

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

**Cowlitz River Advisory Group**

September 25, 2019

Lewis County Old Credit Union Building- 156 NW Chehalis Ave. Chehalis, WA 98632

**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, *Business/ Sport fishing*
- 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"/> Josh Holowatz  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Serl        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Myrtice Dobler |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brian Gale       |  |

**Public:**

Buddy Rose, Frank Urabeck, Steve Bagley, Ed Torkelson, Ed Stein, Rick Graser

## **Meeting Agenda**

- I. Introductions and opening remarks (~40 minutes)
  - a. Review of CRAG purpose and Ground Rules – Kelly/Bryce
  - b. Finalize Meeting Notes from May 16, 2019 - Myrtice
- II. Action Item Review – Myrtice
- III. Updates – (~50 minutes)
  - a. Hatchery Program Updates
  - b. Tilton River Secondary Release Site
  - c. Wallace Access
  - d. Other?
- IV. BREAK – Approximately 3:00 (~15 minutes)
- V. Current Status of FHMP (~15 minutes)
- VI. FHMP – WDFW Perspectives (~40 minutes)
- VII. Public Comment (~15 minutes)
- VIII. Action Item review/Adjourn ( 5 minutes)

## **Meeting Notes**

### **Introductions and opening remarks**

#### **Review of CRAG purpose and Ground Rules**

- WDFW staff have been asked by the Director to examine the effectiveness of our Advisory Groups
- Discussion
  - Feelings that advisors provide recommendations and yet don't see action or measurable results
    - Have not seen value come out of CRAG meetings, except to have something to point to so we can say something's being done.
  - Reminder of things that CRAG input helped with
    - Hooking mortality study
    - Wallace Access
  - There is value in opportunities to interact and build relationships with WDFW and TPU
  - Advisors are able to know, understand and share information on how decisions are made and why things aren't just a simple fix.
  - Provides a place for everyone to hear the same thing

*Requested advisors think about the group, if it's valuable, and what the value is and send Kelly an email sharing those thoughts.*

- *Think about interactions, involvement, and if it's worth the time.*
- *If the position is that the group should be disbanded, think about alternatives to dispersing information and receiving input.*

## Meeting Notes from May 16, 2019 and action items were reviewed.

- Update on budget action item
  - Cowlitz was not specifically on the first Orca recovery phase, due to lack of immediate capacity at the hatchery
    - Options for phase two are still being examined
    - WDFW will be requesting funding for a comprehensive review of facilities to identify space for additional Chinook and coho

## **Updates**

### Hatchery Program Updates

- Sam reviewed updates from handouts
  - Spring Chinook, we were able to make brood, although it was very close
  - Summer Steelhead, run is mostly complete
  - Fall Chinook, we're tracking about 50% behind where we would like to be. Staff will be monitoring collection curve and run closely.
    - Suggestion of collecting NOR/HOR fish from lower river- discussion on holding mortality and transport issues
  - Coho, still early in returns but we are hopeful
    - Short discussion on what to do with excess fish- questions on how funding would work
    - Suggestion that funds from fish sold return to hatchery

### Tilton River Secondary Release Site

- Brief history
  - WDFW has a transport program, with a 6,000 transport cap, for extra segregated coho to the Tilton. One challenge the program has faced is the limitation of one release site (Gus Backstrom Park).
  - Over the last few years WDFW implemented extended boundaries around the fish release site for a period of time in the early fall due to low flows and fishing pressure.
- This year we identified a new release site, and the FTC M&E team developed a transport plan
- TPU update
  - Received permit from DOC last week
  - Received, reviewed, and accepted a bid
  - Hope to complete sooner, but deadline in contract with builder is December 31
- Reviewed strategies and contingency plans recommended by M&E Team (provided in handouts)
  - Weather has helped and staff are monitoring flows and fish passage
  - Have identified a temporary release site for NOR fall Chinook if needed
  - Advisors suggested a make-shift chute from the bridge to do the releases
    - Discussion on limitations and contingency plan

## Wallace Access

- WDFW has established the Wallace Access site, there is a parking area, and a gravel trail to the river. The question has been whether fishermen can walk along the road.
  - Advisors requested clarification on access (where people can and cannot go). Fish Program staff will work with Wildlife Program Access staff to clarify
    - Confusion on getting in
    - Early spring access will be difficult with higher water

## **Current Status of FHMP**

- Extension was received earlier this year, deadline is currently mid-October. Another extension is needed.
  - WDFW, TPU, and Federal partners are working on developing an extension request.
- Review of process to date
  - WDFW and some of this group participated in initial comment periods
  - After initial drafts, a series of workshops were planned for FTC members to participate in. The goal was to improve alignment between WDFW, TPU and other FTC members.
  - TPU took information from the workshops and developed a second draft and opened it up for public comment. WDFW had not reviewed those drafts prior to release
  - A third draft is in progress and WDFW has committed to a deeper review
- Question on how many more drafts, and opportunities for public to review
  - It depends on the extension
  - Would like to have the full document reviewed (as one piece) by the public

## **FHMP – WDFW Perspectives**

- WDFW staff took the notes from the FTC workshops, and added comments explaining what the Department agreed with, and their perspective behind discussions.
- Staff would like CRAG to know the Department's perspectives, identify whether the advisory group recommendations were captured, and see if there was anything staff missed.

*Requested CRAG members review perspective documents, and provide comments/input/ideas- please send response by October 16, 2019*

## **FHMP – Discussion**

- Question on HSRG verbiage- are other long term plans being taken into consideration? And is there flexibility in the plan if those other plans change?
  - While there are discussions on HSRG guidelines, the main focus is in the recovery plan. Flexibility would come through discussions with NOAA

- Concern expressed that if funding for additional fish is found that a new FHMP might need to be done.
  - The coverage for our programs will come from the HGMP, providing ESA coverage
  - The FHMP provides structure for TPU responsibilities
- Question on what's the plan for maintaining the recreational fishery for Riffe Lake.
  - Not sure if plan has been addressed or examined, but we do not want to lose the opportunity for that body of water.

### **Tacoma Power Update**

- Trout Hatchery- on track to replace ozone generator
- Trout Ponds- beginning discussion expect it to take a long time
- Satellite Pond Document- received document from contractor, working on getting a higher quality document prior to external review.
- Draw Down at Mayfield- went down to 4-15.5, did this to extend the boat ramp. Making it so that it's launchable at 4-19

### **Public Comment (~15 minutes)**

Rick Graser

- Expressed frustration with lack of transparency from WDFW
- Encouraged keeping Advisory Group going
- Feels WDFW is not truthful, and is vindictive toward public
- Would like more support, and for people to play "hard ball," let WDFW know what you think
- Expressed frustration over sea lions, and lack of movement from legislation.

Ed Torkelson

- Would like better education for how to release fish
  - Improve info in the regulation pamphlets, and at the boat launches
- There's a new vegetation line that will be a problem for enforcement- need to be paying attention to that.
- Has seen fishing go downhill in the last 47 years. Early on, bank fishers could limit, now even guides struggle to get fish
  - Suggests looking at picture on his website where there were 300 people fishing at Blue Creek

Ed Stein

- Dissatisfied with how fishing has been on the Cowlitz- came to find out what people are doing about it.
- Encourages continued communication, and for people to get involved, speak up and try to get things better

**Action Items**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>
Send an email for advisors to respond to with comments on effectiveness of advisory group.	Kelly
Think about the group’s effectiveness and send an email with comments to Kelly	CRAG members
Provide summer steelhead tag recovery rates	Bryce/Sam
Wallace Access- work with Wildlife Program Access staff to improve/clarify how much of the area is accessible to the public	Bryce
FHMP- Send electronic version of WDFW perspectives	Myrtice
Review perspective documents, and provide comments/input/ideas- please send response by October 16, 2019	CRAG members

**Parking Lot**

**Added this meeting**

- Continue to monitor HGMP/ESA coverage and compare to FHMP and TPU responsibility
- Kokanee fishing in reservoirs

**From previous meetings**

- Fall Chinook discussion- redd survey compared to brood
- Bird Predation
- Pinniped Update

**List of Common Acronyms**

CRSSE.....	Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement
CRAG.....	Cowlitz River Advisory Group
CRR.....	Cowlitz River Restoration (fund)
FHMP.....	Fisheries and Hatchery Management Plan (Cowlitz River)
fpp.....	Fish per pound
FTC.....	Fisheries Technical Committee (Cowlitz River)
HGMP.....	Hatchery and Genetic Management Plan
MA BIOP.....	Mitchell Act Biological Opinion
NMFS.....	National Marine Fisheries Services
PCSRF.....	Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund
PD.....	Position Description
pHOS.....	Proportion Hatchery Origin Spawners
RMT.....	Regional Management Team
RSI.....	Remote Site Incubator
TPU.....	Tacoma Public Utilities (aka; Tacoma Power)
UCR.....	Upper Cowlitz River