoma feels that they need to conduct productivity testing in both the Tilton and the upper basin and get a 5-year rolling average. They are fine with testing just steelhead, starting this coming winter, as suggested by WDFW; however, the testing should be in both basins. It is their belief that testing steelhead would have the least effect on the fishery and that steelhead has the highest likelihood of establishing a self-sustaining population.

Tacoma also needs to stick with the original 500 abundance number as a minimum for a viable population. This number was set in the FHMP by National Marine Fisheries Service, when they supplied comments that explained the reasoning behind the 500 number.

Tacoma doesn't believe the timelines of license year 12, 14, and 15 (2018) need to be altered. They believe it is possible to make a proposal, starting this winter that supports the Settlement Agreement as it is written. By year 15 Tacoma feels there would be enough information for the FTC to decide whether to continue testing or not as we would be 4 years into a 5 year average and we would know if the target is likely to be met. The check in points would remain years 14 and 15. Year 16 would be the first year that a 5-year average would be available. It is possible that productivity testing could continue beyond that point (for at least another 4 years). The WDFW proposal for continuing or not might apply here. The FTC would ultimately make that call. We need to be very clear up front about what "likely to be met" might look like so we don't do testing forever. Pat offered to work with Tacoma to flesh out likely to be met triggers. We want something that makes biological sense.

We feel that we are gaining a good understanding of each others' perspectives on this important issue. We will continue this discussion at our next meeting. We agreed to make a decision by our meeting on December 1st or sooner.

Action Items:

- Mark will post the July 6 revised WDFW proposal to the website.
- Mark and Debbie will work with Pat to revise the likely-to-be-met triggers and send out to all.
- Mark and Debbie will provide their corollary to the WDFW productivity testing matrix.
- Michelle will work with Rich to explain the rationale behind the revised abundance number for the Tilton River steelhead population.
- All will conduct legal review of Settlement Agreement language requirements (e.g., one or both basins, species, timeline, etc.).

**Agenda Item: Presentation on NMFS Biological Opinion for Cowlitz Falls Dam
Presenter: Michelle Day**

Michelle walked us through an overview of the NMFS Biological Opinion for Cowlitz Falls Dam that was issued on June 2, 2009. It covers Chinook, coho, and steelhead. She focused on the effects of the action which lead to the conclusion that there was no jeopardy and no adverse modification of critical habitat. She described the measures that led to the incidental take statement. A copy of the BiOp was distributed to those who requested it. It also available on the NMFS website.

BPA has a 10a (1a) permit and a BiOp for the operation of the Cowlitz Falls fish facility, issued February 27, 2009.

Agenda Item: Mayfield Attraction Flow Pump Operation
Presenter: Steve Fischer

Steve distributed an explanation of how Tacoma proposes to operate the secondary separator pumps. The original plan included a variable frequency drive on the pumps to allow a uniform apex slot velocity of 1.1 to 1.7 above background level velocity. Testing has shown that flow moves through the louvers in a uniform fashion. The intention of this design is to achieve a constant, steady slot velocity of 1.4 times the background velocity.

We discussed performing some biological evaluations to confirm we are meeting the criteria.

Action Items:

- Mark will get numbers on fry collection during winter months.
 - All members will review and supply any questions/comments through Tom M by the next FTC meeting (August 4).
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Agenda Item: Update Status of May & June Meeting Action Items

The following Action Items were carried over from the June FTC meeting:

- Mark L will post John's PowerPoint presented at June FTC meeting to the website.
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**Agenda Item: Approval of June 2, 2009 FTC Meeting Summary,
Set August 4 Agenda (See last item below)**

We reviewed and approved the June 2 meeting summary with minor edits. It will be posted to the public website.

Agenda Item: Meeting Evaluation

Well Done:

- Stayed on time with agenda items
- Good participation

Do Differently:

- Some technical difficulties
- Missed Brad and George

The meeting was adjourned at 2:05 pm.

Meeting Handouts

- Agenda for July 7, 2009 FTC meeting
- Draft June 2, 2009 FTC meeting summary
- Public's Issues/Questions from June 23, 2009 Public Meeting
- April 24, 2009 Letter from Morton Mayor James Gerwig and the Morton City Council
- WDFW July 6, 2009 Productivity Testing and Decision Making Protocol letter
- PowerPoint notes for NMFS Cowlitz Falls Biological Opinion
- Ration Attraction Flow vs. Generation Flow Chart
- License Article 401 and Settlement Agreement Article 2 (b): Revisions to the Downstream Fish Passage Improvement Plan: Mayfield

Topics for August 4, 2009 FTC Meeting

Welcome / Review Agenda / Check-In

Public Outreach Protocols

AHA Subcommittee Report

Construction/Operations Update

Supplemental Collection Report

Latest report on weir box

Productivity Testing Discussion

FHMP Schedule Update

Approval of July 7 meeting summary

Meeting Evaluation and set September 1, 2009 meeting agenda