Willapa Bay Salmon Management Policy Development – Open House
October 25, 2014
Raymond, Washington

Welcome to the Willapa Bay Salmon Management Policy Development Open House. Under direction of the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission), the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) is beginning the process of developing a salmon management policy for Willapa Bay. This process will involve 4 public meetings, 3 ad-hoc committee meetings, and 4 meetings of the Fish and Wildlife Commission, beginning today and ending in February of 2015.

The objective for today's open house are: 1) to provide you with valuable information that will help you provide input into this public process; and 2) begin a discussion about what objectives the public has for the salmon resource and salmon management in Willapa Bay. We will use the input provided today, from the ad-hoc committee on October 25th, and from the public workshop on November 1, to help construct proposed sideboards for developing the policy to present to the Commission on November 8th.

There are 4 information stations and 3 public input stations in the room. Please feel free to visit any of the stations at your own pace and ask questions of any of the staff here today.

Information Stations

Policy and Guidance – What laws and policies guide the Department when managing the salmon resources and fisheries in Willapa Bay.

Stock Assessment – What is the status of natural-origin (or "wild") salmon in Willapa Bay.

Fisheries – What are the fisheries and where are fish caught in Willapa Bay.

Hatcheries and Hatchery Reform – How many fish are reared in the hatcheries and how are we complying with Hatchery Reform.

Public Input Stations

We have provided some "strawdog" objectives for you to review and provide input on. These objectives are intended to stimulate further discussion and are in no way meant to limit the range of discussion or input. Please provide as much input as you would like. Staff will do their best to record all input provided.

Conservation – How should the Department be managing wild salmon in Willapa Bay?

Commercial – How should commercial fisheries be constructed and operated in Willapa Bay?

Recreational – How should recreational fisheries be constructed and operated in Willapa Bay and its freshwater rivers?

RCW 77.04.012
Mandate of department and commission.

Wildlife, fish, and shellfish are the property of the state. The commission, director, and the department shall preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage the wildlife and food fish, game fish, and shellfish in state waters and offshore waters.

The department shall conserve the wildlife and food fish, game fish, and shellfish resources in a manner that does not impair the resource. In a manner consistent with this goal, the department shall seek to maintain the economic well-being and stability of the fishing industry in the state. The department shall promote orderly fisheries and shall enhance and improve recreational and commercial fishing in this state.

The commission may authorize the taking of wildlife, food fish, game fish, and shellfish only at times or places, or in manners or quantities, as in the judgment of the commission does not impair the supply of these resources.

The commission shall attempt to maximize the public recreational game fishing and hunting opportunities of all citizens, including juvenile, disabled, and senior citizens.

Recognizing that the management of our state wildlife, food fish, game fish, and shellfish resources depends heavily on the assistance of volunteers, the department shall work cooperatively with volunteer groups and individuals to achieve the goals of this title to the greatest extent possible.

Nothing in this title shall be construed to infringe on the right of a private property owner to control the owner's private property.

[2000 c 107 § 2; 1983 1st ex.s. c 46 § 5; 1975 1st ex.s. c 183 § 1; 1949 c 112 § 3, part; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 5780-201, part. Formerly RCW 75.08.012, 43.25.020.]

Notes:

State policy regarding improvement of recreational salmon fishing: See note following RCW 77.65.150.

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION
POLICY DECISION

POLICY TITLE: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Hatchery and Fishery Reform **POLICY NUMBER: C-3619**

Effective Date: November 6, 2009

Supersedes: N/A

See Also:

Approved by Miranda Wecker, Chair
Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

Purpose

The purpose of this Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife policy is to advance the conservation and recovery of wild salmon and steelhead by promoting and guiding the implementation of hatchery reform.

Definition and Intent

Hatchery reform is the scientific and systematic redesign of hatchery programs to help recover wild salmon and steelhead and support sustainable fisheries. The intent of hatchery reform is to improve hatchery effectiveness, ensure compatibility between hatchery production and salmon recovery plans and rebuilding programs, and support sustainable fisheries.

General Policy Statement

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) shall promote the conservation and recovery of wild salmon and steelhead and provide fishery-related benefits by establishing clear goals for each state hatchery, conducting scientifically defensible-operations, and using informed decision making to improve management. Furthermore, it is recognized that many state operated hatcheries are subject to provisions under U.S. v. Washington and U.S. v. Oregon and that hatchery reform actions must be done in close coordination with tribal co-managers.

Artificial production programs will be designated as one of the following:

- Conservation Programs. Artificial production programs implemented with a conservation objective shall have a net aggregate benefit for the diversity, spatial structure, productivity, and abundance of the target wild population.

- Harvest Programs. Artificial production programs implemented to enhance harvest opportunities shall provide fishery benefits while allowing watershed-specific goals for the diversity, spatial structure, productivity, and abundance of wild populations to be met.

State commercial and recreational fisheries will need to increasingly focus on the

harvest of abundant hatchery fish. As a general policy, the Department shall implement mark-selective salmon and steelhead fisheries, unless the wild populations substantially affected by the fishery are meeting spawner and broodstock management objectives.

In addition, the Department may consider other management approaches provided they are as or more effective than a mark selective fishery in achieving spawner and broodstock management objectives.

Hatchery reform should be implemented as part of an "all-H" strategy that integrates hatchery, harvest, and habitat actions. Although this policy focuses on hatchery and harvest reform, in no way does it diminish the significance of habitat protection and restoration.

In implementing the policy guidelines the Department shall work with the tribes in a manner that is consistent with U.S. v. Washington and U.S. v. Oregon and other applicable state laws and agreements or federal laws and agreements.

Policy Guidelines

1. Use the principles, standards, and recommendations of the Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) to guide the management of hatcheries operated by the Department. In particular, promote the achievement of hatchery goals through adaptive management based on a structured monitoring, evaluation, and research program.

2. The Department will prioritize and implement improved broodstock management (including selective removal of hatchery fish) to reduce the genetic and ecological impacts of hatchery fish and improve the fitness and viability of natural production working toward a goal of achieving the HSRG broodstock standards for 100% of the hatchery programs by 2015.

3. Develop watershed-specific action plans that systematically implement hatchery reform as part of a comprehensive, integrated (All-H) strategy for meeting conservation and harvest goals at the watershed and Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU)/Distinct Population Segment (DPS) levels. Action Plans will include development of stock (watershed) specific population designations and application of HSRG broodstock management standards. In addition, plans will include a time-line for implementation, strategies for funding, estimated costs including updates to cost figures each biennium.

4. Externally mark all Chinook, coho and steelhead artificial production that is intended to be used for harvest except as modified by state-tribal agreements or for conservation or research needs.

5. Secure necessary funding to ensure that Department-operated hatchery facilities comply with environmental regulations for passage facilities, water intake screening, and pollutant control systems.

6. Implement hatchery reform actions on a schedule that meets or exceeds the benchmarks identified in the 21st Century Salmon and Steelhead Framework.
7. Provide an annual report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission on progress of implementation.

8. Develop, promote and implement alternative fishing gear to maximize catch of hatchery-origin fish with minimal mortality to native salmon and steelhead.

9. Seek funding from all potential sources to implement hatchery reform and selective fisheries.

10. Define "full implementation" of state-managed mark selective recreational and commercial fisheries and develop an implementation schedule.

11. Work with tribal co-managers to establish network of Wild Salmonid Management Zones (WSMZ)1 across the state where wild stocks are largely protected from the effects of same species hatchery programs. The Department will have a goal of establishing at least one WSMZ for each species in each major population group (bio-geographical region, strata) in each ESU/DPS. Each stock selected for inclusion in the WSMZ must be sufficiently abundant and productive to be self-sustaining in the future. Fisheries can be conducted in WSMZ if wild stock management objectives are met as well as any necessary federal ESA determinations are received.

1 Wild Salmonid Management Zone is equal in meaning and application to the term of 'Wild Stock Gene Bank' as used and defined in the Statewide Steelhead Management Plan.

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION
POLICY DECISION

POLICY TITLE: 2013-2014 North of Falcon **POLICY NUMBER: C-3608**

Supersedes: C-3608, 2011-2012

Effective Date: February 8, 2013
Termination Date: December 31, 2014

See Also: Policy C-3001
Policy C-3620

Approved by: _____ Chair
Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission, 02/08/2013

North of Falcon Policy

This Policy will guide Department staff in considering conservation, allocation, in-season management, and monitoring issues associated with the annual salmon fishery planning process known as "North of Falcon." When considering management issues, Department staff will ensure that decisions are made consistent with: the Department's statutory authority; *U.S. v. Washington; U.S. v. Oregon*; the Endangered Species Act; the Puget Sound Chinook Harvest Management Plan; the Pacific Salmon Treaty; the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Framework Salmon Management Plan; pertinent state/tribal agreements; and the applicable Fish and Wildlife Commission policies.

The Department will implement this Policy consistent with the purposes and intended outcomes described in the 21st Century Salmon and Steelhead Planning Project including:

- Salmon and steelhead will be managed to recover and assure sustainability in a way that is science-based, well-documented, transparent, well-communicated, and accountable.

- Fisheries will be managed to meet or exceed ESA, recovery, and conservation goals; and harvest management measures will protect and promote the long-term well-being of the commercial and recreational fisheries.

Fishery Management

General

- On a statewide basis, fishing opportunities will be provided when they can be directed at healthy wild and hatchery stocks.
- Selective fishing methods and gears that maximize fishing opportunity and minimize impacts on depressed stocks will be utilized to the fullest extent possible taking into consideration legal constraints on implementation and budgetary limits associated with required sampling, monitoring and enforcement programs.
- When assessed from a statewide perspective, fishing directed at chinook, coho, pink, sockeye, or chum salmon will not be exclusively reserved for either sport or commercial users.
- When managing sport fisheries, meaningful recreational fishing opportunities will be distributed equitably across fishing areas and reflect the diverse interests of fishers, including retention and catch and release fisheries.
- The Department will seek non-treaty fishing access to unutilized portions of treaty harvest allocations through the implementation of pre-season agreements, taking into consideration changes in abundance, fishery conflicts, and factors that may influence attainment of spawning escapement objectives.

Sockeye, Chum, and Pink Salmon

- For fisheries directed at Fraser River-origin chum, pink, and sockeye stocks, the majority of harvest will be provided to the commercial fisheries.
- For fisheries directed at harvestable Puget Sound-origin chum stocks, the majority of harvest will be provided to the commercial fisheries.
- For fisheries directed at Lake Washington sockeye, the first 200,000 non-treaty harvest will be provided to recreational fishers. If the allowable non-treaty harvest is greater than 200,000, commercial harvest directed at this stock may be considered.
- For fisheries directed at harvestable Puget Sound origin pink salmon, seasons will be established that provide meaningful opportunities for both recreational and commercial fisheries while minimizing gear and other fishery conflicts.

Chinook and Coho Salmon

- The Puget Sound harvest management objectives for chinook and coho stocks, in priority order, are to: (1) provide meaningful recreational fishing opportunities; and (2) identify and provide opportunities for commercial harvest. When managing sport fisheries in this region, recreational opportunities will be distributed equitably across fishing areas, considering factors such as: the uniqueness of each area; the availability of opportunities for various species in each area throughout the season; the desire to provide high levels of total recreational opportunity; and the biological impacts.
- Grays Harbor harvest management objectives shall include opportunities for both the recreational and commercial fisheries.
- The Fish and Wildlife Commission's policy on Columbia River Salmon Management (POL-C3620) shall guide pre-season and in-season planning of Columbia River salmon fisheries. Columbia River harvest management regimes shall be developed in cooperation with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife representatives. Willapa Bay harvest management shall be consistent with Willapa Bay Framework management objectives. The following general intent shall apply: Willapa Bay harvest management objectives shall include meaningful opportunities for both recreational and commercial fisheries.
- Pacific Ocean harvest shall be managed consistent with the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Framework Salmon Management Plan and the National Standards that provide for fair and equitable allocation of fishing privileges among various fishers.

In-Season Management

- When in-season management actions are taken, they will be implemented in a manner that is consistent with pre-season conservation and harvest management objectives, and the fishery intent developed through the North of Falcon process.

Monitoring, Sampling and Enforcement

- Monitoring, sampling and enforcement programs will be provided to account for species and population impacts of all fisheries and to ensure compliance with state regulations.
- Fishery participants will be required to comply with fishery monitoring and evaluation programs designed to account for species and population impacts.

Gear and Fishery Conflicts

- Recreational and commercial fisheries shall be structured to minimize gear and other fishery conflicts. Unanticipated fishery interaction issues identified in-season, including conflicts with

fisheries directed at other species, shall be resolved by involving the appropriate sport and commercial representatives in a dispute resolution process managed by Department staff.

Incidental Mortalities

- The Department will manage fisheries to minimize mortalities on non-target species (e.g. rockfish, sea birds, etc.). Management regimes will include strategies to limit seabird mortalities consistent with the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Communications

- The Department shall strive to make ongoing improvements for effective public involvement during the North of Falcon planning process and annual salmon fishery implementation, incorporating the following intents:
    - North of Falcon participants will be included as observers during appropriate state/tribal discussions of fishery issues.
    - all decisions made during the North of Falcon process will be recorded in writing.
    - variety of tools will be used to effectively communicate with the public, to receive input on pre-season planning or in-season fishery issues, and to make available the record of decisions. Such tools will include: recreational and commercial advisory groups; public workshops to address key issues; the WDFW North of Falcon Web site; and in-season tele-conferences.

Other Species

- The Fish and Wildlife Commission's policy on Lower Columbia Sturgeon Management (POL-C3001) shall guide pre-season and in-season planning of Columbia River and coastal sturgeon fisheries and related incidental impacts. Management of Willapa Bay sturgeon fisheries will be further guided by Willapa Bay Framework management objectives.

Delegation of Authority

The Fish and Wildlife Commission delegates the authority to the Director to make harvest agreements with Northwest treaty tribes and other governmental agencies, and adopt permanent and emergency regulations resulting from the agreements made during the annual North of Falcon process.

Commission Budget Policy 2015-17

Reduction in General Funds and Increase in License Fees

The Department's share of General Funds - State (GF-S) has declined dramatically over the past five years, decreasing from $110 million in 2008 to $61 million in 2014. Once again this year, the Department was directed to prepare and submit a budget with additional GF-S reductions of 15%, or roughly $11 million. The cuts presented in that submission are distributed over the activities that are largely supported with GF-S: enforcement, habitat protection, native fish recovery, and fish management activities associated with commercial fisheries.

Over this same period, the share of Department costs supported with sport fishing license revenues has grown. License fees were increased three years ago and now represent the largest single portion of funding. The Department now faces increased costs of maintaining existing services. In addition, we see the potential of additional cuts in future biennia to allow the state to meet its K-12 educational obligations under the McCleary decision. The Department also faces the prospects of additional reductions in federal funding that support hatchery production and critical fishery sampling and monitoring activities. If it is to maintain and expand opportunity for recreational fishing, the Department must pursue additional fee increases.

Approach for Sport Fishing License Fee Increases

The Commission recognizes the benefits of sport fishing across the state in generating funding for agency activities well beyond fishery management cost. Deposited in the Wildlife Account, user fees support such things as native fish recovery, fish production, and a variety of costs associated with management of the fisheries.

It is the policy of the Department to ensure that recreational license fees are used for the benefit of the sport fishery. To be successful, the Department is committed to working closely with the sport fishing community to define the new fee structure and to identify specifically the use of the new revenue created from the new fees.

The Commission recognizes that increased fees can be counterproductive. Increased fees can lead to declines in sales. To counteract that response, the Department must develop specific proposals that result in increased sport fishing opportunity.

The Commission believes that it would be beneficial to look for ways to make practical commitments to expand sport fishing opportunities at the same time that it pursues a course during this Legislative Session that *avoids* the need for additional license increases in the next two biennia.

Cost Benefit Analysis and Budget Decisions: Salmon Fishery Activities

The Director will provide a report to the Commission that includes all the available information relative to the costs of providing and managing sport and commercial fisheries including enforcement, monitoring, and hatchery production costs. The Director will include in his report a breakdown of the revenue sources that support the activities (GFS, federal, local, DJ). Within existing resources, the Director will also report to the Commission the Department's best estimates of the economic benefits and license revenues that are derived by the state from each major salmon fishery, e.g. Puget Sound, Willapa Bay, and the Columbia River.

It is the policy of the Department that consideration be given to the comparable economic and agency revenue benefits of respective fisheries as various cuts, fee increases, and policy changes are proposed and discussed by budget decision-makers.

Promote Selective Fisheries

The Commission adopted policies that support hatchery and harvest reform and realigned management in a number of specific fisheries to promote more selective harvest practices. The Director will ensure that the Department's biennial budget submission includes elements that maintain and advance selective fisheries and hatchery reform measures.

Equitable Sharing of the Costs of Management

In light of continued reduction of GF-S, the Commission directs the Department to seek means to recoup the costs of hatchery production and management of commercial fisheries from the participants in the commercial fisheries or reduce agency activities in support of these fisheries.

The cost of managing and maintaining commercial fisheries has long been funded with general fund revenue. Commercial licenses provide very limited revenues to offset management costs -- roughly 4% of the costs of these fisheries. Unlike sport fishing license revenue, funds from the sale of commercial salmon licenses largely go directly to the state treasury. The sizable reduction in general fund revenue that the Department has experienced over the last two biennia has left it without the financial means to continue providing the existing commercial fisheries the hatchery fish that sustain them. The Director will include in his legislative requests submission a proposal that is designed to raise new revenues from commercial license holders that will help offset the costs of providing commercial salmon fishing opportunities.