

North Fork Lewis River Project Request for Decision Template

North Fork Lewis River Coho Salmon, Winter Steelhead and Summer Steelhead Transition Plans

Part A –Decision Summary (to be completed after decision is made)

Date of Decision: 07-13-2023
Expected Implementation Date of Action (if applicable): 2024
Expected completion date of action (if applicable): Not Applicable

➤ **Decision Summary** (*brief summary of decision or action made by Committee*)

At the ACC meeting on July 13, 2023, the proposed actions were reviewed and discussed including comments received by representatives of the ACC. After discussing, the ACC followed voting protocols outlined in the ACC/TCC ground rules document. The proposed actions were approved by Representatives in attendance. The Utilities will distribute the approved decision template to Representatives not present at the July 13, 2023 ACC meeting for a required 7 day additional review period.

Part B –Decision Request (to be completed by Representative(s) requesting decision)

1. Representatives and Affiliations

WDFW in concert with the Lewis River Aquatic Technical Subgroup

2. Description and Justification of Request

- **Requested Action:** The ATS requests that the ACC adopts the Lewis River Coho Salmon and the Lewis River Winter and Summer-run Steelhead Hatchery Transition Plans as supplemental guidance documents to the Lewis River Hatchery and Supplementation (H&S) Plan (PacifiCorp 2020) to facilitate implementation of program changes for these hatchery stocks.
- **Introduction and background:** The H&S Plan (PacifiCorp 2020) describes hatchery production and supplementation components, monitoring and evaluation objectives, fish marking and tagging strategies, reintroduction outcome goals and an annual operating planning and reporting process. The H&S Plan is updated (at least) every 5 years and is structured to be consistent with Section 8 of the Lewis River Settlement Agreement (“Settlement Agreement”) dated November 30, 2004. The H&S Plan requires the development of an Annual Operating Plan (AOP), which provides for annual review and coordination of hatchery broodstock sources, production targets, fish release schedules, facility upgrades, broodstock collection and spawning protocols and monitoring & evaluation needs. The H&S Plan also calls for the development of Transition Plans (where appropriate) describing protocols for transitioning hatchery programs from segregated to integrated strategies. The ATS has worked together to develop these transition plans. Drafts of these

plans and associated analysis and technical materials were provided to the ATS by WDFW during the April and May ATS meetings for review and comment. Comments received were collated, discussed by the ATS, and incorporated into the final drafts of transition plans. These drafts were submitted to the ACC for an additional 30 day review. Comments received were again collated, discussed and incorporated into final versions of the Transition Plans. Both plans use a phased approach to implementation where Phase 1 starts implementation of program changes based on modeling and alternative analysis using currently available information and current recovery phase information. The goal of Phase 1 is to modify programs in a way that improves the recovery trajectory of listed populations affected by the programs (essentially better achieving conservation and reintroduction goals) while still providing fishery/harvest mitigation benefits. Phase 2 is the evaluation phase where program performance is evaluated alongside assessment/refinement of population biological reference points, recovery phase triggers and new management/transport objectives (i.e., implementation of fish passage at Yale and Merwin dams). Phase 3 is the adaptive management phase where program sizes and splits between conservation and harvest programs are adjusted based on program performance, recovery phase triggers and management/transport objectives.

Included in these Transition Plans are the following major objectives:

- Transition the existing integrated late coho (Type N) hatchery program to an integrated coho hatchery program that better represents the full breadth of the natural run timing of the Lewis coho population.
- Maintain an early coho segregated (Type S) hatchery program for harvest mitigation.
- Maintain the current integrated conservation winter steelhead hatchery program focused on providing fish for reintroduction.
- Discontinue the current out of basin (Chambers Creek stock) segregated early winter steelhead hatchery program.
- Transition the current harvest mitigation, early winter steelhead program to a winter steelhead stepping stone variant program utilizing adult returns from the current conservation program as broodstock.
- Reduce winter steelhead harvest program production (i.e., stepping stone variant) by 25,000 smolts, but increase the segregated summer steelhead production by 25,000 smolts, resulting in no net loss or gain of steelhead production.
- **Justification for requested action:**
 - The H&S Plan calls for the development of Transition Plans (where appropriate) describing protocols for transitioning hatchery programs from segregated to integrated strategies.
 - a) The transition to an integrated coho program that better represents the full breadth of run timing of the natural Lewis coho population provides a recovery benefit by improving the diversity of the hatchery stock being used for reintroduction into the Upper Lewis subbasin, while preserving harvest opportunity in the Ocean, mainstem Columbia and Lewis River provided by this hatchery program. The integrated coho

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program would run parallel to the current segregated early returning coho program, which has been shown to be a major contributor to ocean and freshwater fisheries.

- b) The transition to a new stepping stone variant steelhead program and discontinuation of the early winter steelhead program (Chambers Creek stock) is designed to reduce genetic risk to the natural origin winter steelhead population while increasing angling and harvest opportunity. Use of the Chambers Creek early-winter stock has not been supported by NOAA Fisheries in other hatchery program consultations with ESA listed populations in the Lower Columbia Basin.
- c) Lewis River hatchery programs will be undergoing consultation with NOAA Fisheries to obtain full coverage under the ESA. The first step in the consultation process is completion of Hatchery Genetic Management Plans (HGMPs), Transition Plans will provide the framework for development of HGMPs for the Lewis River steelhead and coho hatchery programs.

3. FERC or Settlement Agreement Requirement(s)

- What relevant FERC or SA articles justify this action?
[SA Articles 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 9.5](#)
- Are there any other regulatory requirements to support the requested action?
[Consultation with Services as part of the HGMP submittal](#)

Part C – Committee Decision (to be completed by Committee)

4. Committee Decision

- Was the decision made by consensus (as defined in the Committee ground rules)? **Yes**
- Document voting record and tally (if applicable)

		Transition Plan		
	Organization	ACC Representatives	Coho Salmon	Steelhead
1	American Rivers	Bridget Moran	Not Present	Not Present
2	Cowlitz Indian Tribe	Christina Donehower Dalton Fry	Approve	Approve
3	Fish First	Alex Maslov Janae Brock	Not Present	Not Present
4	Lewis River Community Council	Mariah Stoll-Smith Reese	Not Present	Not Present
5	Lower Columbia River Fish Recovery Board	Steve Manlow Steve West	Approve	Approve
6	National Marine Fisheries Service	Emi Melton (proxy) Bonnie Shorin Melissa Jundt	Approve	Approve
7	Utilities	Erik Lesko Chris Karchesky Amanda Farrar	Abstain	Abstain
8	Trout Unlimited	Jim Byrne Jonathan Stumpf	Approve	Approve
9	US Fish & Wildlife	Jeff Garnett	Abstain	Abstain
10	USDA Forest Service	Josh Chapman JD Jones Kyle Wright	Not Present	Not Present
11	Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	Bryce Glaser Peggy Miller Josua Holowatz (proxy) Aaron Roberts	Approve	Approve
12	WA Recreation/Conservation Office	Adam Cole	Not Present	Not Present
13	Yakama Nation	Bill Sharp Keely Murdoch	Approve	Approve

5. Justification for Committee Decision

- What information (i.e. empirical data) and how was this information used to inform decision? [WDFW presented these coho and steelhead transition plans to the ATS for review and comment. Comments, questions, and responses were collated into a comment matrix and were addressed in final transition plans.](#)

6. Contingencies or Conditions of the Decision

- Is decision contingent on other actions or information? **No**
- Is implementation of decision contingent on specific actions or information? [ESA consultation for potential take of listed species](#)
- Are there any conditions attached to this decision? **No**

7. Additional Information or Notations

[Comment matrix attached](#)