

# LEWIS RIVER AQUATIC COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Facilitator: ERIK LESKO  
503-412-8401

Location: TEAMS MEETING ONLY

Date: December 08, 2022

Time: 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM

## AGENDA

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9:30 AM	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Review and Accept 12/08/2022 Agenda</li><li>➤ Review and Accept 11/10/2022 Meeting Notes</li></ul>
9:45 AM	Public Comment Opportunity
9:50 AM	Yale Saddle Dam Remediation Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Status, Process and Schedule (<i>Brent Sullivan, PacifiCorp</i>)</li><li>➤ Distribution of Draft Application for License Amendment, ACC 90-day review (<i>Olson</i>)</li></ul>
10:15 AM	Draft Update Letter to FERC regarding Fish Passage Proposal – Request for ACC approval ( <i>Olson</i> )
10:40 AM	Study/Work Product Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Flows/Reservoir Conditions (<i>Lesko</i>)</li><li>➤ Merwin Gate Testing Schedule (<i>Lesko</i>)</li><li>➤ Aquatic Fund Schedule (<i>Lesko</i>)</li><li>➤ Reservoir Shoreline Development Projects (<i>ACC</i>)</li><li>➤ WASHDOT - Cougar Creek (<i>Lesko</i>)</li><li>➤ ATS Update (<i>Lesko, Montgomery</i>)</li><li>➤ FPS Update (<i>Glaser, Olson</i>)</li><li>➤ Fish Passage/Operations Update (<i>Karchesky</i>)</li><li>➤ Swift Reservoir Stranding Surveys (<i>Lesko</i>)</li><li>➤ 2023 ACC Schedule (<i>Lesko</i>)</li></ul>
11:45 AM	Public Comment Opportunity Next Meeting Agenda
12:00 PM	Meeting Adjourn

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Note: all meeting notes and the meeting schedule can be located at:  
<https://www.pacificorp.com/energy/hydro/lewis-river/acc-tcc.html>

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Phone Conference ID: 644 857 650#

**FINAL Meeting Notes  
Lewis River License Implementation  
Aquatic Coordination Committee (ACC) Meeting  
December 8, 2022  
TEAMS Meeting Only**

**ACC Representatives and Affiliates Present (18)**

Bridget Moran, American Rivers  
Sarah Montgomery, Anchor QEA  
Christina E. Donehower, Cowlitz Indian Tribe  
Amanda Froberg, Cowlitz PUD  
Anne Baxter, Ecology  
Steve Manlow, LCFRB  
Melissa Jundt, NMFS  
Chris Karchesky, PacifiCorp  
Erik Lesko, PacifiCorp  
Todd Olson, PacifiCorp  
Brent Sullivan, PacifiCorp  
Jeremiah Doyle, PacifiCorp  
Jim Byrne, Trout Unlimited  
Nick Grant, USFS  
Jeff Garnett, USFWS  
Bryce Glaser, WDFW  
Josua Holowatz, WDFW  
Peggy Miller, WDFW  
Bill Sharp, Yakama Nation  
Keely Murdoch, Yakama Nation

**Guests (0)**

None

**Calendar:**

December 8, 2022	ACC Meeting	TEAMS Meeting
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<b>Assignments from December 8, 2022</b>	<b>Status</b>
All: Provide comments on the Yale License Amendment to Beth Bendickson by March 8, 2023.	<b>Ongoing.</b>
Olson: Revise the FERC letter and provide to the Settlement Agreement parties for review.	<b>Ongoing.</b>
All: Circulate FERC letter internally and provide comments back to Olson by January ACC meeting.	<b>Complete (01/04/2023)</b>

<b>Assignments from November 10, 2022</b>	<b>Status</b>
Karchesky: Discuss potential impacts of Merwin conveyance system work with the ATS to determine broodstock collection modifications.	<b>Ongoing.</b>

<b>Assignments from July 14, 2022</b>	<b>Status</b>
Erik Lesko: Update Teams meeting invitation to add and remove staff as needed. (Full update planned for 2023 meeting invitations.)	<b>Complete (12/23/2022)</b>

<b>Assignments from April 14, 2022</b>	<b>Status</b>
Erik Lesko: Coordinate with the TCC regarding the timing for WSDOT’s Cougar Creek culvert project.	<b>Ongoing. (Currently planned for 2023.)</b>

**Opening, Review of Agenda and Meeting Notes**

Erik Lesko (PacifiCorp) called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. and reviewed the agenda. Lesko reviewed the November 10, 2022 meeting notes. The notes will be deferred to January for approval due to review timing.

**Public Comment Opportunity**

None.

**Yale Saddle Dam Remediation Project Update**

Brent Sullivan (PacifiCorp) provided a project update on the Yale Saddle Dam Remediation Project. He said FERC requires a “Board of Consultants” for the project, which is needed for more technically complex projects. This is not uncommon for complex hydroelectric projects, but this presents a scheduling challenge, because a large group needs to meet and review design and analysis. He said given the review timelines, combined with PacifiCorp’s own design and dam safety review process by staff and subject matter experts, design work will probably not be complete until 2023, with construction in mid-2024. He estimates the park will be open in 2023, then closed for two years (2024 and 2025).

Peggy Miller said WDFW looked over the plan drawings but did not have substantive comments. Peggy noted there will be hard armoring, such as riprap, added to the upstream side of Saddle Dam, asked whether the reservoir would need to be drawn down more than the usual 10-foot draw-down. Sullivan said there is existing riprap on the upstream side of Saddle Dam which will be rehabilitated and added to during the project. The timing of the riprap work would ideally occur during the normal 10-foot draw down, but if an additional draw down is needed, it would be coordinated. He noted the work will likely require a lower reservoir elevation to access the upstream toe of slope.

Miller asked whether the construction schedule would affect the Yale Dam downstream fish collector construction. Olson said no, the projects have no scheduling ties or conflicts.

Jeff Garnett asked about the permitting process for the project and whether Endangered Species Act permitting timeframes are accounted for in the schedule. Olson said there was some staff turnover at PacifiCorp that affected who was handling permits for this project, but he is working to move those processes along and plans to discuss the project with USFWS and NMFS staff soon.

ACC representatives present thanked Sullivan for the update, and he offered to answer any additional questions as they arise.

### **Draft Application for Yale License Amendment**

Todd Olson shared the document, “Yale Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. P-2071) Draft Application for Non-Capacity Amendment of License for a Major Project,” which was distributed to the ACC, TCC and Settlement Agreement parties on Thursday December 8, 2022, for a 90-day ACC review (comments due March 8, 2023). Olson said the proposed amendment is for the earlier discussed Saddle Dam remediation project, which is a dam safety project. PacifiCorp had several calls with FERC to discuss whether a license amendment would be needed, and it was ultimately determined that one would be needed. PacifiCorp drafted the amendment and provided it to the Settlement Agreement parties for 90-day review. Olson said the document is available on PacifiCorp’s website, and hard copies can also be provided upon request.

He reviewed the multiple volumes and exhibits in the proposed amendment and noted those which are not available for public release. Additions to the license Exhibit A are shown in bold underlined text and deletions are shown in strikethrough. Though the focus of the amendment is the Saddle Dam remediation project, PacifiCorp also took the opportunity to update sections that were out of date. He reviewed the proposed schedule and Exhibit D, which discusses the costs and financing plan for the project. He reviewed Exhibit R, showing the recreational facilities and drawings that will be affected. He reviewed Exhibit E, which reports on environmental conditions and impacts in a format that will assist with NEPA permitting.

Peggy Miller thanked Olson for the update and noted the TCC has evaluated temporary and permanent impacts to PacifiCorp’s Wildlife Habitat Management Plan lands at Saddle Dam and developed a mitigation plan for those impacts. The TCC conducted a field visit with PacifiCorp’s project manager (Eric Hansen) to discuss the project, too. She noted PacifiCorp has other draft applications for license amendments pending with FERC for fish passage updates and asked whether both can be implemented. Olson said one amendment can become active without affecting the other, or they can both become active. Typically, license amendments are specific to certain project works. Once the review period is completed and the application submitted to FERC, it will become an active proceeding with the Commission.

Josua Holowatz asked whether Saddle Dam Park will be closed for two years, and whether there has been discussion of expanding parking at Yale Park to absorb some of the traffic. Olson said PacifiCorp anticipated this issue and proposed the expansion of two parking areas as mitigation, which is described in the other license amendment that is pending approval. Parking expansions at Cresap Bay and Yale Park were reviewed by the Settlement Agreement parties in summer 2021 and PacifiCorp submitted a license amendment to FERC in November 2021. PacifiCorp has reached out multiple times to check on the status of this amendment but not heard anything back. Ideally, those projects can be completed before Saddle Dam Park is shut down for construction to accommodate the park users.

### **Study/Work Product Updates**

#### **ATS Update**

Erik Lesko said the Aquatic Technical Subgroup (ATS) is working to finalize the 2022 Annual Operating Plan. The ATS has also recently revisited their priority items and upcoming deliverables and are working to reorganize their work plan so that priorities and ongoing work

can be tracked well. Staff from WDFW, PacifiCorp and Cramer Fish Sciences are also working to finalize the genetics monitoring plan. In May, PacifiCorp will provide a summary of ATS activities in 2022 that are included in the 2022 Annual Operations Report. Other activities in early 2023 will be working to update monitoring plans for 2023 and making progress on the integrated population models (IPM's).

### FPS Update

Bryce Glaser said the FPS has been working to finalize the “Elements of Future Fish Passage” document. Recently, the FPS received a presentation by Peter Martins (PacifiCorp, Dam Safety Director) focusing on the spillway upgrades and construction schedule. PacifiCorp has been working on edits to the Elements document and that will be further discussed during the FPS meeting this afternoon.

Todd Olson reminded the ACC that everyone is invited to attend the 30% design workshop on December 14<sup>th</sup> from 12:30 to 4:30 pm. During that meeting, 30% designs will be presented for Yale upstream passage, Yale downstream passage, and Swift upstream passage. The design teams comprised of fish passage experts in the region will be available for questions.

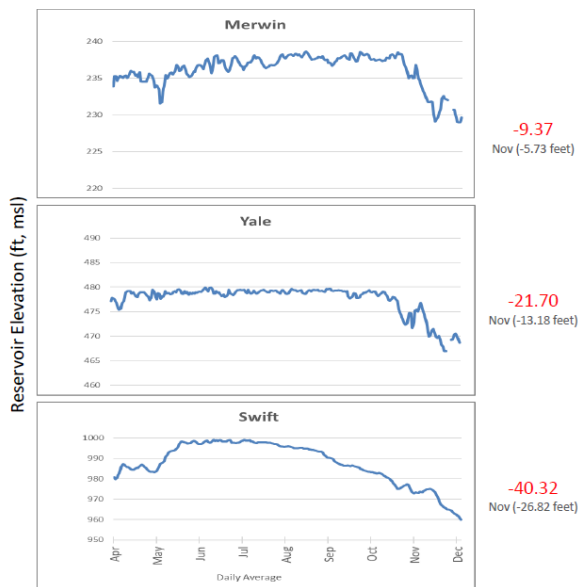
Glaser also welcomed Melissa Jundt (NMFS) to the FPS and ACC, who is engaging on fish passage issues for NMFS in the Lewis River basin.

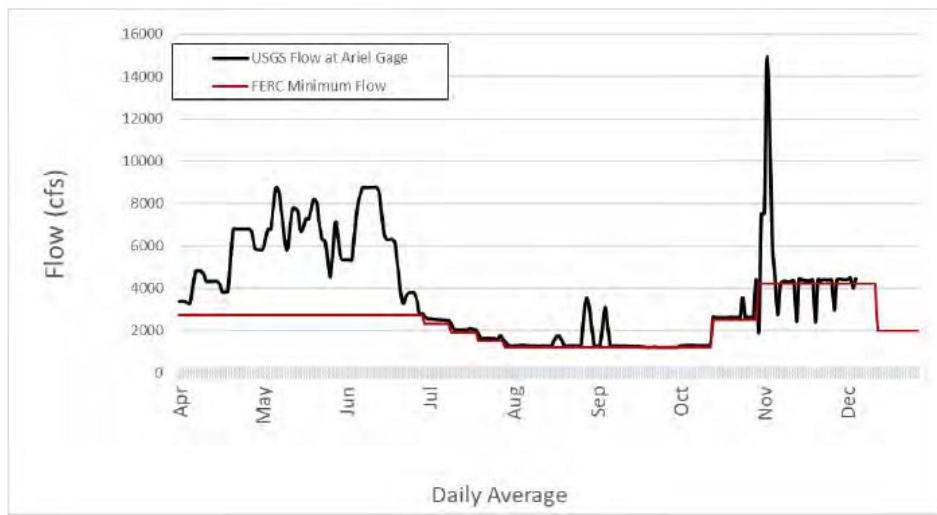
### Flows/Reservoir Conditions Update

Erik Lesko shared the flows and reservoir conditions update:

Daily Average Reservoir Elevations – April 1 to December 8, 2022

**Total Draft: -71.39**  
 Nov (-45.73 feet)  
 (-61.39 with Yale restriction)





Lesko noted the total draft is 71 feet, 61 feet with the Yale reservoir restriction. This draft amount provides an allowance for winter storms. For flows downstream of Merwin Dam, he pointed out the weekly deviations present in the figure to accommodate WDFW Chinook surveys.

Glaser asked when is the proposed drop to 2,200 cfs? Olson said the FERC minimum requirement is 4,200 cfs through December 15, then on December 16 the minimum drops to 2,000 cfs. Olson noted there is an interim reduction for fall Chinook surveys planned next week as well, but flows will increase after that minor reduction. Glaser noted that flow reductions to accommodate WDFW Chinook surveys were approved by the low flow committee prior to implementation.

### **Merwin Gate Testing Schedule**

Erik Lesko reminded the ACC of the spill gate testing that is planned at Merwin Dam this week. Notification of this work was provided to the ACC via email on December 2, 2022. This work should be completed by next week and will not impact flow reduction for WDFW Chinook surveys or compliance with our FERC license requirements.

Josua Holowatz thanked Lesko for the update and noted that WDFW receives questions from the public regarding Merwin Reservoir levels. When water levels drop 11 feet, he receives many comments about being able to use the ramp at Speelyai Bay. Lesko said he understands the public interest in the levels because of the popular fisheries in the reservoir. Olson added that inflows have been low this year, so water in the reservoir has been used to make up Merwin flow to the lower river. He noted that flows will drop back down to 2,000 cfs starting December 16, which should allow the reservoir to fill up more. Holowatz said he understands the priority is to provide flows for listed fish species in the lower river, which creates a deficit in the reservoir, and he will continue explaining this to the public.

### **Aquatic Fund Proposals**

Erik Lesko thanked the ACC representatives for providing comments on the two draft Aquatic Fund proposals. He provided the comments back to the applicants, and final applications are due to PacifiCorp on December 30. In early January, Lesko will distribute the final proposals along

with our evaluation template to the ACC. We will conduct our project selection meeting in February.

### **Shoreline Development Update**

Erik Lesko said he does not have any updates on known shoreline development projects within the project limits.

Steve Manlow asked for an update from WDFW on permitting for the Camper's Hideaway project (which includes expanded overwater facilities in Merwin Reservoir), due to the concerns about expanding predator habitat. Josua Holowatz said WDFW reviewed pre-submittal materials and provided comments on the overwater facilities. The habitat biologists at WDFW are requiring perforated grating for the decking material, which was a point of contention for the applicant. However, it sounds like this item has been addressed and will be included in the final SEPA submittal. When that permit package is received, WDFW will have a full review opportunity. Manlow thanked Holowatz for the update and said he is mostly looking to see that there is not an increase of overwater cover in the reservoir. Glaser and Holowatz said they will continue providing updates on the project from the permitting standpoint. Lesko agreed and said it is a relatively large development project in the reservoir so it will be good to have the ACC's attention on this project as updates become available.

### **Cougar Creek – WSDOT Culvert Replacement**

Erik Lesko provided an update on the WSDOT culvert replacement project on Cougar Creek at highway 503. He shared photos from a November 14, 2022, site visit. He noted riprap that was installed along the road to protect the highway, and illustrated the current flow pattern that is starting to scour towards the road. The intent of the project is to protect the highway and prevent it from washing out. Peggy Miller noted that the TCC has also been discussing this project, and that part of the proposed action involved moving gravel to reroute flow of the creek towards the existing culvert. Lesko recalled a similar design element but did not have those details currently to share with the ACC. As details become available, Lesko will continue to update the ACC.

Anne Baxter asked for the location of the culvert. Lesko said it is just east of the town of Cougar, on highway 503 (Lewis River Road). Its coordinates are 46.056816, -122.294215.

### **Letter to FERC Regarding Fish Passage**

Todd Olson said the FPS has been working on the "Elements of Future Fish Passage" document and working together to resolve outstanding issues. PacifiCorp continues to coordinate with FERC on progress towards fish passage, and there is a lot of pressure coming from FERC to resolve issues and move forward. The FPS discussed sending FERC a letter describing the progress made to date and what issues the FPS is working through. Olson said he drafted a letter that either the Utilities or the ACC could send to FERC that shows support from the broader group (Attachment A). The draft letter is an update to FERC and identifies the end of April as a target for resolving outstanding fish passage issues. He asked the ACC for feedback on the letter, which can also be discussed this afternoon during the FPS meeting.

Glaser said he initially envisioned the letter as a joint letter from various ACC/FPS representatives, though a joint letter may take more time to vet and get approval on. Glaser said he cannot approve the letter today because he will need to vet certain aspects of it through legal staff, but he supports the development of the letter, which signals to FERC that progress is being made and issues are being worked through thoughtfully. He hopes the message can be balanced



and show that the FPS is not slowing the process down but working alongside the design. He asked whether the April deadline is for working through the design elements, or for developing the process to work through the design elements. Olson said he envisioned April as the deadline to work through any significant design issues, but he understands if that is not realistic, and the April deadline is more conceptual for developing a process to work through outstanding issues. He said he chose April as a target because it seems like a reasonable date to work towards.

Glaser suggested expanding the content of the letter to also describe the process that has been developed through the FPS, including monthly meetings and working through the design elements. Melissa Jundt agreed and said she would need some time to determine which group at NMFS should be providing approval for the letter. She said signing a joint letter might present too many complications. Bill Sharp agreed and said legal review may slow down review and signing timeframes. Christina Donehower agreed and said she appreciates the discussion on the draft letter, and she will similarly need time to provide the draft internally for review.

Olson said he will revise the letter to include more description of what has been accomplished, including establishment of the FPS and its actions, then will provide the revised letter for the ACC to review. He will also add text strengthening the message that the ACC is working aggressively on evaluating alternatives, studies, and designs, and not slowing the design process down. He said he has a meeting with FERC next week, and will update them that they can expect a letter soon on behalf of the ACC. He asked for ACC representatives to please seek feedback from management and legal staff in a timely manner, so the letter can be approved at the January ACC meeting. If FERC shares any concerns with this plan, he may reach back out to the ACC with a different proposed path forward for the letter.

Jim Byrne agreed with the path forward.

Bryce Glaser also agreed with the path forward, noting a joint letter would likely be challenging to put together. He asked what happens if the April 30 date is still not met? Olson said because FERC has not provided the Utilities a hard deadline, these updates are proactive. He suggests updating FERC again in March if there are outstanding items that are unlikely to be resolved by the end of April.

Olson said he will include the formal Settlement Agreement parties in the distribution list for the letter. If there are any changes to representation or contact information, please let him know.

### **Merwin Fish Passage Update (see also Attachment B)**

Karchesky said fish passage operations have remained uninterrupted at Merwin Dam. Quarterly maintenance of the lift and conveyance system is planned for next week, which will include checking the fish ladder, conveyance system, cables, and other routine inspections to make sure the collector is running as intended. Staff are still collecting an above average number of adult coho for this time of year, and the program is on target to meet the goal of 9,000 fish transported upstream. The first wild winter steelhead was also collected and transported upstream, and that run becomes more prevalent in February to March.

### **Swift Floating Surface Collector (see also Attachment C)**

Chris Karchesky reported the Swift FSC is currently in operation. Reservoir inflows have been low, which has contributed to low reservoir elevation, and not much debris has been encountered at the FSC. He noted a push of fish arrived at the FSC in mid-November, mainly coho parr and smaller smolts, which is consistent with previous years. However, as temperatures have

decreased, daily collection numbers have quieted. Jeff Garnett asked about the bull trout that was detected at the Swift FSC, described in the monthly report. Karchesky said this fish was collected on November 1, measured 540 mm in length and was returned to Swift Reservoir (PIT code: 3DD.003E2980AA).

### **Swift Reservoir Stranding Surveys**

Lesko said he revisited the Swift Reservoir stranding survey locations in November and noted the swimming area is now dry. A temperature monitor was installed in the swimming area previously. He noted the channel by Northwoods still had water in it, and there is a water level monitor in that location that can inform whether the channel goes dry or not. He said a report will be available in January that evaluates the 2022 data and findings. He plans to make one more field visit to observe whether the channel by Northwoods changes in water level and retrieve the water level and temperature monitors.

### **Lewis River Fish Passage**

See Attachment D.

### **Fishery In-season Update**

Josua Holowatz said the flow reduction beginning on December 16 coincides with the opening of angling for adult coho between Colvin Creek and Merwin Boat Ramp, per the permanent rules. He added that WDFW is working through the run reconstruction for spring Chinook and forecasting the 2023 run. He expects this information to be available by the next ACC meeting, and he plans to provide an update then.

### **Administrative Updates**

Erik Lesko said the Teams meeting invitations have been sent out for the 2023 ACC meetings. If anyone has issues with accessing those, please reach out.

Glaser noted that the most recent list he has of ACC representatives and alternates seems out of date. He asked for this to be an agenda topic in early 2023, with the goal of updating each primary and alternate representative with the appropriate contact information, and cross-checking this with the distribution lists and signatory lists. He reminded the ACC of the voting protocols, whereby if a representative or alternate is not present, they can identify a proxy via email or vote via email themselves. Lesko said that Beth has been updating and maintaining the current ACC distribution as it continues to change often. PacifiCorp will continue to update and maintain the list to ensure that distribution of ACC materials and meeting notifications are sent to the appropriate representatives. He reminded the ACC that the February meeting will be a voting meeting for Aquatic Fund proposals.

### **Public Comment Opportunity**

None present.

### **Agenda Items for January 12, 2023**

- Review December 8, 2022 Meeting Notes
- FERC Letter
- Spring Chinook Run Forecasts
- Review Updated Representatives/Alternatives List
- Swift FSC Collection Efficiency Evaluations
- Study/Work Product Updates

*Adjourn 11:30 am*

**Next Scheduled Meeting**

January 12, 2023
Teams Call
9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Meeting Handouts & Attachments**

- Meeting Notes from 11/10/2022
- Agenda from 12/8/2022
- **Attachment A** – Letter to FERC Regarding Fish Passage
- **Attachment B** – Swift FSC Facility Collection Report (November 2022)
- **Attachment C** – Merwin Adult Trap Collection Report (November 2022)
- **Attachment D** – Lewis River Fish Passage Report (November 2022)