

FTC Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project
FERC NO. 2016
Fisheries Technical Committee
Final Meeting Summary

November 3, 2009 from 9:00 AM – 2:30 PM
Mayfield Office, Silver Creek, Washington

Members Present

Michelle Day	NMFS
Brett Swift	American Rivers
Pat Frazier	WDFW
Brad Caldwell	WDOE
Mark LaRiviere	Tacoma Power
George Lee	Yakama Nation
Tim Romanski	USFWS

Other Attendees

Rich Turner	NMFS
John Serl	WDFW
Julie Henning	WDFW
Chris Sergeant	Tacoma Power
Tom Martin	Tacoma Power
Debbie Young	Tacoma Power
Tom Santee	Insights Northwest
John Barr	John Barr Consulting
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting

Future FTC Meeting Dates (first Tuesday of each month)

2009: December 1

2010: January 5, February 2, March 2, April 6, May 4, June 1, July 6, August 3, September 7, October 5, November 2, December 7

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

Announcements

The draft interim instream flow monitoring report is posted on the FTC website for review. Mark L hand distributed the draft interim 5-year study report on gravel augmentation to the FTC members.

Hatchery coho returns to the salmon hatchery continue to be strong – over 63K adults as of last week with no signs of slowing down. This is expected to continue into December. Fish are surplused to local Lewis County food banks and other food banks through a state-wide buyer.

The upper Cowlitz River basin nutrient enhancement activities are beginning this week. Some folks in the upper basin may help provide transportation to the upper Cowlitz River sites.

Tom M announced that the status report on downstream passage (License Article 1) is due to FERC on Dec. 15, 2009. The draft will include the latest from the Downstream Team that is meeting on November 17. Therefore some of the information (e.g., next year's program) that is in the report out for the 30 day review may change slightly between now and then. We will have detailed discussions regarding this report at our December 1 FTC meeting.

Agenda Item: Productivity Testing Discussion
Presenter: Debbie Young

Debbie suggested that at our last meeting Ray Beamesderfer confirmed the abundance value of 500 steelhead that Tacoma proposed originally. Mark distributed a handout of Tacoma's proposal in which Tacoma proposed using the 500 abundance number for the upper Cowlitz River basins and the Tilton. The late winter-run steelhead productivity test can begin this winter – as early as December 1. Tacoma's proposal is for testing in the Tilton and upper Cowlitz River basins. The parameters of the test are consistent with those in the Settlement Agreement. The FTC could make a recommendation if it doesn't look like the criteria have a chance of being met regarding this testing as early as 2018. The first 5-year rolling average would be available as early as 2019. Productivity testing would continue in 2020 in the Tilton River.

Brett distributed an NGO proposal that called for using a 250 abundance value for testing in the Tilton River and no testing in the upper Cowlitz. The FTC discussed the rationale and potential value of testing in the upper basin. After some discussion the FTC agreed to include the upper Cowlitz River basins in the testing, as that is consistent with the Settlement Agreement. All share concerns about an open-ended approach to productivity testing.

Mark acknowledged that the Actions specified on the Tacoma Proposal in Scenarios 1 and 3 should be edited to match that in the NGO proposal (consistent with the Settlement).

After lengthy and detailed discussion we agreed to use the abundance number of 300 for steelhead in the Tilton. This is a combination of the medium viability range (200-500 for a small population*) and the EDT capacity estimates, and passage mortality. It also accounts for habitat improvements.

The FTC agreed to use the year 2019 for recommendations on actions based on the annual results from both the Tilton and the upper basins. This means testing the upper basins for a minimum of one 5-year rolling average. We would not continue testing in

the upper basins unless the FTC affirms that it makes sense to do to (based on the likelihood that the criteria would be achieved).

The FTC agreed upon the year 2024 for actions based on annual results from the Tilton River. This gives the Tilton additional 5 year rolling averages.

When the FTC reviews the annual results of the productivity testing, we ask if we are achieving the criteria. The decision would be based on the most recent 5-year rolling average. When we are at the point of achieving the criteria then we would provide for fish passage per the Settlement Agreement.

For future consideration: How do we operationalize the abundance number for the upper Cowlitz River and the Cispus River steelhead populations? Do we use 500 for each population? This is a complicated issue as the Settlement Agreement contemplated only one population. The Recovery Plan (more recent than the Settlement Agreement) identifies these as two distinct populations. We will resolve this at our December 1 meeting.

*Per the 2006 and 2007 McElhany et al viability criteria documents

Action Items:

- Mark L will update the FTC proposal to reflect the agreements from today's meeting and send it out to Brett and then to the FTC. He will work with Brett to ensure a consistent approach with the years used. The FTC will approve the revised proposal at our next meeting.
- Mark will draft a statement explaining how we are in compliance with the Settlement Agreement with this proposal. We will review it at our next meeting.
- John B. will run the EDT estimates with different FCEs.

Agenda Item: AHA Subcommittee Report

Presenter: John Barr

John distributed a handout that the AHA Subcommittee drafted in response to our question to them regarding the issue of fish size at release. The table included Future Brood Document target size, subcommittee recommendations, and associated comments.

LC Spring Chinook: The Subcommittee recommendation is to keep it at 5 fish per pound and develop a trigger point to reduce the size of fish at release to produce fish that have the same size and age structure of natural spring Chinook. The new facility may allow us to do releases at a smaller fish per pound (fpp). We know that there is a positive correlation between fish size and survivability.

LC Fall Chinook: The recommendation is to increase size of release to 60-65 fpp from 80 fpp. They also recommend an earlier release time (mid-May through early July).

LC Winter Steelhead: The recommendation is to test producing 2-year old smolts. (The challenge will be keeping them off surface waters so they don't contract IHN).

Other recommendations were fairly standard. If the sea-run cutthroat program persists, the recommendation would be to go from 4 to 4-7 fpp.

Mark pointed out that we will want to evaluate the recommended ranges based on what is possible with the new hatchery. This will be incorporated into the Evaluation and Monitoring plan and will be included in the draft FHMP.

Agenda Item: Report from October 29, 2009 Public Meeting
Presenter: Tom Santee

Tom S reported that the meeting went well. Pat and Mark were presenters. Michelle and Brett also attended as did Rich, John, Julie, and others. There were excellent discussions. All agreed that the meeting was highly productive. Approximately 35 members of the public also attended. The subsequent write-up in the newspaper reflected well the content of the meeting. Pat did a great job preparing handouts and explaining various hatchery scenarios. He also facilitated much of the discussion. He also provided Tom S the bulk of the questions that were used in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was distributed and the public was asked to fill it out and return it to Tacoma Power by November 23. These will be reviewed and summarized prior to our December meeting. The summary of the results will be posted on the Cowlitzfish.net website. Also on the website is an audio recording of the meeting along with the documents that were distributed.

The next public meeting will be in early 2010 when additional aspects of the FHMP update will be available for comment.

Action Items:

- Future questionnaires will have more extensive FTC review before release.
- FTC will review the summary of the responses to this questionnaire at our next meeting.

Agenda Item: FHMP Format and Schedule Update
Presenter: Mark LaRiviere

Outline: Mark distributed a draft outline of the FHMP update, dated November 2009. The FHMP update will look a lot like the document posted to the FTC website in September 2008. The updated FHMP will be more concise than the original FHMP.

This updated FHMP will be a standalone document. It will refer to the original FHMP in certain cases, e.g., implementation and effectiveness monitoring, the adaptive management portion of the document, etc.

It will also include some information that was not in the original FHMP, e.g., searun cutthroat predation study and HSRG guidelines, etc.

Schedule: Discussion of the hatchery program alternatives will occur at the January FTC meeting. This schedule is not compatible with the March 1, 2010 due date to FERC. The FTC wants to be sure to get good consensus on how to proceed on a number of important issues. We also want to build in more public review time.

Action Items:

- Pat will send M&E information to John Barr to include in the draft FHMP. Copy Lyn to forward to all.
- Mark will create a more detailed schedule that includes which pieces are to be discussed (initiate discussion and complete discussion) on which dates per our FTC meeting schedule. We will review this at our next meeting.
- Michelle will send Bi-Op to Lyn to distribute.
- Mark will set up new Section on the FTC website: Monitoring and Evaluation.
- All will let Mark know if they have trouble accessing information from the FTC website.

Agenda Item: Update Status of October 6 Meeting Action Items
Presenter: Lyn

All items were complete!

Agenda Item: Approval of October 6 Meeting Summary

We approved the October 6, 2009 meeting summary with a minor edit. It will be posted to the public website.

Agenda Item: Meeting Evaluation

Well Done:

- We made a consensus recommendation re productivity testing!
- Great discussions
- Full FTC attendance
- Pushed through a difficult discussion

Do Differently:

- Ran late

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm.

Meeting Handouts

- Agenda for November 3, 2009 FTC meeting
- Draft October 6, 2009 FTC meeting summary
- FTC Data Gaps/Action Items relative to Hatchery Production Scenarios (October 6, 2009)
- Productivity Testing – Tacoma Power Proposal, November 2009
- Productivity Testing – NGO Proposal, November 2, 2009
- FHMP Update – Subcommittee Recommendations for Fish Size at Release
- Draft Outline of FHMP Table of Contents, November 2009

Draft Agenda for December 1, 2009 FTC Meeting

- 9:00 – 9:30 Welcome / Review Agenda / Check-In
9:30 – 9:50 Review / Approval of Productivity Testing Proposal
- Upper Cowlitz Abundance Numbers
9:50 – 12:50 Downstream Team Report
- Schedule
- USGS Presentation
- Plan for Revisions to Juvenile Marking Protocols
12:50 – 1:50 Supplemental Collection (Interim Measures)
1:50 – 2:20 M&E Update
- Info that allows us to make hatchery program alternatives
decision in January
2:20 – 2:35 FHMP Schedule Update
2:35 – 2:45 Update Status of November 2 Meeting Action Items
2:45 – 3:00 Approval of November 2 Meeting Summary
Meeting Evaluation and set January 5, 2009 Meeting Agenda

Main Focus of January 5, 2010 Meeting: Hatchery Program Alternatives

Future Topics

- Fish release strategies

Action Items relative to Hatchery Production Scenarios

The FTC flagged various data gaps to resolve before recommending adoption of any specific scenario for each species. We will continue to follow up on all these at future meetings and remove items from the list once the gap has been filled.

LC Spring Chinook Action Items

- Mark will get data on number of fish we have been able to transport above Cowlitz Falls Dam, their distribution and when they were released.
- George will arrange for BPA Acclimation Pond results – report and presentation for future FTC meeting. He will arrange this for one of our meetings in the first quarter of 2009. The presentation focus will be study plan and result (return rates, etc.) for acclimation ponds for spring Chinook in the Yakama system.

LC Fall Chinook Action Items

- Rich will check for us the acceptable NOR removal rate and supporting rationale. What has been allowed up to now?
- How do we propose getting sufficient number of fish? Pat will follow up with Lou Reed, Jess Winter on (adult capture) sites. (Include in FHMP). This is a broodstock management issue (NORs).

Lower Cowlitz Coho Action Items

(No outstanding items)

LC Winter Steelhead Action Items

- Pat will provide information on weir type, placement, monitoring, etc. Where would wild broodstock be collected?
- Rich will provide information on the size of the population. How can we be confident in taking 60?

UC Coho Action Items

- Need to know the timing and whether we meet the HSRG criteria.
- We need to know how the transition will occur (broodstock and escapement management details). Note: Transition depends on FTC recommendation for UC Coho program.

UC Steelhead Action Items

(No outstanding items)

Cowlitz Cutthroat Action Items

- Tim to provide guidance from USFWS re: status
- For future consideration:
 - At certain reductions in programs, the fisheries become no longer attractive to the people – analysis on the returns?
 - What is the harvest rate of current program?
 - Continue this hatchery (only one in the Pacific Northwest)?