

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Cowlitz River Advisory Group
September 25, 2018
Centralia Timberland Library, 110 S Silver St, Centralia, WA 98531

Attendance

Cowlitz River Advisory Group Members:

- Anthony Crocco, *Fishermen on the Upper Cowlitz Basin*
- Bob Reid, *The Cowlitz Plan for Restoration*
- Butch Smith, *Illwaco Charter Association*
- Carl Burke, *Northwest Sportsfishing Industry Assoc. and Northwest Marine Trade Assoc.*
- Cody Clark, *Bob's Sporting Goods*
- Dan Tudor, *Sports fishermen*
- David Passmore, *Outdoors sport fisherman*
- Don Glaser, *Friends of the Cowlitz*
- Gene Tripp, *Sports fishermen*
- Greg King, *Friends of the Cowlitz*
- Hank Emond, *Sports fishermen*
- Jack Tipping, *CCA*
- James Shinn, *CCA*
- Jon Vigre, *CCA*
- Larry Pryor, *Northwest Fisheries Enhancement*
- Lonnie Goble, *East Lewis County Fishermen*
- Paul Ockerman, *NW Guides and Anglers Association*
- Randy LeDuc, *CCA*
- Rudy Salakory, *Cowlitz Indian Tribe's Natural Resources Department*
- Stan Bartle, *Fishermen on the Tilton*

Tacoma Power:

- Keith Underwood

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Staff:

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kelly Cunningham | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sam Gibbons |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bryce Glaser | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tom Wadsworth |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Serl | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Myrtice Dobler |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brian Gale | |

Public:

None

Meeting Agenda

- I. Introductions and opening remarks (~30 minutes)
 - a. Ground Rules reminder (Kelly)
 - b. Announce/Welcome new CRAG members (Kelly/Bryce)
 - c. Updates (Bryce)
 - d. Follow up topics from previous meeting.
 - i. CRAG member affiliation update (Myrtice)
 - ii. Finalize meeting notes from 6/26/18 (Myrtice)
- II. FHMP Discussion (~30 minutes) (Keith)
 - a. FHMP Update overview
 - b. Chapters 1&2
 - c. Schedules & timelines for review
- III. Hatchery Production Options (~30-40 minutes)
 - a. Hatchery Production Options Assessment (Sam/Brian/Bryce)
 - b. Jack Tipping handout (Jack)
- IV. Next meeting (~10 minutes) (All)
 - a. Topic List prioritization for next meeting
 - b. Next Meeting date
- V. Public Comment (~10-20 minutes)
- VI. Wrap up/adjourn

Meeting Notes

Updates and introductions

Bryce introduced our two new advisory group members: Cody Clark and Paul Ockerman. Cody Clark is the tackle buyer at Bob's Sporting Goods. He's lived near and fished the river his whole life. Paul Ockerman is a guide, who works primarily on the Cowlitz and Chehalis rivers. He is part of Washington Northwest Guide and Anglers Association.

Bryce gave a quick overview of the update that was sent out last week to advisors (in meeting handouts)

- Budget talking points
- Summer steelhead updates
- Cowlitz Trout Hatchery release
- Juvenile production status for the/ Lower Cowlitz River- steelhead was highlighted
 - Currently we estimate we are at 86% of goal for winter steelhead
 - Discussion of diseases effecting the salmonids (soft shell and Bacterial Coldwater Disease)
 - Members asked about the process if the quantity of juvenile fish released from Cowlitz Hatcheries falls short of targets
 - There's no process in the contracts
 - Numbers are a recommendation not a requirement and the poundage is a cap.
 - This is something members would like to talk about again.
- Closed Lower Cowlitz to Chinook retention.
 - We may only get 50% of our collection goal
 - We have started to try to backfill some of our broodstock goal with increased use of NORs

- Cowlitz River Coho
 - umbers (particularly jacks) are looking strong- potentially signals a change in ocean conditions
- Tilton River boundary move: WDFW extended closed area at Gust Backstrom Park due to low water conditions.
 - We are trucking coho upstream
 - Looking at some potential alternate release sites

Myrtice went over several business items from the July meeting.

- CRAG member affiliations are compiled and ready for review
- June meeting notes were sent out for review and a hard copy was handed out. Members will have until Tuesday, October 2nd to provide edits then Myrtice will post the notes online.

FHMP Discussion

On September 20th Travis Nelson (Tacoma Power) sent out the first two chapters of the draft FHMP. Chapters one and two are mostly about what the plan is and don't get into species specific content. Reviews are scheduled to occur every 30 days, a draft schedule was provided to CRAG members. Tacoma Power is planning to have drafts of the Chinook and coho chapters on November 1st. Currently it is due February 2019.

The layout of the document is to have a chapter for each species that tells where they are historically, currently and where we'd like them to be.

Discussion on the draft sent out:

- Questions on where data came from, some of the information seemed to be missing species and some numbers seem low.
- Encouraged members to flag items that seem incorrect.
- WDFW will be doing second review at the same time the CRAG is doing first review.

There were questions about the new documents time frame:

- Will this be a three year plan because we are behind? Or does it still reflect 6 years? This will need to be discussed with FERC.
- Tacoma is proposing to extend the timeframe of the plan
 - Either ask to have the clock reset from when we submit this update.
 - Perhaps try for a 10 year plan with five year check-ins

A reminder that while we are working through this update we are still working under the existing FHMP.

Hatchery Production Options

We are looking to evaluate potential options for restructuring and/or increasing hatchery production to optimize programs to meet conservation and harvest goals. The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission directed WDFW to explore increasing production in the lower Columbia River.

Jack Tipping provided a summary of the document that he sent out earlier in the month (in meeting handouts). The key points from the document and discussion are:

1. Larger fish have greater survival
 - Jack estimates that based on the current spring Chinook hatchery program we produce about 9k adult fish, if all these fish were released in March estimate would be 16k
 - There was discussion on the history of releasing fish at 5 fpp
 - Tacoma Power expressed concern that 5 fpp is not representative of natural fish
 - It was suggested to have more variety in sizes
2. Mini jacks can be used to help estimate returns
 - There is a strong relationship between mini jack returns and jack returns with adult returns in the following 2 years.
 - This is not as strong as other relationships, but it can be seen.

Staff agreed that larger fish have higher survival rate, the hatchery release strategies we use currently were based on capacity of hatchery. The hatchery has a maximum poundage for released fish. The fish currently released in October cannot be converted into fish released in spring at 5 fpp without increasing hatchery capacity, therefore any adults returning from that release should be considered 'bonus' fish. The goal today is to discuss short-term solutions, but if we really want to increase capacity, new facilities will be needed. There are several different ways, but many of the low cost options come with higher risk, and the higher cost options have a lower risk. We are trying to figure out options for improving hatchery programs and then write them into the FHMP update.

Sam provided a quick review of hatchery production options for Chinook (in meeting handouts). These are WDFW ideas from a fish culture stand point and/or responses to suggestions from CRAG members, Tacoma Power has not had an opportunity to provide input.

Main Points:

1. Use existing infrastructure differently.
 - Use Mayfield net pens for a portion of coho instead of fall Chinook
 - There were suggestions from CRAG on how to bypass hydro system other than trucking (i.e., pipeline pumping fish into exit flow in the dam)
 - Leave fall Chinook in hatchery instead of moving to net pens
 - Raise ~165K spring Chinook from 16 fpp group to 5 fpp.
2. Construct net pens capable of holding entire current coho program.
 - Construct net pen array at a reservoir location (ideally Mossyrock hatchery site) capable of holding 2.2M coho.
 - Members suggested gravel pit/ net pens. There was discussion of the concerns around natural populations and higher stray rates.
 - Leave fall Chinook in hatchery instead of moving to net pens
 - Raise the 500K 16 fpp spring Chinook group to 5 fpp.
3. Construct raceway (with reuse water) capable of holding entire current coho program.
 - Construct additional raceways at Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery and upgrade pollution abatement (PA) pond.
 - Tacoma Power feels that they met obligation to salmon hatcheries, but would be open to discussion of partners or trade of satellite ponds.

- Leave fall Chinook in hatchery instead of moving to net pens
- Raise the 500K 16 fpp spring Chinook group to 5 fpp.
- 4. Revamp kettles at Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery to increase capacity for Spring Chinook grow-out.
 - Additional 500K spring Chinook (above current program) released at 16 fpp in November.
- 5. Construct rearing ponds, PA upgrade and additional intake at Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery to increase capacity for Spring Chinook grow-out.
 - Additional 500K spring Chinook (above current program) released at 5 fpp in March.

An option for coho was discussed (in meeting handouts). Construct rearing ponds, PA upgrade and additional intake at Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery plus net pen array in reservoir or re-use raceways. This could provide capacity for an additional 800k released at 15 fpp in April.

Options for winter steelhead were discussed. The winter and summer program sizes are co-dependent.

- 1) Current path – expansion of integrated late winter steelhead program run-timing.
- 2) Implement segregated early-timed winter steelhead program using Big Creek stock.
- 3) Development of segregated early-timed winter steelhead program from local broodstock (within strata)
 - Could be 10-15years out before stock is developed
 - Should interim stock be used?
 - CRAG would like to see what the tradeoffs would be

Building a new facility/substantial remodel within the basin would provide the lowest risk and highest potential of long term success. This could be done to specifications to provide the maximum for each stock with space for growth.

Other Topics

There was discussion on CRR fund, it is going mostly to habitat and small opportunities for aquaculture. Currently they are still trying to define what an appropriate aquaculture project is, as it needs to apply to recovery. Opportunity to submit requests and solicitation for projects is coming soon.

Action Items

Item	Assigned to
CRAG provide edits to last meeting notes by next Tues	
Once edits are received Myrtice to post to CRAG website	

Next Meeting

Plan to meet within next 2 months, Myrtice will send out a Doodle Poll to set a date.

Nov 6 meeting- FTC will be open to public

Topic List for next meeting

- FHMP update
- Continue discussion into next meeting
- Governor's budget- southern resident killer whales
- Bird predation
- Nutrient enhancement
- Tacoma Power restoration- Stan Bartle requested to have discussion on how to be involved. He would like some of the restoration projects to be focused on the Tilton and Cispus
- What trout hatchery remodel looks like- Keith potential future agenda items
- Cowlitz Trout Hatchery release