Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Cowlitz River Advisory Group
May 17, 2018
Lewis County Courthouse, Hearing room, 351 NW. North St, Chehalis, WA 98532

Attendance:
CRAG: Greg King, Butch Smith, Carl Burke, Larry Pryor, Hank Emond, Stan Bartle, Lonnie Goble, Dan Tudor, Anthony Crocco, Jack Tipping, Jon Viger, Randy LeDuc

WDFW Staff: Kelly Cunningham, Bryce Glaser, Sam Gibbons, Tom Wadsworth, John Serl, Brian Gale, Myrtice Dobler (note taker)

Public: Clancy Holt, Bryan Tonnley, Buddy Rose, and approximately 3 others

Purpose of meeting:
AGENDA
I. Introductions and opening remarks - Kelly Cunningham
   a. Follow up topics from previous meeting.
      i. CCA/WDFW/TP Meeting 3/13/18
      ii. FTC Discussion re: CRAG member and/or public participation at FTC
II. Review Draft CRAG Charter – Bryce Glaser
III. Finalize existing CRAG membership – Bryce Glaser/Tom Wadsworth
    a. Review existing membership roster
    b. Formally identify organization or user group each member represents
IV. Additional Membership – Kelly Cunningham/Bryce Glaser
    a. Discuss potential addition of members
    b. WDFW solicitation/review process
V. Topic List
    a. Generate Topic list for future meetings – accept topics/proposals from CRAG members
VI. Discuss next meeting date
VII. Wrap up

Meeting Notes:
Introductions
Summary of March meeting
• Restarting the relationship between the prior Cowlitz Ad Hoc Committee and WDFW
• Transition the Ad Hoc Committee into a WDFW Advisory group utilizing 2017 guidelines
• Interest in working together to meet the needs of angling public while maintaining and improving the resource

Question about John Long’s absence
• Explanation of J. Long’s resignation to pursue other things
Dan Rawding is the acting Region 5 Director
Recruitment is currently underway for a new Region 5 Director

Summary of March 13, 2018 meeting between CCA, WDFW, Tacoma Power (meeting summary handout provided to the Group)

- 3 main topics
  - Increase Poundage at the Cowlitz Hatchery
  - Begin Tagging Out-Migrating Chinook at Mayfield Trap
  - Earlier Timed Return of Winter Steelhead

- Poundage cap increase
  - Poundage cap increase is associated with decision to abandon volitional passage
    - NOAA has finalized this decision
  - Draft May 2016 Issue Paper on this subject is on FTC website
  - Poundage cap does increase for Cowlitz with the NOAA decision to abandon volitional passage at Cowlitz River dams
    - Request by CCA for this increase to be used for Spring Chinook production
    - Purpose of increased production is to support recovery
    - Responsibility of funding for potential production increase
    - Question on if Tacoma Power Utility (TPU) needs to pay for additional production.
      - TPU clear that they don’t see that as their responsibility.
    - Additional discussion on how decision came to this point
      - Cowlitz FHMP and HGMP updates are high on list for WDFW and TPU and the rest of the FTC this year
        - CRAG to help inform updates
        - These will provide the opportunity to discuss additional spring Chinook production options.

- Mayfield Trap- tagging out-migrating juvenile Chinook
  - CCA’s proposal was to tag them to help distinguish returning adult fish
  - Juv. Trapping facility owned and op by Tacoma Power
  - Trap is not 100% efficient
    - Additional steps needed in evaluation, including fish not captured in the trap and survival of fish passing through Mayfield Dam turbines
  - Discussion of trap and tagging needs
    - Desire for the process to happen quickly
    - TPU started studies, not complete yet
    - Is on TPU’s work plan

- Earlier timed return of Winter Steelhead
  - WDFW recognition of impact from the loss of the early winter program
We have started some steps towards advancing the return of the fish by collecting fish for broodstock that return to the hatchery before April.

FHMP and HGMP process offer an opportunity to discuss additional options for replacement of the early timed component.

- A FTC sub-group has discussed options and identified some potential scenarios to model out (to see if they fit within ESA constraints).

- Question on results of TPU DNA testing of early returning winter run.
  - WDFW indicated that we do not believe samples have been processed by TPU.

Next steps: Continue to work on run advancement, model out options to improve that process, discuss as part of FHMP and HGMP updates.

- Time frame:
  - HGMP - update by the end of this year
  - FHMP - technically Tacoma Power requirement, FTC has been trying to start work on an update with the goal of finishing by February 2019

- We hope to have CRAG help find solutions to this issue.

Public/CRAG potential involvement in FTC meetings - update from T. Wadsworth

- CRAG requested involvement in FTC meetings
  - Two main options discussed by FTC in recent meetings
    - Open some meetings to public attendance
    - Could a member of CRAG be a technical representative for WDFW on the FTC
  - No decision was made by FTC - plan to keep discussing
  - TPU and WDFW want a decision by late summer

- TPU and WDFW are both looking towards building transparency and improving communication

- CRAG requested opportunity to have larger discussion
  - Should be a topic with TPU present
  - Some members said it would be significant to have someone CRAG on the FTC group

How to conduct business with conflicting points of view (question from CRAG)

- WDFW would like the CRAG to be the group where these discussions occur rather going to outside sources (i.e. newspapers, legislators, etc.)
  - CRAG members return to their groups and gather information from their members and share what’s happening here

- WDFW staff explained that the CCA meeting came from a letter from Director’s Office with direction from the Director to staff to have the meeting

- Size of the group
  - Do not increase or break up the group (C. Burke)
    - Knowledge base from what has been discussed before
- Time to look at what’s working and what’s not working

Review of Draft CRAG Charter (B. Glaser)
- Refocus, how do we want to function
- Asked for comment on draft Charter in an email sent to the CRAG last week
- Change name from Ad-hoc to Cowlitz River Advisory Group (CRAG)
- Mission statement and purpose
  - CRAG making recommendations to Agency
  - Must work within mandated recovery/conservation actions
    - Setting harvestable goals for wild fish (Larry)
      - We don’t have support from community about recovering wild populations because they cannot keep them
      - Would like to discuss what harvestable goals are at a future meeting
    - Goal of the plans is how to mesh harvest of wild and hatchery together
      - The larger the wild fish population is, the more we can increase our hatchery production and stay within ESA limits
  - Group Charter recognizes WDFW’s mission statement
    - Part of mission statement says WDFW will provide ‘sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities’
    - Cowlitz River fish are harvested in commercial fisheries outside of the Cowlitz River
      - Larry argued group’s responsibility is to the community not commercial fisheries
      - Bryce explained the hope is to have group understand this is part of WDFW’s mission
- Ground Rules were discussed at the March 2018 meeting
- Organizational structure
  - Anglers and others with diverse interests
    - Currently have angling groups and Tribal representative
    - Jack suggested that we need to add commercial sports fishermen (guide) representation.
  - Group limited to up to 20 members
  - Appointed for 3 year terms
    - May be reappointed or removed at WDFW discretion
  - Declare organization or user group representing
    - Want to make sure we have the right mix of people
  - Members responsible for travel and meals
  - ADA
- Methods of operation
  - Handbook on website
  - Chairperson vs. no chairperson for Group
• WDFW would prefer to get input from all members equally
• WDFW not interested in votes on topics, rather want to hear points of view from all representatives
• Chairperson may complicate meeting operations because it requires formal format (i.e., Robert’s rules of order)
• WDFW can plan and facilitate meetings
  o Meetings quarterly
    ▪ Additional as needed
  o Open to the public
    ▪ We need to notify public of meetings
    ▪ Public meeting rules only guarantee public the right to attend- not speak

• Potential inclusion of TPU or NOAA
  o CRAG wants ability to invite TPU, NOAA and FERC
  o Will invite these groups when pertinent
    ▪ Want to make effective use of their time
    ▪ Another reason we want to develop agenda topics ahead of time

• Question of if group can make recommendations to TPU
  o CRAG is an advisory group for WDFW
  o TPU has expressed interest in hearing input from group

• Opportunity for public comment
  o Set 5-10 min for people who commit to come opportunity to speak
  o Consensus on having time for public comment
  o Last 10 minutes (T. Crocco)

• Public Records Act
  o Can be requests for CRAG information

• Send an email to Tom Wadsworth (Thomas.Wadsworth@dfw.wa.gov) and Myrtice Dobler (Myrtice.Dobler@dfw.wa.gov) if you see any flaws or have major comments for the draft Charter

CRAG Membership
• If group decides we need additional representation, WDFW solicits for applicants
• In order for things to get done and get done well we need the right people
  o Guide community not represented
• Friends of the Cowlitz would like to fill some spots
  o Medical issues of people currently in CRAG
• Discussion emphasizing that WDFW is not looking for consensus, but wants to hear all perspectives
  o Want perspectives from multiple user groups
    ▪ Guide, local business
    ▪ Spread across the river (upper, lower, middle)
• Put solicitation out for a fishing guide and local businessperson affected by fishing industry to join the Group
• Discussion about some members representing multiple or no groups
• Everybody who was on the current Ad Hoc, list and/or attended the last meeting would be reappointed, if they still had interest
  o We need to finalize group and move to working on topics
    ▪ Determine who each member currently represents
  o If there are people who can no longer participate
    ▪ Option to fill their places through solicitation.
• Member finalization by phone and email before next meeting
• Ways to attend meetings remotely?
  o Important for first few meetings to be face-to-face, until we make some progress
• Appointing alternates
  o Butch suggested alternates should be allowed due to busy schedules.
  o Some members agreed
  o Greg suggested if this was allowed, FOC would provide alternates for current members with health challenges
  o WDFW will think about this idea and consider options.
• Suggestion to spread topics into overall categories (Fall Chinook, Spring Chinook, etc.) by meeting, based on current priorities
  o Steps are to identify topic list and then prioritize for discussion

CRAG members should send top 5 issues to address in future meetings – at the next meeting we will be going over the issues and creating a prioritized list

CRAG requested:
• Current production levels on the Cowlitz by species
• Poundage released in 2017?

Public Comment
  o Clancy Holt said if he can be helpful he would join the group, but if we can find someone better that is fine too

Below is a list of potential future topics brought up during the CRAG meeting
• 3 topics from CCA letter
  o Increase Poundage at the Cowlitz Hatchery
  o Begin Tagging Out-Migrating Chinook at Mayfield Trap
  o Earlier Timed Return of Winter Steelhead
• Request for overview of some quick hatchery issues (springer returns)
• Upper River fish distribution/allocation with lower river
• Planting trout into watershed
• Discussion of run timing
• Setting harvestable goals for wild fish
• Larger discussion regarding FTC involvement
• Discussion on poundage and hatchery efficiency
• What can be done to improve efficiency of the hatcheries?
• Bird Predation

**Action Items:**

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| Provide CRAG members with:  
  • Current production levels on the Cowlitz by species  
  • Poundage released in 2017 | T. Wadsworth | Prior to next meeting |
| E-mail requesting the following from CRAG:  
  • Fatal flaws/major comments seen in charter  
  • Top 5 Cowlitz River topics to address at future meetings  
  • Review of meeting notes | M. Dobler | May 25 |
| Response from CRAG with comments on the charter and the top 5 topics | CRAG members | June 14 (~2 weeks) |

**Next Meeting:**

• Try for next meeting to be mid-June
• In Centralia/ Chehalis area