

**Cowlitz River Advisory Group
DRAFT Charter
May 2018**

Introduction

WDFW formed the Cowlitz River Advisory Group in 2010 to gather recommendations from recreational anglers during the process of updating the Cowlitz River Fishery and Hatchery Management Plan (FHMP). The FHMP is a requirement of the Cowlitz River Project Agreement (Article 6) and addresses implementation of Tacoma Power's obligations to support hatchery production and fish management activities in the Cowlitz Basin. The Group met as needed and was termed the "Cowlitz Ad Hoc Committee". This Committee continued to provide input to WDFW on Cowlitz fishing and hatchery issues after the Cowlitz FHMP update was completed and approved by the Federal Energy and Regulatory Commission (FERC) in 2014. This charter revises the mission statement, organizational structure and method of operation for the Cowlitz River Advisory Group (CRAG) effective as of May 2018.

Mission Statement

The Cowlitz River Advisory Group provides recommendations to WDFW regarding Cowlitz River hatchery programs, fishery management issues, and natural origin fish population recovery actions; particularly as they relate to actions described in the Cowlitz River FHMP and Hatchery Genetic and Management Plans (HGMP). The CRAG shares WDFW's goal of maintaining, and when possible, expanding sustainable fishing opportunities on the Cowlitz River, while continuing to promote recovery of natural origin salmonid populations. The CRAG assists WDFW in communicating with other members of the public about Cowlitz River management strategies discussed at CRAG meetings. The CRAG recognizes WDFW's mission to preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities.

Ground Rules

In an effort to establish a positive working relationship and maximize our discussions, WDFW and CRAG members agree to these guidelines:

1. We will think the best of one another (we will not assume negative motives).
2. We will not interrupt (we will be quick to listen and slow to speak).
3. We will tell the truth.
4. We will be respectful – looking out for each other's interests; building each other up, not tearing down.
5. We strive for full and open disclosure (yes means yes, no means no).
6. We will communicate with each other proactively

Organizational structure

The CRAG membership is intended to include anglers and others with diverse interests who recreate in different portions of the Cowlitz River Basin and/or are affected by Cowlitz river fisheries and hatchery programs, to ensure all relevant interests are represented.

Membership

- The CRAG is comprised of up to 20 members.
- Members are appointed by WDFW for three-year terms.
- Members must declare the organization or user group they are representing.
- Members may be reappointed or removed at WDFW's discretion.
- Members are responsible for their own travel and meal expenses.
- WDFW welcomes the participation of persons with disabilities in all of its programs and related outdoor activities, including membership in advisory groups.

Method of Operation

The CRAG operates under the guidelines of the WDFW Advisory Group Handbook, available on the WDFW website (https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/advisory/advisory_group_handbook_2017.pdf), as further defined here:

Meetings

- The CRAG does not have a chairperson.
- WDFW staff will plan and lead/facilitate meetings, including developing agendas with input from CRAG members.
- Meetings will occur quarterly.
- Additional meetings will be scheduled as necessary.
- Meetings will be open to the public in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30).
 - WDFW will notify the public of proposed meetings, and will allow interested persons to attend.
 - The Open Meetings Act does not guarantee the public a right to speak or actively participate in the meeting.
- The CRAG and WDFW can include NOAA Fisheries and Tacoma Power representatives in relevant meetings/discussions.
- Public Records Act (RCW 42.56) – CRAG meeting records are public, and therefore subject to disclosure.