

# **PROJECT CHARTER**

## ***Anadromous Fish Floor (AFF) Validation Study*** ***August 7, 2025***

### **PROJECT CHARTER OVERVIEW**

The purpose of the Project Charter is to describe the project and give the Project Manager and the Project Team the authority to begin utilizing program resources and spending allocated project funds (CMER Protocols and Standards Manual (PSM) Chapter 7, section 4). In general, Project Charters should be brief and updated as needed as the project is implemented to accurately, reliably, and concisely communicate the projects' basic elements and objectives. When substantive changes are considered necessary, which amend the scope of the project (i.e., study design, budget, or schedule), the charter should be updated (version #2, #3, etc.) to communicate those changes.

### **PROJECT CHARTER APPROVAL DATES**

CMER: 6/24/2025

TFW Policy: 8/7/2025

### **OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

Instream Scientific Advisory Group (ISAG)

### **PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS**

Jason Walter (Weyerhaeuser, ISAG Chair), Hans Berge (UCUT), John Heimborg (WDFW), Susannah Maher (SRSC), Mark Meleason (WSAC), Anna Toledo (DNR, Project Manager)

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

On July 5, 2023, a Proposal Initiation for an Anadromous Fish Floor (AFF) Validation study was delivered to TFW Policy. TFW Policy passed a motion to "approve the Anadromous Fish Floor Proposal Initiation with a recommendation to the Forest Practices Board (the Board) to approve adding the AFF validation study into the CMER work plan and into the Master Project Schedule". On August 22, 2023, CMER passed a motion assigning this AFF work to ISAG. The Forest Practices Board's Water Typing Committee convened a policy/technical workgroup outside of the Adaptive Management Program (AMP) in 2019 which produced a series of policy and technical reports. The current AMP AFF Project Team submitted a technical summary clarifying how the AFF validation study will fit into the AMP Water Typing Strategy (TFW Policy Committee, 2024). That memo was approved by CMER on March 24, 2024, and by TFW Policy on April 4, 2024, and the contents summarized to the Forest Practices Board on May 9, 2024.

In 2022, the Board defined the Anadromous Fish Floor as “measurable physical stream characteristics downstream from which anadromous fish habitat is presumed” (Washington State Forest Practices Board, 2022; TFW Policy Committee, 2023). On June 6 2025, the Forest Practices Board approved revised water typing rules which state “The AFF is delineated on waters connected to saltwater by measurable physical stream characteristics of biological significance to anadromous fish, within which anadromous fish habitat is presumed, and upstream of which the default physical characteristics or a protocol fish survey under FHAM may be applied to establish the Type F and N Water type break” (WAC 222-16-0301). To date, the Board has not identified specific thresholds or criteria for measurable stream physical characteristics to define the AFF. This charter guides a multi-stakeholder project team within ISAG to develop an anadromous fish floor.<sup>1</sup>

The AFF is intended to be used in conjunction with the Fish Habitat Assessment Methodology (FHAM), however the AFF points would play a different role in the water typing process than Potential Habitat Breaks (PHBs) and Default Physical Criteria (DPC) points. The AFF can identify a starting point for protocol electrofishing surveys. The goal of the AFF is to reduce the risk of failing to identify anadromous fish habitat. The AFF can also reduce the exposure of anadromous species to electrofishing.

Conceptually, the AFF and DPC function as bookends, between which implementation of FHAM begins, and the AFF:

- Would likely require a separate sampling framework to capture data representative of anadromous fish use. Anadromous fish use tends to occur at relatively lower elevations in the watershed, whereas PHB and DPC focus on the upper limits of fish use in the watershed. The data needed to characterize the upstream extent of fish use typically differ from those needed to characterize the AFF.
- Must account for the variability in abundance of anadromous species as it relates to extent/distribution.
- Should reflect recoverable habitat historically occupied by anadromous species.

This project will need to address the following data considerations:

- Data on known anadromous fish locations to support this work are not well consolidated and are not centrally/readily available.
- Available anadromous fish presence or presence/absence data often do not account for different habitat needs and uses by the same species at different life stages, including substantial differences in swimming and leaping abilities of juvenile vs adult fish and use of non-channelized habitats.
- Even where high-quality location data for anadromous fishes are available, associated field-verified habitat data are often sparse or entirely lacking.

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this project, the “anadromous fish floor” refers to habitat that is likely to be accessed and/or occupied by anadromous fishes, and not intended to represent the maximum observed upstream extent of anadromous fish use. Ultimately, the floor will be used to identify the starting point for which protocol surveys may be applied for water typing purposes.

The purpose of this project is to identify measurable physical stream characteristics<sup>2</sup> downstream from which anadromous fish habitat would be presumed and to compare those measurable characteristics against field observation data throughout the state. The study is designed to assess which combinations of gradient, channel width, vertical and non-vertical barriers to migration, and other physical habitat and geomorphic conditions are most often associated with anadromous fish use. This will 1) identify habitats where anadromous fish use is presumed using specific physical metrics and 2) provide one potential starting point upstream from which water typing surveys are conducted using FHAM.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

AFF project-specific objectives are listed below:

1. Assemble existing high-quality anadromous fish distribution data sets with adequate geographic coverage, including multiple species and life stages, and empirical physical stream attribute data describing the habitats associated with known anadromous fish locations.
2. Review available data and identify potential gaps (e.g., spatial coverage, specific species or life stages, and/or particular habitat types).
3. Analyze the assembled data to identify and evaluate suitable criteria for the measurable physical stream characteristics to define an AFF.
4. Develop recommendations for measurable physical stream characteristics<sup>3</sup> that can be used to define an AFF supported by empirical data and meeting the specifications provided by the Board, without the influence of Policy and implementation considerations.<sup>4</sup>
5. Evaluate the performance of the recommended measurable physical stream characteristics<sup>3</sup> (from Objective 4) for defining an AFF.

## CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Proposed Project Critical Questions that are AFF-specific and relate to the CMER Workplan Rule Group Critical Questions are below:

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<sup>2</sup> Stream characteristics would include headwater wetlands likely to be used by anadromous fish.

<sup>3</sup> This might include specific values for one or more of these characteristics and the thresholds for them.

<sup>4</sup> The DNR Proposal Initiation (Appendix 2 in the AMPA's memo to TFW Policy dated 5 July 2023) states, "The proposal initiation document is intended to provide the TFW Policy Committee with the manner and means by which to bring an AFF validation study recommendation to the Forest Practices Board (FPB) for approval to add to the AMP Master Project Schedule (MPS) such that:

...b) CMER uses best available science, methods, and data to determine the physical stream features of an AFF and compares to the criteria used in the Board accepted AFF alternatives for consideration; *and to do so from a scientific perspective only, without any consideration of the policy implications of the results or the eventual use of the results in policy decisions by the FPB*" (emphasis added).

- What are the habitat characteristics of stream segments within which anadromous fish (any life stages) will be presumed?
- How can an AFF account for temporal variability that would otherwise influence habitat characteristics that would be presumed to have anadromous fish use?
- How do geographical differences influence the habitat characteristics that will be presumed to have anadromous fish use?
- What is the frequency distribution of distances at which AFF points occur downstream of previously known fish locations?
- What is the frequency distribution of distances at which AFF points occur upstream of concurred F/N breaks?

The Project Critical Questions address certain anadromous aspects of some existing CMER Workplan Rule Group Critical Questions. During the scoping phase of this project, the connections of the Project Critical Questions to the existing CMER Workplan Rule Group Critical Questions will be described.

## **CMER RULE GROUP AND PROGRAM**

CMER Work Plan Stream Typing Rule Group 5.1, Stream Typing Program (Rule Tool) 5.1.4

## **PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND PROJECT TIMELINE**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Responsible Team Member</b>	<b>Estimated Completion Date*</b>
Develop Scope and Best Available Science, including assessing data availability and data gaps	Scoping Document	PT	June 2026
Develop and seek approval for study design	Study Design	TBD (PI*/PT)	December 2027
Develop and seek approval for Prospective 6 Questions	Prospective 6 Questions	PI/PT	March 2028
Develop and seek approval for Project Management Plan	Project Management Plan	PM/PT	March 2028

Determine need for PI/RFQQ/contracts	Recommendation to ISAG/CMER	PT	TBD
Locate, gather, and vet existing anadromous fish location data	Fish location data, including spatial and associated habitat data	TBD (PI/PT)	TBD
Analyze habitat data downstream of known anadromous fish points	Assessment of spatial and temporal variability	PI	TBD
Develop and test AFF models that address the Project Critical Questions	Draft final report including tested models	PI	TBD
Write and seek approval for final report	Final report	PI	TBD

\*Pending determination on scope of need, funding availability, and prioritization by TFW Policy and the Forest Practices Board. The timing of completion dates could be shortened with added assistance to the Project Team (e.g., PI/Temporary PI). Estimated completion dates do not reflect additional assistance to the Project Team.

## BUDGET

Budget/Cost Items	Estimated Budget by Fiscal Year								
	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	FY33

The budget needs and timeline are unknown at this point and are dependent on determination on scope of need, funding availability, and prioritization by TFW Policy and the Forest Practices Board.

## PROJECT TEAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Name, Title, Affiliation, Contact Info	Roles and Responsibilities	Estimated level of time commitment
<b>Project Manager:</b> Anna Toledo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitors project activities and the performance of the Project Team.</li> <li>• Communicates progress, problems, and problem resolution to the Adaptive Management Program Administrator (AMPA), CMER, and ISAG.</li> <li>• Works with ISAG/CMER, and Project Team to manage Project Charter and other managing documents, and keeps them updated.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works with the AMPA, ISAG/CMER, and Project Team to monitor contract performance, and provide input on budgeting, schedule, scope changes, and contract amendments.</li> <li>• Works with ISAG, CMER, and Project Team to resolve problems and build consensus.</li> <li>• Works with PI and Project Team to develop interim and final draft reports.</li> <li>• Ensures communication between team members is clear, concise, and consistent.</li> <li>• Coordinates technical reviews and responses in a timely fashion.</li> <li>• Facilitates archiving of data and documents.</li> <li>• Ensures that contract provisions are followed.</li> <li>• Provides direction and support to the Project Team to achieve clear and specific scopes of work, schedules, and budgets within approved contracts.</li> <li>• Maintains sole responsibility for all aspects of project management even if other individuals are completing or helping complete parts of the project.</li> </ul>	
<b>Principal Investigator:</b> TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversees the technical and scientific components of the project.</li> <li>• Oversees and conducts data QA/QC and analysis.</li> <li>• Provides materials needed by the PM.</li> <li>• Prepares quarterly summary and progress reports of project status.</li> <li>• Leads in the development and writing of the Final Report and Six Questions for Policy.</li> <li>• Presents study progress and/or findings to ISAG, CMER, and TFW Policy.</li> <li>• Communicates project status and issues to the PM and Project Team.</li> <li>• Coordinates project meetings as needed.</li> </ul>	
<b>Project Team Members:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop scoping document.</li> </ul>	

Jason Walter (Weyerhaeuser, ISAG Chair) Hans Berge (UCUT) John Heimborg (WDFW) Susannah Maher (SRSC) Mark Meleason (WSAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in the development of, timely review of, and constructive feedback on project documents, interim reports, 6Qs, and the final report as coauthors with the PI.</li> <li>• Support the technical and scientific components of the project.</li> <li>• Provide technical expertise for successful completion of the project.</li> <li>• Assist PI in addressing technical and scientific questions/issues.</li> <li>• Assist PI with communications, data analyses, and reporting, as needed.</li> <li>• Participate in Project Team and ISAG meetings.</li> </ul>	
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## AUTHORIZATION

The Washington Forest Practices Board (Board) has empowered the CMER committee and the TFW Policy committee to participate in the Adaptive Management Program (AMP) (WAC 222-12-045(2)(b)). CMER is responsible for completing technical information and reports for consideration by TFW Policy and the Board. CMER has been tasked with completing a programmatic series of work tasks in support of the AMP; these tasks are outlined in CMER's biennial work plan approved by TFW Policy and the Board.

## RECOGNITION OF SUPPORT

Committee	Date of Acceptance	Reference
ISAG	May 6, 2025	meeting minutes
CMER	June 24, 2025	meeting minutes
TFW Policy	August 7, 2025	meeting minutes

## REFERENCES

Timber/Fish/Wildlife (TFW) Policy Committee. 2023. Memorandum "Anadromous Fish Floor Validation Study Proposal Initiation."  
[https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/fp\\_tfw\\_aff\\_pi\\_ampa\\_memo.pdf](https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/fp_tfw_aff_pi_ampa_memo.pdf)

Timber/Fish/Wildlife (TFW) Policy Committee. 2024. Memorandum "Anadromous Fish Floor (AFF) Validation Study – Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research (CMRC) Committee and Instream Scientific Advisory Group (ISAG) Recommendation."  
[https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/fp\\_tfw\\_aff\\_ampa\\_memo.pdf](https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/fp_tfw_aff_ampa_memo.pdf)

Washington State Forest Practices Board 2022. Minutes from November 28, 2022 Forest Practices Board Special Board Meeting.  
[https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/bc\\_fpb\\_mtgmin\\_20221128.pdf](https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/bc_fpb_mtgmin_20221128.pdf)