

## Lewis River Fish Passage Subcommittee Meeting

### Agenda

Thursday July 14, 2022

2:00 to 3:30 pm

Teams

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#### Introductions

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#### Review Agenda and Meeting Notes

All

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#### Updates

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#### PacifiCorp Draft AIP

All

- Review elements
- Identify areas of alignment and/or issues of concern for each element

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#### Next meeting – August 17<sup>th</sup>

- Agenda
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**FINAL Meeting Notes  
Lewis River License Implementation  
ACC Fish Passage Subcommittee Meeting  
July 14, 2022  
MS Teams Meeting**

Attendees

Bridget Moran – American Rivers  
Eli Asher – Cowlitz Indian Tribe  
Christina Donehower – Cowlitz Indian Tribe  
Amanda Froberg – Cowlitz PUD  
Steve West – LCFRB  
Beth Bendickson – PacifiCorp  
Eric Hansen – PacifiCorp  
Nathan Higa – PacifiCorp  
Chris Karchesky – PacifiCorp  
Erik Lesko - PacifiCorp  
Todd Olson – PacifiCorp  
Sam Gibbons – WDFW  
Bryce Glaser – WDFW  
Josua Holowatz – WDFW  
Peggy Miller – WDFW  
Erin Peterson – WDFW

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**Introductions, Review Agenda and Meeting Notes**

Bryce Glaser, WDFW, briefly reviewed the meeting agenda. The June meeting notes, distributed for review on July 13, 2022, will be discussed and finalized at the next meeting. The thought on these is that they may not need a formal 30-day review process.

**Updates**

Eric Hansen, PacifiCorp, provided an update on the Yale downstream fish passage facility. He talked about capture velocity at the Floating Surface Collector (FSC). What is the velocity, 9 feet or as in the past, 3 feet per second? Nine feet per second will be our target design criteria and 12 feet per second may be achievable once the modeling is completed. Determining that speed and when fish start to move toward the fish collector location will help with orientation of the FSC and guide net location including whether to use full length nets. At this time in the design phase, we are planning to use full length guide nets. The 2022 NMFS criteria has been released and we will review and implement changes. One change in particular to the design criteria is the location of the FSC. It will be placed near the intake of Yale Dam. Orientation/axis will be confirmed in subsequent model runs. Our near-term focus with the design team will be on modelling and input of that data to inform design. It may be too deep for pile-driven or trestle, like Swift. We'll be

investigating mooring options with pile or navy type anchors. We are considering Saddle Dam Park to fabricate, construct, and launch the completed FSC. High level discussions will continue until we confirm all the parts and pieces.

The design team will be ready to provide the 30% design presentation in December.

### Comments

Bryce talked about schedule alignment as he wanted to make sure there is a pathway for communication so folks can see project milestones. This committee will help formulate the basis for the design team. He wants to make sure there are enough spots for input along the way and not just at the end. Eric said the design team acknowledges and mentioned that it takes time to formulate designs, and he will keep this group informed of the design criteria. Bryce said that based on feedback there may be changes. Eric added that when you read through the list, for example on capture velocity, if you read 9 feet per second but would like the design team to look at 7 or 12 feet, we will entertain that question. Is it based on prior design standards which utilities have built what, and what velocity has been successful. He is looking forward to discussions. Bryce appreciated that and wanted to make sure we are all on same page. Eric said we are available for questions via email and you can always contact any of the PacifiCorp staff.

In parallel, Chris Karchesky, PacifiCorp, said that it's always a challenge to design to a certain criteria. It's based on what fish are doing. He mentioned the Yale Fish Behavior Study. One of the biggest things for a fish passage facility is understanding what fish do. Regarding the 2022 Fish Behavior study, all fish were released by the end of May, on schedule. As of this week, all fish have been detected at receiver sites. From manual tracking this week, fish are seeking out cool water and starting to congregate near Cougar Creek. The data from May and June will be compiled and a preliminary report encompassing those months will be available in August. Some fish in the forebay transitioned downstream past Yale. Chris is looking through the data and getting details on where fish passed and related conditions. Some of the fish in the study are now in Merwin.

Nathan Higa, PacifiCorp, provided an update on the Yale upstream fish passage facility. He said a draft criteria memo will come out soon. Site surveys are complete and hydraulic modelling has begun to establish the circulation conditions that affect what we are going to design. The Swift upstream fish passage facility is coming along similarly about several weeks behind.

Regarding Eric's update, Bryce asked if there were documents or a link to share the new NMFS fish passage criteria. *Action Item:* Beth Bendickson, PacifiCorp, will send the link to the new criteria.

### **PacifiCorp Draft AIP**

Bryce said it may take several discussions/meetings to get through a Draft Agreement in Principle (AIP). He asked if we could at least get some alignment on the AIP and also discuss how we should package it up for ACC review. Capturing the letter to FERC might not be the right pathway. Maybe we could draft some kind of document that designs for the short term, near term, and also what adaptive management changes would look like. In addition, we should capture some of the different things we need to be thinking about into the future even though we don't have all the answers now.

Todd Olson, PacifiCorp, noted that having something down on paper for subcommittee review and comment would ultimately help lead to a document that the ACC could then review and comment on. The objective would be to achieve consensus on a plan that could be submitted to FERC. Todd added that there is a bit of pressure for PacifiCorp to provide something soon to FERC, but he is ok with providing them with the things we agree on and the things we have yet to resolve. Eli Asher, Cowlitz Tribe, asked if after reviewing the document, would it be something that would then go to FERC as a preliminary update in August? Todd said yes, and that it would also be the pathway for how we get to a final submittal to FERC. Eli liked that.

Bryce said it was awkward for him to ask the ACC to agree to an AIP in a letter to FERC. His thought was that we need a standalone document, as the AIP may have legal aspects to it. He suggested maybe a fish passage plan that outlines considerations, what we can agree to in the short term, and what the process is to move to a long term solution or direction, something that the ACC would approve, rather than have them bless/adopt the letter to FERC. Eli liked the idea of a standalone document. Bryce suggested having the subcommittee review the document until they are comfortable with it and then it give to the ACC. It could then be filed with FERC showing that we were working through the process.

### **Draft Fish Passage Plan Proposal Review Elements**

Todd walked the group through the Draft Fish Passage Plan Proposal and explained the document is based on a previous draft letter to FERC with some updated and added new language.

Bryce noted that WDFW considered the following when they evaluated the plan. What is the best way for fish passage configuration and what are we comfortable with for the short and long term? What is the vision? Are we working on the assumption that we generally agreed to trap and truck transport? It would be good to reiterate PacifiCorp's stance on why that's still the case. A lot of years have passed since the original assumption. We've looked at this again and there may be new rationale. We should do our due diligence on why this is still the preferred option.

### **Integration of Upstream Adult Salmonid and Bull Trout Passage Facilities**

#### Comments

From WDFW's standpoint, Bryce said one fish passage facility for bull trout and salmonids to accomplish both tasks is ok as long as it's designed with agreed-upon capacities. USFWS (for bull trout) needs to agree with the concept. Some of the language still needs careful review. We all recognize the transport species, but there are other species we will have to deal with, let's not forget those that aren't called out in Settlement Agreement. Todd was in agreement. If non-transport species show up in the trap, what are we going to do? The Utilities will definitely want input on that.

## **Downstream Fish Passage Facilities**

### Comments

Bryce said WDFW was in agreement with the general approach of using surface collector on the Yale downstream passage. They recognize Ecosystem Diagnosis and Treatment (EDT) results provide a general idea of fish numbers per reservoirs but there are concerns. There is a lot of uncertainty in EDT so we should plan for a buffer on top of the EDT values and allow for extra capacity from the get-go. Other than that, the language in SA 4.5 references downstream transport of fish to release ponds below Merwin from the Yale facility. So the plans for Yale need to align to that. Todd said the idea is to have holding tank space available at the Yale downstream facility and asked if there were any thoughts on what the number of fish might be? Bryce said without getting into it too much, the ATS has talked about a modelling approach to better understand seeding capacity and expected returns. It would be a longer term heavily modelled exercise. On shorter term “back of napkin estimates” we could apply modelling by making assumptions not captured in EDT. Maybe kick it over to the ATS to evaluate EDT predictions vs. what new information we could use to validate and buffer on top of that. He doesn’t have a clear answer but would like to get something in the works for having more discussion.

Regarding the Merwin downstream facility, he said there are some bigger questions and concerns. WDFW is struggling with a “simplified/modified” bypass collection facility and do not understand what it would look like. He’ll get back to Todd after vacation. The first concern is the bypassing of fish below Merwin Dam and the development of a modular surface collector agreed to in the Settlement Agreement. The Settlement Agreement talks about transport below Merwin rather than bypass. The bypass option doesn’t align with the Settlement Agreement in WDFW’s opinion. The second item of concern is we may need to have collection/holding facility whether or not you would handle or sub-sample the fish before they are bypassed. This would allow the addressing of other concerns. Regarding downstream bull trout movement, it’s unclear what the Utilities’ standpoint is on what to do with adults or juveniles. We need to work with the Services. Also, there are a lot of nontarget fish (other than Kokanee) and other resident fish that would be bypassed into the lower river. If passing nontarget fish was a problem and we didn’t have the capacity to collect/hold them it could cause challenges down the road. Having the capacity to collect and hold all the fish might be something to consider in the design. Lastly, his understanding is that there are some water temperature issues below Merwin. If we bypass below Merwin Dam, we need to understand the effects on fish and then pivot/move/change to release ponds. Flexibility in design would be important. Regarding returning adults, how do we sort/deal/identify fish that originated from Merwin so that they can be returned to Merwin. These are just some of their concerns on downstream passage.

Eli asked if the collection was just in springtime? Todd said yes, that is proposal. Merwin has no spring Chinook habitat and those are the juveniles we see going out in the fall. Plus in the winter there are spill events in Merwin. It gets complicated from a dam safety standpoint. Eli then inquired about fall fry migration. Chris said we do see that at times at the Swift FSC, it depends on fall flows. High flows can push them out into the reservoir. Eli asked Chris about the collection of parr size in the fall. Chris said he understands they may be in there at certain flows. Some of the monitoring has suggested if there are out-migrating juveniles they return at separate rates. For example, a large amount of the fry migrations only make up a small portion of adults. He doesn’t want to base anything on assumptions. Todd said he will work with Chris to look at Swift to help

define the period so we can address Eli's concerns and those of dam safety. Bryce added that Cowlitz has operations into the fall so it could help with information. He supports the ability to include fall or the ability to use adaptive management to address timing.

## **Expansion of Upstream Fish Passage Facilities**

### Comments

Bryce noted that the number of natural fish will build over time and we ultimately need to do an exercise to start out with a buffer for increased capacity. It's the same concept for juveniles. The numbers proposed don't necessarily mean we achieve healthy harvestable numbers. We may need to include hatchery fish. To that point, Todd said the EDT fish numbers give a starting point, but there is room for discussion. The key for the design team is how many fish are there on any given day but having a buffer to be able to handle a large number. Designing for too little a capacity causes concerns.

## **Determination for Upstream Swim-Through Fish Passage Operations**

### Comments

For the upstream fish passage, WDFW went back and scoured the Settlement Agreement and there are references that do imply swim-through and transport (SA 4.7 and SA 4.8). It definitely appears that it is already outlined and would be somewhat of a long-term configuration. We need to work through the concerns. In working through the alternatives of reservoir select release or swim-through, we should be thinking of the numbers of fish to implement. Changing away from a selective release we would need to think of the process steps. May have to modify the Settlement Agreement if we move away from that. What is the pathway on how to move into that. Todd said the Utilities' are not saying no to the swim-through alternative. We're trying to lay out a process starting with select reservoir release but leaving open the possibility of the swim-through alternative once the value of that alternative is identified and criteria to start that alternative established and agreed upon by the ACC. Bryce mentioned describing the process of adaptive management. Similar to before, recognizing the "other fish species" and what are we going to do with them, and the capacity and plan on what to do with them. When we look at the draft language, we should include Merwin, not just Yale. Regarding items one through four, you could add "here's how we should go about it," but be careful not to be too descriptive. Bryce said maybe add something like "through this process the following things should be considered." He said WDFW can help with wordsmithing this section.

## **Timing of Fish Passage Measures**

### Comments

Bryce is in in alignment. He will review Todd's additional language.

## **Fish Marking**

### Comments

Bryce said we need to have a clear plan of what the marking program is going to look like from the perspective of getting fish back to the right place. How do we get the fish into those habitats? All the details may not be dialed in now but as we get into different configurations we should indicate the need of a strategy. We should include bull trout on the list because there will be bull trout smolts and juveniles that will also be moving around. Todd will work with Jeff at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). For instance, on bull trout smolt, do they want to take them downstream or put them back into Yale, etc.? It might be a different strategy than salmon.

## **Kokanee Mitigation**

Bryce said WDFW will give a close look and get back to Utilities.

## **Studies to Inform Design Decisions and Design Review**

Bryce asked how we plan for facility design but also provide a way for the ACC, ATS, and this group to help inform the design team regarding future fish passage studies? Future Fish Passage subcommittee meetings can provide an opportunity and facility designs will be submitted out to the ACC for review as per the Settlement Agreement.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation Plans**

Todd noted that the Lewis River Monitoring and Evaluation Plan would be expanded to include these new fish passage facilities. Bryce added that maybe bullet points should be added for types of items to include.

## **Lewis River Habitat Enhancement Fund - Ran out of time to address this topic.**

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Bryce is still interested in having more discussion. Todd appreciated the comments and asked everyone to please take a look at the Draft Fish Passage Plan Proposal. Bryce's two main items are 1) ensuring that we have done our homework in considering trap and haul passage versus other alternatives and 2) continued discussions about Merwin downstream facility. *Action Item:* Todd will accept changes on the proposal and make it the next official version. Beth will then send it out to the group for review.

Eli thanked Todd for putting it together and thanked Bryce for providing comprehensive feedback. He is keenly interested in finding ways to meet the needs of the Utilities, but he added that it isn't a free pass.

Bryce reviewed the actions items identified during the meeting. He informed the group that he'll be out for a few weeks so may not be able to review the Draft Fish Passage Plan Proposal until early August.

Todd added that the Utilities would appreciate any comments folks might have.

<b>Action Items from July 14, 2022</b>	<b>Status</b>
Beth will send out the NMFS Criteria link	Complete
Beth will distribute the next version of Draft Fish Passage Plan Proposal for review and comment.	Complete
Beth will reschedule the August meeting to August 11, 2022 immediately following the ACC meeting.	Complete

Next meeting: August 11, 2022.

Meeting adjourned at 3:56 PM.