

Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project
FERC NO. 2016
Fisheries Technical Committee
Final Meeting Summary
December 6, 2006
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Mayfield Office

Attending Members

Kaitlin Lovell	Trout Unlimited
Brad Caldwell	Washington Department of Ecology
Brian Peck	USFWS
Craig Burley	WDFW (by phone)
Mark LaRiviere	Tacoma Power

Other Attendees

Brett Swift	American Rivers
Marc Wicke	Tacoma Power
Tom Martin	Tacoma Power
Debbie Young	Tacoma Power
Steve Fischer	Tacoma Power
Wolf Dammers	WDFW
John Serl	WDFW
Julie Henning	WDFW
Charles Morrill	WDFW
Mike Kohn	LCPUD/BPA
Jim Byrd	LCPUD
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting, Facilitator

Future FTC Meeting Dates

Conference Call: Friday, December 15 from 9:30 – 10:30 am.

1. Dial access number - 866-257-0480; 2. Hit the * key followed by the meeting number **5028280** followed by the * key (there are voice instructions); 3. There will be a tone on the call when you are added to the call - announce yourself; and 4. If you call in before the call organizer starts the call, you will be put on music hold until the call is started.

Draft Conference Call Agenda: 1. Welcome/Introductions; 2. Interpretation from WDFW/NMSF (AG opinion) of FHMP/FERC Order re: early run steelhead recycling; 3. Next steps including PR Plan; 4. Evaluate the meeting and remind all of the agenda for the Jan. 3 meeting

2007: Jan. 3 (from 10-3), Feb 7, Mar. 7, Apr. 4, **May 9** (*note this was changed from May 2*), June 6, July 11, Aug, 1, Sept. 5 Oct. 3, Nov. 7, and Dec. 5
Default time: 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM with working lunch; Default location: Mayfield

Note: If you are running late, call Lyn at 425-890-3613 the morning of the meeting. Call Mark L. at (253) 502-8767 to check meeting status in the event of inclement weather.

To participate by phone for any of our 2007 meetings dial: 503-326-7672
(This number is provided to us by Michelle courtesy of NMFS.)

New Action Items

- ALL – Plan to participate in the Dec. 15 conference call from 9:30 – 10:30. Invite any additional parties also to participate as we will be coming to consensus around the meaning of the FERC order relative to the recycling of early run winter steelhead.
- Mark L – Set up password-protected HTTP site to post FTC documents for members to access.
- Lyn – Send final November Meeting Summary out with today's meeting summary. Include updated FTC Member List (adding Brett and Kaitlin).
- Mark L – Send out data/models from WDFW and Tacoma that support or dispute the 35,000 number.
- ALL – Review the draft schedule that Mark put together for our stock by stock review at upcoming FTC meetings. Keep in mind the aim is to make decisions before it comes down to crunch time for the various runs. Be prepared to discuss/edit the schedule during our January meeting.
- ALL – Plan to bring your comments on the Downstream Migrant Transport Flow Evaluation Study to February meeting (or submit to Mark L earlier in written form). Note: This item may be deferred to our March meeting depending on how full our agenda is.
- ALL – Review plans for 2007 Cowlitz Falls Dam Activities and give Marc W your feedback asap.
- Marc W – Keep all informed as the above plan continues to evolve.
- Craig – Check with AG/DOJ and NMFS re: interpretation of FERC ruling/FHMP requirements re: recycling of early winter-run steelhead.
- Craig – Talk with Mark J re: capacity issue (see above action item).
- Mark L – Call together Genetic Test Teamlet prior to our January meeting.
- Wolf – Check availability of State geneticist (re: teamlet listed above) and let Mark L know so he can take that into account in setting up the teamlet meeting.
- Mark L – Send out LWD Report submitted to FERC at year end to all.
- ALL – Review the revised FTC Operating Protocols for approval at our January meeting.
- ALL – Review December 6 Meeting Summary and email any edits to Lyn prior to the next meeting.
- ALL – Let Lyn know if you will *not* be able to attend the January 3 meeting.
- Michelle – Get Clackamas spillway survival numbers by species and send to Mark.
- Mark – Send meeting handouts to absent team members.

Approval of Meeting Summary

We approved the November meeting summary with minor revisions suggested by Mark L. Lyn will send these out along with today's summary.

Coho Issue

Concern was expressed by Brett and Kaitlin that the 35,000 threshold of total coho was a violation of the FHMP and also the Settlement Agreement. Craig reported that WDFW doesn't see the inconsistency. Brett suggested that this would require amendments to the FHMP with FERC approval. Regardless of how we interpret the FHMP and other Plans and the FERC order, we need to establish a protocol for fully vetting such issues in a timely manner, for each of the stocks, before presenting them as a "done deal" to the public as was done at the Packwood meeting the day after our last meeting.

Kaitlin reported that Trout Unlimited and American Rivers are concerned that natural production in the upper watershed is being compromised by the 35,000 limit. There is confusion over the interpretation of the FHMP and associated biological and legal implications. It is not appropriate to change the plan in response to public pressure. She reminded us that public input has already been incorporated into the FHMP. Our role is to implement the plan, not open it to the public for revision. Kaitlin also cited two major issues that she sees as unaddressed: 1) An "oversized" hatchery, and 2) fish being passed up river without a reduction in harvest.

Brian suggested we might be well advised to more aggressively implement the "PR" aspects of our FERC-approved Public Information Plan. We want to keep the public informed as we implement the plan and we hope to do so in a way that reduces a negative public reaction to our actions.

2007 Cowlitz Falls Dam Activities

Marc W. briefly reviewed the actions Tacoma is considering for next year. The three main areas they are seeking to address are:

- Rejection inside the screen
- Fish not entering the screen
- Debris barrier issue

He reported that Tacoma, in consultation with NMFS, has made some changes in the hydraulics associated with the screen. They are also looking at the flume gate controls in an effort to try to create a more consistent velocity across the screen during different turbine operations.

With coho, the major problems with the current configuration are getting them to enter the screen and then, once they do enter the screen, to stay. In talking with LCPUD about installing a version of the Merwin trap discussed at our November meeting, it was suggested that we install a scaled-back version of the trap in order to deal with debris concerns. Marc reported that we are unable to move the

debris barrier out of the way in time for the 2007 runs. Beyond 2007 we may be able to look at a way to meet debris management requirements in a way that is not detrimental to fish attraction.

Marc is also talking with NMFS about using as large of mesh size as possible. Brian asked to also be included in these discussions.

He reported that we will also be putting up guide tarps again for shading. We will consider painting them as necessary.

The USGS suggested that it is appropriate for us to scale back on the 2007 evaluation in terms of the number of fish we tag. Marc assured us that the evaluation will still be very robust and will focus on the impacts of modification we are making. He also reported that we will have a contingency plan to make in-season changes as necessary in place in case the modifications don't appear to be working and/or yield unintentional consequences. Brian expressed a desire to see a more rigorous plan in place with triggers based on the success of the modifications.

Given that talks are continuing with USGS, NMFS, WDFW, LCPUD, and others, the FTC gave Tacoma the go-ahead to move forward with the hard/physical parts of the plan. We will continue to discuss the "soft" pieces of the plan at our January meeting.

LWD Study

Mark L. reminded everyone that this study is due to FERC by the end of this month and is due to be repeated every 5 years going forward. Based on input he received from FTC members, he will add an additional table that will further define the type of wood by river mile and also describe in detail the characteristics of each reach. Wolf reported that EDFW is concerned about the disposal of unused LWD. They would like to see alignment with the HPA. They also feel that the size of wood being placed in the lower river may be on the small side. We were reminded that the license/settlement doesn't require Tacoma to do anything at all in the lower river, however, Tacoma did include placement of LWD in the lower Cowlitz River in their implementation plan. WDFW and USFWS will get their comments to Mark within the next few days.

Early Run Winter Steelhead

Mark L. walked us through a PowerPoint presentation on what is called for in the FHMP with regard to the early run winter steelhead. The presentation ended with questions around what to do if recycling ends.

In the discussion that followed, it quickly became obvious that there was confusion around if and when genetic testing would/should be implemented. Craig reported that WDFW interprets the summary language to indicate that

genetic testing would drive the decision whether to eliminate the recycling. Others (American Rivers, TU, and Tacoma) explained that their interpretation of the FERC order was the opposite – calling for Tacoma to end recycling first (immediately) and then test to determine its impact. We agreed that regardless of the interpretation, we will need to develop a robust genetic testing plan. Mark will convene a meeting of a teamlet of the FTC to begin to do this. He will meet with Brian, Julie, Kaitlin and hopefully also with the State's geneticist to begin to work on this. Initial steps will include a review of the proposed plan that WDFW was put forward. We will get a report on their progress and a chance to offer input at our January meeting.

Tacoma asked FTC members to brainstorm what they should do with the excess fish should they stop recycling. The list follows:

- Stay the course (Keep recycling and do the genetic study to see if a halt to recycling is warranted)
- Stock the fish into non-anadromous waters (question here of who would provide the transport to do this)
- Give the fish away
- Use the State's surplus system
- Increase harvest
- Have WDFW do the transporting if Tacoma feels that they would be in violation of the license requirements if they participated in recycling activities going forward.
- Use the carcasses for nutrient enhancement
 - Look into disease concerns when exploring nutrient enhancement options in the Upper Cowlitz
- Seek to gain clarification on the FERC order from FERC
- Enter into arbitration among FTC members over this issue

After considerable discussion of these brainstormed alternatives, we decided that we were not ready to decide on an interim course of action for Tacoma to take until we gained consensus around the meaning of the FERC order. To this end, Craig will contact the AG Office and DOJ and also talk with NMFS in order to get clarification on "what to pay attention to" regarding the FERC order and FHMP.

We agreed to meet again on December 15 from 9:30 – 10:30 via conference call (Mark L will set this up). The agenda for that call is on the first page of this meeting summary.

We also agreed that, in the meantime, Tacoma will do all they can to minimize recycling to the extent possible.

Meeting Handouts

- November Draft Meeting Summary
- FTC Operating Protocols (revised at our October meeting)
- Draft Cowlitz Falls Juvenile Collection and Evaluations Plan for 2007

- Entrance Trap Schematics
- PowerPoint Presentation entitled: Cowlitz River Early Winter-Run Steelhead Fisheries and Hatchery Management Plan

Draft Agenda for January 3 FTC Meeting at Mayfield from 10:00 - 3:00*

***Note: Meeting time may go as late as 3:00 instead of the usual 2:00.**

- 10:00 - 10:20 Welcome/Check In
Review Agenda/ Meeting Summary from Dec. 6 Meeting
- 10:20 - 10:40 Action Item Reports
- 10:40 - 11:30 Report from Conference Call and Genetic Test Teamlet
- 11:30 - 12:00 Working Lunch
- 12:00 – 12:30 Update on 2007 Cowlitz Falls Plans
- 12:30 – 2:00 Analysis of Actions required under FHMP and Impacts:
Early Winter Run Steelhead
Suggested Approach:
 1. What the FHMP says
 2. Management implications
 3. How we envision proceeding – incl. PR
- 2:00 – 2:20 Review/Edits to Mark’s Draft Stock-by-Stock Review
Schedule distributed at this meeting
- 2:20 – 2:35 Final FTC Operating Protocol Review
Analysis of Actions required under FHMP and Impacts:
Late Winter Run Steelhead
Suggested Approach:
 1. What the FHMP says
 2. Management implications
 3. How we envision proceeding – incl. PR
- 2:35 -2:45 Set Agenda for February 7 Meeting:
Welcome/Check In/Review Agenda/Meeting Summary
Action Item Reports
Downstream Migrant Transport Flow Study
Late Winter Run Steelhead
Set March 7 Draft FTC Meeting Agenda
Evaluate the Meeting
- 2:45 – 2:50 Evaluate the Meeting
- 2:50 – 3:30 Field Trip: Separator (Optional)

Note: Discuss Downstream Migrant Transport Flow Study if time permits

MEETING EVALUATION

Well Done:

- Stayed on track
- Covered a lot
- Got clarification of differences in interpretation of FHMP

Craig's excellent command of the '#' key!

Do Differently Next Time:

We missed some key players (George, Michelle, and Ed)

We missed the physical presence of Craig

Set longer meeting time (from 10:00 – 3:00)

Prioritize agenda items to ensure spend time accordingly

Start and end on time

Open and distribute Dove chocolates in a timely manner

Meeting Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 PM.