

**Thompson Falls Technical Advisory Committee
NorthWestern Energy**

Annual Meeting for 2026 Calendar Year

December 8, 2025
10:00 – 1:00
Butterfly House & Insectarium

Attendees

NorthWestern: Andy Welch, Grant Grisak, Joe Hagengruber, Jon Hanson, Jordan Tollefson, Andrew McElroy
FWP: Abigail Maddigan, Jason Blakney, Harvey Carlsmith, Mike Hensler
USFS: Josh Schulze

Avista: Eric Oldenburg, Shana Bernall
FWS: Carter Fredenburg
CSKT: Craig Barfoot
TU: Christine Brissette
GEI: Ginger Gillin, Kyle Olcott

Welcome/Introductions

Quorum is present with representatives from FWS, FWP, CSKT, and NorthWestern

Review 2025 Activities – PowerPoint Presentation provided by Jon Hanson

- Fish Ladder and Monitoring
 - March 21 through October 30
 - Not closed for high flow in 2025
 - 4,369 total fish captured
- One bull x ebt hybrid captured and was passed upstream
- First full year of evaluating orifice mode in the lower pools 1-8. Positive fish response in movement from entrance to pool 8; compared to weir mode. More testing in 2026.

2026 Ladder Operations

- Operate lower pools in orifice mode to evaluate internal efficiency compared to weir mode.
- Maintain existing tagging protocols as previous years.

2025 TAC funded projects report

Project Title	Agency/Contact	TAC Approved Cost	Status
Genetic Baseline Update (TRiver)	FWP	\$10,600	
Contingency funds	NWE	\$10,000	
Submersible PIT- data management	NWE	\$15,400	
Prospect/Dry Creek Easement	FWP/TPL	\$150,000	*approved mid-year

Review End-Of-Year 2025 Budget and Reserve Account

**Thompson Falls Technical Advisory Committee
NorthWestern Energy**

Annual Meeting for 2026 Calendar Year

2025 Project Summary

Thompson River Genetic Baseline Update: (Jason Blakney, FWP) Samples sent to lab to update bull trout baseline. Utilize this information for genetic assignment protocol.

Contingency Funds Update (Jon Hanson, NWE) Funds unused in 2025.

Submersible PIT- Data Management (Joe Hagengruber, NWE) Utilized Kleinschmidt to come up with data management and interpretation using computer programming. Final report looks good and saved considerable time in analyzing the information. Joe and Jon are working with NWE IT and Kleinschmidt to develop the tools in-house to do this work.

Prospect/Dry Creek Easement (FWP/TPL) Place a conservation easement on property in the lower Prospect Creek and Dry Creek areas. Provide additional streamside protections for Bull Trout.

Review/Discuss 2026 TAC Proposals and Allocate Funds

Budget for CY 2026	\$100,000
Uncommitted Reserve Funds start of 2026	\$55,697

2026 Proposed Projects for TAC Funding

Upper Prospect Creek Fish Passage – Christine Brissette (TU)

- Retrofit a state highway culvert and partial barrier to allow year-round passage of bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout.

Contingency Funds – Jon Hanson (NWE)

- Funding to be used towards approved project overruns or equipment needs during the 2026 calendar year. Used as needed and report back to the TAC.

- **Spare Tributary Arrays – Joe Hagengruber (NWE)**

- Purchase 2 mainstem Thompson River tributary antennas to be used as back up as needed. Intent is to be able to respond faster when PIT antennas have issues.

All projects approved by TAC consensus.