

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 Vigre, 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
  - Meetings quarterly
    - Additional as needed
  - 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
  - CRAG wants ability to invite TPU, NOAA and FERC
  - 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
  - CRAG is an advisory group for WDFW
  - TPU has expressed interest in hearing input from group
- Opportunity for public comment
  - Set 5-10 min for people who commit to come opportunity to speak
  - Consensus on having time for public comment
  - Last 10 minutes (T. Crocco)
- Public Records Act
  - 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
  - Guide community not represented
- Friends of the Cowlitz would like to fill some spots
  - Medical issues of people currently in CRAG
- Discussion emphasizing that WDFW is not looking for consensus, but wants to hear all perspectives
  - 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
  - We need to finalize group and move to working on topics
    - Determine who each member currently represents
  - 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?
  - Important for first few meetings to be face-to-face, until we make some progress
- Appointing alternates
  - Butch suggested alternates should be allowed due to busy schedules.
  - Some members agreed
  - Greg suggested if this was allowed, FOC would provide alternates for current members with health challenges
  - 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
  - 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

- 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
  - Increase Poundage at the Cowlitz Hatchery
  - Begin Tagging Out-Migrating Chinook at Mayfield Trap
  - 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:**

| Item                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Assigned to  | Due                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Provide CRAG members with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current production levels on the Cowlitz by species</li> <li>• Poundage released in 2017</li> </ul>                                                                          | T. Wadsworth | Prior to next meeting |
| E-mail requesting the following from CRAG: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fatal flaws/major comments seen in charter</li> <li>• Top 5 Cowlitz River topics to address at future meetings</li> <li>• Review of meeting notes</li> </ul> | 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