

**North Umpqua Hydroelectric Project
(FERC No. P-1927)
Resource Coordination Committee (RCC)
January 17, 2024 Meeting**

FINAL

RCC Members or Alternates Present

Steve Albertelli (PacifiCorp)*
Rich Grost (PacifiCorp)*
Michelle McMullin (NOAA)*
Chris Stine (ODEQ)*
Sarah Sauter (ODEQ)
Jason Brandt (ODFW)*
Craig Kohanek (OWRD)*
Martin Sanchez (OWRD)*
Jedidiah Hancock (USDA-FS)*
Valerie Thompson DEQ*
Parul Baranwal (ODEQ)*
Mike Korn (USDI-BLM)*

Other Attendees

Jeffrey Brown (PacifiCorp)*
Debbi Smith (PacifiCorp)*
Jillian Hochstrasser (OWRD)*
Jenna Seim (OWRD)*

*=Attended remotely

INTRODUCTIONS, MEMBER UPDATES, ORGANIZATIONAL NEWS

USDA-FS: Jed Hancock, the incoming Hydropower Program Manager working out of Cottage Grove provided updates. Pam Sichting has retired. Alice Carlton will be taking some time off, and Jake Wynn will be stepping in to temporarily fill her position. There will be an office move on April 1 from Stewart Parkway to the Garden Valley address in Roseburg to be co-located on the BLM campus. The current congressional budgeting process has been extended. They passed the new continuing resolution into March. It was also mentioned that the Forest fisheries program manager, Bob Nichols retired, and they are looking to replace him.

NOAA: Michelle McMullin provided updates. NOAA is under continuing resolution through early February and are will also be moving to the new interagency office at BLM's current campus in April.

USFWS: No updates.

BLM: Mike Korn provided updates. The previous field manager for the South River Field Office, Sarah Bickford, moved to Eugene. Will be picking up an assistant district manager and hopefully hiring an associate district manager soon. As for work, focus has been on landslides and roadways recently.

ODEQ: Valerie Thompson introduced herself as the new 401 Hydropower Program Coordinator replacing Marilyn Fonseca. Parul Baranwal is the new 401 Hydropower Program Manager replacing Chris Stine, but Chris is still helping in the transition period. Chris has retired officially but is working under contract through the end of February to help with transition. ODEQ is back to full staffing. Sarah Sauter also introduced herself as the Interim Basin Coordinator for the Umpqua.

ODFW: Jason Brandt introduced himself as the Southwest Hydro Coordinator for ODFW. ODFW is fully staffed in hydro, with the exception of finding a replacement for Sam Moyers' position to help with various settlement agreement activities.

OWRD: Craig Kohanek introduced himself as the hydroelectric Program Coordinator for Water Resources working out of the Salem office. OWRD expect to see some new projects, especially in the realm of additional hydro piggybacking on an existing water right. The goal is to have a new director by April. Martín Sanchez introduced himself as the Hydroelectric Project Analyst also from the Salem office, Jillian Hochstrasser introduced herself as an Assistant Watermaster in the Roseburg office, and Jenna Seim is the temporary Watermaster.

PacifiCorp: Jeff Brown mentioned that they had a project engineer vacancy and were recruiting for that. Rich Grost explained that Lory Dudley recently retired, and Brian Hanson is the new general foreman.

PUBLIC OUTREACH (PAST EVENTS/FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES)

The public tour held in October had a record number of attendees. The tour was started in the late afternoon, and it was proposed that future public tours start in the late afternoons.

Upcoming Events

There were two recent inquiries from the October tour. Gloria Coleman, the News-Review reporter who wrote the short feature article about the tour, was looking for details about the fish enhancement work for a follow-up article. The second inquiry was from Paul Heberling, who was also on that tour. He used to do temperature monitoring for the TMDL at the DEQ but is retired now. He is currently the president of the Umpqua Fisherman's Association, who have monthly meetings in Roseburg, and he thought that it would be nice to have an update on our fish enhancement projects at one of their monthly meetings. Rich will present at that on January 23, 2024 at 6 pm at Abby's in Roseburg.

The Umpqua Fishery Enhancement Derby Student Education Day is on Wednesday, January 31st at the Rock Creek Pavilion. Rich will probably be working with Evan Leonetti at ODFW and perhaps others to help describe the life cycle of our native fish and their habitat and fish passage needs.

FACILITY AND PROJECT UPDATES

Fish Creek and Clearwater 2 Pumped Storage

Fish Creek: On December 1, 2023, PacifiCorp received a license amendment from FERC to construct, operate, and maintain the Fish Creek pumped storage facilities. Notices to proceed for the surveys and geotech have been received, but not for construction of the facility. The mechanical equipment designs aren't expected to be done until the third or fourth quarter of this year. The consultation and work with Water Resources and DEQ on the water right amendment and water quality certification modification, respectively, went very well, and PacifiCorp is very appreciative of the RCC's consultation on the project to date. The pumped storage license amendment requires that construction start within two years and is completed within four. The engineering design and turbine technology was reviewed, and the water quality monitoring report, other studies, and schedule were discussed. The aquatic biology and water quality monitoring report were submitted in December.

Clearwater 2: Steve explained that PacifiCorp was pausing any efforts on Clearwater 2 pumped storage. Prospective pump-turbine technologies and project economics are not favorable in the near term and do not justify applying for a license amendment at this time. PacifiCorp will not continue implementing the studies proposed in the Initial Consultation Document. If PacifiCorp decides to pick-up the project in the future, PacifiCorp will reinitiate consultation with the RCC parties and resume these and/or other studies as needed. PacifiCorp will complete reporting and consultation on studies implemented in 2023 for future use in relicensing and/or pumped storage efforts.

Fish Protection and Passage Facilities (Tailrace Barriers, Ladders, Screens)

Due to recent weather conditions, high flow precautionary procedures have been in place for several days. There were some problems with a water level sensor that was giving erratic readings and beginning to trigger some flow transfer schemes at the Soda Springs fish screen beginning on December 29, 2023. On January 2, 2024, PacifiCorp crews corrected the indications and wiring. On January 14, 2024, rising flows and debris loads prompted opening of the north intake with the fish screen still in operation. PacifiCorp temporarily closed the north intake on January 16, 2024, but it's back open now to facilitate passage of high flows and debris. Operations are normal at the ladder and tailrace barriers, though extra cleaning efforts have been implemented at the tailrace barriers.

Toketee Dam Rehabilitation

A board of consultants will convene to work on seismic hazard issues, but this is the earliest stages and implementation is still many years away.

NTPs or Other Permitting Coordination

There are two outstanding NTP requests. There is the T-line access road TL46_5/29, which is being reviewed and is expected to be completed in the next couple of weeks. The hazard tree NTP is just waiting for the cultural review. Once that has been reviewed by the program manager, it should be ready to go.

The Lemolo 1 penstock intake rack and stairs are currently being installed and are expected to be operational by the end of February.

Updates were provided on Fish Creek forebay dredge disposal site options, including the Clearwater 2 forebay dredge disposal area. The Oregon Department of Aviation declined to receive spoils at Toketee Airport. Multiple options were discussed, and it will be brought up in a future transportation meeting to check for other options.

There was some discussion about the Fish Creek Forebay excavation and any required permits. There are draft NTPs requests for transmission pole replacements on both BLM and Forest Service lands this year. An NTP request will be needed for the Fish Creek forebay maintenance dredging.

MONITORING PROGRAM & TECHNICAL WORK GROUP UPDATES

SA 4.1 Soda Springs Fish Passage O&M

The Soda Springs Fish Passage Facility operation and maintenance plans require an annual report that summarizes the O&M activities. That report for 2023 was reviewed and approved by the TWG and will be filed with FERC prior to the February 1st deadline. There was one fish mortality event that year, in April, and then there were several high flow events where we initiated our cautionary procedures and opened the north intake in order to protect the fish screen from damage.

Major rain and snow was experienced in early December. It was the highest flow in approximately the last five years. No damage occurred to the facilities due to precautionary procedures, staff assignments, and the amount of attention given during high flow events, in addition to all the work done maintaining and upgrading the cleaning systems and facilities through the year.

SA 5 & 6 Flows and Ramping Monitoring

A flow and ramping report for water year 2022 was submitted last November to the Water Resources Department, DEQ and Forest Service. Analysis for the 2023 water year is in progress now. Down ramping beyond the 0.2 feet per hour threshold was experienced at the Toketee and Clearwater 2 bypassed reaches as a result of unit trips during storms. Fallen trees and debris caused issues, especially at the Lemolo 2 canal. Steps taken and current conditions were also reported.

SA 7.2 Gravel Augmentation Monitoring

Gravel patches downstream from the Soda Springs Dam were monitored and salmon were documented spawning on each of the gravel augmentation sites, although there is room for additional gravel in each. PacifiCorp noted that since the gravel augmentation fund has been expended, future gravel augmentation projects will need to be funded by the 19.3 mitigation fund and/or be conducted by the TWG agencies.

SA 8.2 Slide Creek Bypass Reach Habitat Monitoring

The Slide Creek bypass reach could also use some additional gravel to keep seeding the spawning habitats. PacifiCorp will convene the technical work group and key agency personnel to put together a plan for adding gravel to the Slide Creek bypass reach and also the Soda Springs bypass reach during 2024. A few of the agencies suggested good contacts to work with PacifiCorp on that plan, including Sophia Kim with the Forest Service. Jason agreed that augmentation was needed in the Slide Creek bypassed reach.

There had been a lot of discussion over the years regarding the challenges that faced when doing these types of habitat enhancement projects and the difficulties we have in obtaining permits. PacifiCorp will look to the agencies to provide comments of support and help where possible when that time comes.

SA 8.3 Soda Springs Bypass Reach Habitat Maintenance

Since major high flow events haven't occurred, the habitat quality remains good – similar to last year and substantial numbers of all four species are the habitat it to make redds. Redd counts were on the high side for Chinook and coho and were on the intermediate to high side for steelhead and brown trout. Some gravel from the deep pool immediately downstream from the fish screen structure was pushed up onto the upper pool tail out, up under the bridge, and some of that new gravel was used by coho salmon during December, immediately after it was distributed there.

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SA 19.2 Long-term Monitoring and Predator Control

It's been a record year in terms of the number of adults counted passing Soda Springs Dam. There were record low numbers of winter and summer steelhead, and then record high numbers of Chinook and coho salmon. As in 2022, the Chinook salmon counts included a very high proportion of clipped fish. There was a detailed description of the proposed 19.2 program budget for 2024, after which it was approved unanimously.

The 19.2 budget was voted on and approved by the RCC. Frank Weaver of FWS was absent, but Jason Brandt noted as FWS' proxy that there were no objections to the provided budget from FWS.

ODFW reported that as of the prior day, 29 jacks, and 13,164 adult coho had ascended the ladder at Soda Springs Dam. Compare that to the previous high of 542 in 2020, and the ten-year average is 220. No winter steelhead had passed upstream yet this year.

SA 19.2 Water Quality Certification Monitoring

The main monitoring related to the water quality certification is the Soda Springs Water Quality Station. The data hasn't been received from the USGS for water year 2023, but it should be ready soon. The report summarizing Lemolo Reservoir drawdowns for the previous September, October, November and December was finished and distributed on January 9th. That drawdown report only went to Forest Service and ODFW, but any RCC member can request a copy of it. PacifiCorp stayed above the 725 CFS target flow in the Wild and Scenic reach to support spring Chinook spawning during the Lemolo Reservoir drawdown.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE UPDATES

Powerhouse and Canal Outages (updates, plans)

A powerhouse and canal outage report was given. Toketee Unit 2 will be offline through Mid-September. There will be one or two 3-unit outages tentatively scheduled in July. The next outage will be for Soda Springs plant maintenance beginning at the end of March and extending into April. The Clearwater 2 biennial maintenance outage will occur at the end of April. Due to the storm and debris sluffing off the hillsides, Lemolo 2 plant remains in an unplanned outage, with plans for ramping water back into the canal on Friday.

The question was raised about whether there had been any landslides. No major landslides had occurred at that point, but there were hundreds of trees in the waterways and access roads.

Reservoir Management (Lemolo, Toketee, Soda Springs): The Lemolo Lake drawdown proceeded according to schedule. As reported above. Toketee and Soda Springs reservoirs have been operating as usual since the last RCC meeting.

SA 19.1 TRIBUTARY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

For the benefit of new RCC members, ODFW provided a brief synopsis of the Tributary Enhancement Program and the fish passage MOU that was developed in the settlement and relicensing phase of the Project. The 19.1 fund is for restoration projects in the North Umpqua Basin. Most of the 19.1 work has been in the Rock Creek subbasin.

Coho spawning ground surveys have begun and identified 168 coho redds in Rock Creek basin to date. That is more than last year ($n=98$) but less than previous years. There were difficult survey conditions this year due to high flows, turbidity, and debris loads throughout the survey period. ODFW has removed returning hatchery fish from the Rock Creek Hatchery fish ladder. Kirk is working on permitting and acquisition of materials for the coming field season. He is anticipating a Corps permit before June or July implementation. ODFW has obtained 800 boulders for habitat enhancements in Rock Creek and East Fork Rock Creek from KIA at no cost. The boulders will be staged along the creeks prior to implementation.

A high-water event in December resulted in large debris flows in Rock and East Fork Rock Creeks. Rock Creek water levels came up 9 feet in a short time frame. Many structures were damaged or completely lost, including some from installations as far back as 2009. Large log jams remain in the streams, and landslides are resulting in increased turbidity. More damage was sustained this last weekend, including the structures installed by Stillwater Sciences in the earliest implementation phases. Channel widths went from 1 foot to approximately 50 feet in the tributaries to East Fork Rock Creek. Lessons learned post-storm-events will inform future efforts, including whether ODFW will even consider large wood placement anymore. The boulder structures are holding much better than large wood. Water quality monitoring stations in North Fork East Fork Rock Creek and East Fork Rock Creek were also destroyed.

ODFW is continuing the riparian planting efforts. Twenty thousand seedlings were purchased and planting plans were designed for the riparian environments.

SA 19.3 FEDERAL MITIGATION FUND

The latest request for proposals will be going out soon. The new partnership coordinator, Jennifer Taylor, is working with partners to distribute funds for the previous round of projects.

OTHER RCC AGENCY PROJECTS AND/OR COORDINATION

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

NEXT RCC Meeting: April 17, 2024

The meeting adjourned at 12:13 P.M.