

**DRAFT MEETING NOTES FOR JOINT MEETING  
COWLITZ FISHERIES TECHNICAL COMMITTEE AND AD-HOC GROUP**

Friday, March 26, 2015 from 9:00 – 11 AM  
100 SW Veterans Way, Chehalis, WA

**Attendees**

Tony Crocco	Ad Hoc Group
Stan Bartle	Ad Hoc Group
Bob Reid	Ad Hoc Group, CPR – Fish
Randy LeDuc	Ad Hoc Group, CCA
Shannon Wills	Ad Hoc Group, FTC Tech Rep for Yakama Nation
Mark Johnson	WDFW
Cindy LeFleur	WDFW
John Serl	WDFW
Eric Kinne	WDFW
Ann Weckback	Lewis County
Michelle Day	NMFS
Rich Turner	NMFS
Jim Pacheco	WA Dept. of Ecology
Paul Sparks	Trout Unlimited
Keith Underwood	Tacoma Power
Mark LaRiviere	Tacoma Power
Lyn Wiltse	PDSA Consulting (facilitator)

**Next Joint Meeting**

April 23 from 1-4PM at Centralia College (Room TBD)

**Initial APR (Annual Project Review Public Meeting)**

April 23 from 6-8 PM at the Centralia College, 600 Centralia College Blvd., Centralia  
Discussion topics to include: Drought update, WDFW regulations, Plan to abandon volitional upstream passage (incl. 650 lb. limit and upper Cowlitz satellite ponds), Mayfield net pens

**Action Items**

- Cindy Look into what they are seeing in terms of handle – the expectation that a certain number of NORs of all species are killed due to sports fishery.
- Rich Check the source of the upper bound permitted by the ESA of 771,500 pounds.
- Mark Set up a conference call with FTC members to discuss the WDFW proposal to allow winter integrated steelhead retention in the Tilton.
- Mark Send these notes to the FTC.
- Cindy Send these notes to the Ad Hoc Group.

**Welcome / Introductions**

We reviewed meeting purpose, ground rules, and asked for any additions to the agenda. The meeting goals include:

- Getting to know each other
- Understanding each other's interests and responsibilities
- Engaging in productive dialogue about those interests

- Building trusting relationships

We agreed that draft notes from these meetings will be approved at the following meeting at which point they will be posted to the FTC website and the WDFW Ad Hoc Group website. We also agreed that all should assume what is said during these meetings is “fit for public consumption” unless a participant prefaces what he or she is saying with the request that what they are about to say should be kept confidential. We also added “When in doubt, check it out.” It makes much more sense to go to each other directly if we have a question.

### **Potential Meeting Topics**

We reviewed the list of topics suggested by Ad Hoc Group members in advance of our initial meeting. We prioritized the list in the order shown below, acknowledging that we will continue discussions at our next meeting.

List of Potential Topics:

1. Drought update
2. WDFW Fishery Proposals
3. Plan to abandon volitional upstream passage / 650K lb. cap / Upper Cowlitz satellite ponds
4. Mayfield Net pens
5. ISIT (In-Season Implementation Tool) Model
6. Pulsing / fish transport flows (are there data to substantiate these?)
7. HSRG Standards (sufficiency of these)

### **Drought Update**

At our last meeting we were at a 70% probability of refill. Tacoma Power is currently generating at 4,100 cfs and they plan to drop to 3,100 cfs on April 1 as was previously discussed. As we are currently at a 93% probability of refill, the plan now is to hold the reservoir at 3,100 cfs for as long as possible. The weekly pulsing flows are continuing. Full pool at Riffe Lake is 778.5'. Today the reservoir level is at 760'. Inflow is currently at 6,870 cfs at CF Dam. Jim noted that he will be working on incorporating this new regime into the 401 Water Quality Certificate.

### **Sport Regulations**

Cindy explained that WDFW solicits input from the public on game fish rules for the Columbia River region as a whole. The Commission recently adopted the following regulations, to become effective on July 1:

- Mandatory retention of hatchery steelhead in most tributaries in Region 5
- Increased bag limit of 3 hatchery fish – in most tributaries in Region 5
- The ability to use barbed hooks on the Cowlitz during June and July only (not significant numbers of wild or ESA fish are present during those months).

She explained there is another process where WDFW proposes and adopts salmon rules. Some of those proposals include:

- Increasing the use of 2 poles from the Lexington Bridge up to the Barrier dam. The decision should be late April or May. It would be allowed year-around after that. There

was a question of whether we have the ESA impacts to afford to do this. It was acknowledged that we do not have data on the impact of a 2 pole rule on a fishery, but it would be similar to increasing the effort. We are not currently trying to limit angler effort on the Cowlitz. Cindy will look into what they are seeing in terms of handle – the expectation that a certain number of NORs of all species are killed due to sports fishery.

- Cindy just signed an emergency rule that as of April 1 it will become legal to keep three hatchery-origin steelhead on the Cowlitz River. The rule will become permanent when the new fishing pamphlet comes out July 1.
- The other emergency proposal potentially starting April 1 (pending FTC approval) is to allow hatchery steelhead retention (winter integrated steelhead) in the Tilton. Mark noted the plan to abandon volitional upstream passage has not yet gone through an official FTC approval process. Mark will set up an FTC conference call to discuss this.

### **Plan to Abandon Volitional Upstream Passage**

Members of the Ad Hoc Group explained that abandoning volitional upstream passage, seemed, on the surface, like a win/win, meeting everyone's interests. Tacoma is benefitting financially from abandoning this facility. There was a question about why production hasn't been increased accordingly.

Keith explained there is a (\$15 million) fund associated with this and the focus of the FTC has been to increase habitat quality rather than to expand aquaculture (increase hatchery production). This last year has been talking about this. He doesn't see in the license where Tacoma Power is required to exceed the 650K lb. cap. They can expand to 771,5K lbs. for ESA purposes. 800K is the absolute cap. The sentences are three thoughts listed in series but are not linked together in an interdependent fashion.

It was suggested that if we want to raise more fish or use the satellites (which are out of the limits of the poundage cap), then we can raise more ESA listed fish.

Appendix A: Proposed License Articles, Article 5 (a) language:

*The Licensee shall be responsible for funding the operation and maintenance of the Cowlitz Complex consisting of the remodeled Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery, the remodeled Cowlitz Trout Hatchery, and three satellite rearing facilities, for the duration of the license. The principal stocks of fish to be produced are the indigenous stocks of spring Chinook, fall Chinook, coho, sea-run cutthroat trout, and late winter-run steelhead. Non-indigenous stocks, such as early winter and summer steelhead, may be produced, provided that production shall emphasize the recovery of indigenous stocks, and production and management of all stocks, shall be consistent with that goal. The remodeled hatchery complex will accommodate a range of possible production levels, up to 800,000 pounds, with the current upper bound permitted by the ESA of 771,500 pounds. The total production level within the remodeled hatchery complex will not exceed 650,000 pounds per year for all stocks until and unless a decision has been made pursuant to Article 3 to not construct volitional upstream passage during the term of the license, at which time hatchery production may be considered as part of the plan to expend the funds in the escrow account for the purposes of protecting and promoting recovery of listed stocks. The*

*650,000 pound limit does not include upper basin pre-smolts that are reared and ponded in the hatchery complex to avoid conflicts with listed stocks. During the remodeling of the hatchery complex provided by Article 6, production will approximate the maximum possible within remodeling constraints and ESA requirements. Total annual production levels during remodeling will be established through the planning process delineated in Article 5. Any variations to these transitional production levels during the time period between license issuance and the completion of the remodeled hatchery complex will be prepared in consultation with...*

Discussion included how this says exceeding the 650K lb. cap may be used for increased production related to the recovery of wild fish in the upper and lower basin. It is widely believed that hatchery fish put on top of wild fish reduce recovery efforts of wild fish. The objective is harvestable numbers of wild fish ultimately. Will increasing hatchery production affect the recovery of wild fish in the upper basin? Once the collector is in place things will be different. What do we do in the meantime?

The hatchery is set up for certain levels of rearing density and flow to maximize the health of the fish being reared there. There are constraints within the hatchery design. There would be considerable costs involved if Tacoma Power needed to build new facilities. Mark explained that depending on the species you use to populate the hatchery, you may be more or less limited. It's all driven by steelhead production. Tacoma Power has not talked about raising the cap inside the salmon and trout hatchery.

There was a question about the basis for the 771.5K lb. number. Rich will research this. Michelle reminded all that HGMPs are under consultation presently.

The timing of this discussion is appropriate given that the FHMP is being updated next year and that we are presently heading into the APR. Note: We could put the numbers in the model and see what happens.

Still to discuss: Upper Cowlitz satellite ponds.

Keith explained that Tacoma Power has hired R2 Resources to see if they can use the Cowlitz Falls Fish Facility as a possible satellite facility – the idea would be to focus on spring Chinook as they thrive in low densities and fresh water. They are at the feasibility level with this study.

### **Meeting Evaluation**

All agreed this was another excellent meeting of these two groups and that much information was shared within the relatively short timeframe.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 AM.