

FTC Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project
FERC NO. 2016
Fisheries Technical Committee
Final Meeting Summary
March 3, 2009 from 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Mayfield office, Silver Creek, Washington

Members Present

Pat Frazier	WDFW
Mark LaRiviere	Tacoma Power

Other Attendees

Ed Meyer	NMFS
Rich Turner	NMFS
John Serl	WDFW
Charles Morrill	WDFW
Wolf Dammers	WDFW
Julie Henning	WDFW
Debbie Young	Tacoma Power
Tom Martin	Tacoma Power
Tom Santee	Insight Northwest
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting

2009 FTC Meeting Dates (first Tuesday of each month)

April 7, May 5, June 2, July 7, August 4, September 1, October 6, November 3, December 1

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

Announcement

Tom Santee will be facilitating the May 5 FTC meeting.

Agenda Item: Review FHMP Update Implementation Schedule

Presenter: Mark LaRiviere

We are less than a year away from the filing deadline (Feb. 22, 2010). The FTC has agreed to be very intentional about providing adequate public review. We need time for their input to be considered and evaluated. Pat suggested we might be able to accomplish this through a workshop followed by a 30 day public comment period. The original schedule needs to be revised.

Action Item:

- Mark – Work with Tom Santee to revise the schedule to include public workshop(s) and send out to FTC members for comment prior to our next meeting.

Agenda Item: Construction and Operations Update

Presenter: Mark LaRiviere

Mark reported that the temporary trap has been operational at the CSH ladder since the last meeting. It was removed from service for 3 days last week to widen the opening in the trap, and is now working much better. The flow on the lower Cowlitz River is up to around 6,100 cfs today, in accordance with instream flow requirements.

Hatchery reconstruction: Mark reported that we are still on track here. An issue has developed with the adult holding capacity. The new ponds won't be completed until May so an alternative plan for holding adult broodstock for the month of April has been implemented by WDFW.

Downstream collection improvements at Mayfield: Bids for the counting house remodel are being accepted. An update will be given at our next meeting.

Agenda Item: Productivity Testing

Presenter: Pat Frazier

Development of Testing and Decision-making Criteria

This issue is not well defined in the FHMP. We want to make a decision about how to proceed in June, in order to implement in August. Kevin Malone, John Barr, Mark, Pat and Rich Turner developed a memo with some suggestions on how to proceed.

The memo suggests two methods; biologically preferred (assumed we can identify natural from hatchery production) and biologically confounded, and includes a decision tree. The decision tree addressed Pat's concerns about having a set endpoint to the testing. The memo proposed a start (depending on the species) and how long we would have to go. If we start in 2009, the end of the first 5-year period would be the following:

- Coho – 2017
- Chinook – 2018
- Steelhead - 2019

At end of these 5 years, if productivity is greater than one and if abundance is greater than or equal to 500, then we would build the ladder. There was a question about whether the 500 is carved in stone. Participants agreed that if that is the case, then it is a pretty high bar for some populations like steelhead in the Tilton River. As a contributing population, the abundance target for steelhead could be adjusted to between 200 and 500. In addition, we need to consider what levels of abundance would indicate no need for further testing.

If, after that 5-year rolling average we are under 0.5 for productivity, we wouldn't proceed with a ladder or further productivity testing because the likelihood of achieving the desired productivity of greater than one would be remote. A strong argument for 0.5

being the decision-point productivity level is to account for some good years, some flood years, and a variety of ocean conditions.

The initial decision on for constructing the ladder is needed by year 15. It appears that when we hit year 14, the upper Cowlitz River populations are not needed for productivity testing. After that, the FHMP calls for testing “any species” in the Tilton. Does this mean that all species have to be tested? We need to figure out what this means. Pat hopes to have some legal interpretation from the AG’s office on this in time for the April FTC meeting.

Action Items:

- Rich will determine what the appropriate abundance number should be for the 3 species in the Tilton (can it be a range vs. a specific target? Less than 500?).
- Mark will describe what would happen if we decided to go ahead with passage (the ladder) at Mayfield. Would we have a trap at Mayfield? At Mossyrock? What would the physical facilities be? Where would they be located? Will there be trapping / marking capabilities?
- Mark will share above description with Pat prior to our next FTC meeting.

Agenda Item: AHA Technical Team Update

Presenter: Mark LaRiviere

Mark reported that this team last met in January of this year. The AHA Model is especially helpful in determining hatchery production. American Rivers’ Chuck Huntington is attending and contributing to these meetings.

The team will meet again March 5 in the Ecology Conference Room of WDFW’s Region 5 Office. The aim of this meeting will be to propose solutions and present these at the May FTC meeting.

Agenda Item: Public Meetings and Communications Update

Presenter: Tom Santee

Tom distributed a handout describing some alternative approaches to keeping the public informed of FTC activities. In his opinion, the four public meetings we held last year were only somewhat effective.

These meetings were advertised as FTC public meetings, when they were in fact hosted by Tacoma Power and WDFW upon the recommendation of the FTC. Tom suggested we clarify who is hosting these meetings, going forward. There have also been complaints by members of the public about the time and location of the meetings. At some meetings the public seemed less than interested in the topics being presented. Many expressed appreciation that the meetings were held and the opportunity to

express themselves about their fisheries issues. We recognize that the public seems to be primarily interested in what can be done to preserve and enhance the sports fishery.

Tom proposes hosting two public meetings in 2009. Another option would be to explore the option of exchanging information with the public through the medium of Webinars. This would address the issue of convenient location and also require less time from participants. Tom asked for volunteers to test drive this option. Pat, Mark, and Lyn volunteered to participate in the trial.

Action Items:

- Tom S will contact volunteers to set up a Webinar demo, using the topic of Webinars. He will do this early in the week of March 23.

Agenda Item: Downstream Team Update

Presenter: Tom Martin

Tom M explained that the extension request was filed with FERC as discussed at the last FTC meeting.

The February 17, 2009 meeting of this team included a review of the 30% conceptual design report. The riverine collector option was deemed technically infeasible. The details of this decision will be outlined in the 60% design report, which will be presented at our June FTC meeting.

Final designs of prototypes have been sent to FERC for the weir box and flow deflector. Tacoma has responded to FERC's request for QA/QC plans for these prototypes. In the meantime, Tacoma has begun construction of the deflector. Bids for the weir box are being opened today.

Due to its extremely large size there are issues around getting the weir box in place. Discussions on how best to do this are taking place this week.

Tom reported that Tacoma has received an estimate on the evaluation studies for Cowlitz Falls and Riffe Lake from USGS. The total cost (labor and tags) exceeds \$1 million. Tacoma is re-evaluating these evaluations to see how the costs can be reduced. The plans are in place and the tags have been ordered.

Tom distributed letters on the background and anticipated due date of the NMFS Biological Opinion for the LCPUD Cowlitz Falls Dam. This is expected to be issued from NMFS on March 20, 2009.

Tom also reported that Tacoma is in the process of finalizing the access agreement with LCPUD.

Action Items:

- Marc will send out updated evaluation plans for the FTC to review.

Upper Basin Juvenile Supplementation / Hall Creek Rearing Pond

Presenter: Wolf Dammers

Wolf explained how this site might apply to the upper basin rearing requirement in the SA. The facility has not been in use the past couple of years, due to problems with the intakes and the pumps. At the request of the Cowlitz Game and Anglers (who had voluntarily operated the facility), Tacoma initiated some repairs there last summer. When they re-examined the pond recently, they discovered further damage due to the high water events this past winter.

We will look at the potential of this site through the lens of the AHA Model solutions. The future roles of acclimation ponds will be evaluated through the AHA Model.

Agenda Item: Update Status of Action Items

- Tom M will check with Bill Iyall re WDFW portable adult release chute for the Cispus River.
- Tom M will check with Marc re: 2009 Supplemental Collection Efforts
- All Cowlitz FTC members will let Mark know if they won't be attending each FTC meeting (one week in advance of the meeting if at all possible)
- Lyn will add request for RSVP to draft agenda she emails out one week prior to each meeting.

Productivity Testing

- Tacoma Power will prepare an analysis of the language and dates in Section 3 of the SA, and report on what dates are reasonably attainable. (Tom Martin)
- All FTC members identify any information they need to be ready for a decision in June, and bring their information requests to the April 3 meeting. (All)

Public Meetings/Communications

- Tom S will post answers to key questions raised at the public meetings on the Cowlitz website. He will solicit input from FTC members to do this. He will try to incorporate items listed in Parking Lot during the December 2, 2008 public meeting. He will specify who has what jurisdiction.
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Agenda Item: Approval of February 3, 2009 Meeting Summary

We reviewed and approved the February 3 meeting summary, with Brett's suggested edits.

Agenda Item: Meeting Evaluation

Well Done:

- Summary of public meeting
- Got out early
- Moving forward
- Very productive
- Good discussions
- Appreciated Brett letting us know she had to miss the meeting

Do Differently:

- Disappointing attendance (lack thereof) by FTC members
 - Bring power cord
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The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Meeting Handouts

- Agenda for March 3, 2009 FTC meeting
 - Draft February 3, 2009 FTC meeting summary
 - Productivity Testing at Cowlitz River Memo dated March 2, 2009
 - LCPUD letters dated September 29, 2008 and January 30, 2009
 - Proposed 2009 FTC Public Meetings Memo dated February 25, 2009
 - Questions/comments from December 2, 2008
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Topics for April 7, 2009 FTC Meeting

Welcome / Review Agenda / Check-In (9:00 – 9:10)

Review FHMP Update Implementation Schedule

Construction and operations update

Productivity testing

 Development of testing and decision-making criteria

 Identifying FTC member information needs

AHA Technical Team update

Public meeting and communications update

Lunch

Downstream Team update

Supplemental Collection Efforts

Mayfield debris management review

Upper basin juvenile supplementation – steelhead upper Cowlitz fry plants

Update Status of Action Items

Approval of March 3 meeting summary

Meeting Evaluation and set May 5, 2009 meeting agenda