

# Columbia River Salmon Fishery Policy Review

Bill Tweit and Ryan Lothrop  
Columbia River Management Unit, Fish Program



# Overview

- Background
  - Harvest Reform
  - Policy C-3620
  - Comprehensive Policy Review
- Joint-State Columbia River Fishery Policy Review Committee (PRC)
  - Process
  - Meetings
    - Feb 26 PRC recommendation
  - Future work



# Background – Harvest Reform

- OR Governor Kitzhaber requested OR Commission to work with WA Commission in August 2012
  - Further prioritize recreational fisheries in the mainstem
  - Enhance Select Areas (off-channel) for commercial
  - Transition from gill nets to alternative gears in the mainstem
- 2012 joint-state workgroup process
  - Commissioners, staff, and key stakeholders
  - Final workgroup document was developed November 2012
    - “Management Strategies for Columbia River Recreational and Commercial Fisheries: 2013 and beyond”



# Background – Policy C-3620

- WA Commission adopted Policy C-3620 in 2013.
  - Based upon the 2012 joint-state workgroup recommendations
  - Modified in 2017 (and 2019) and expires in 2023
- Three primary objectives: orderly fisheries, conservation and recovery, and economic well-being and stability of sport and commercial fisheries
- In recognizing uncertainty, the policy was to depend on continued economic and biological monitoring, and rely on adaptive management
- Designed to further establish recreational priority for salmon in the mainstem Columbia River



# Background – Comprehensive Policy Review

- Request for a review of the policy in January 2018; finalized November 2018
  - “Comprehensive Evaluation of the Columbia River Basin Salmon Management Policy C-3620, 2013-2017”
  - Summarize activities and evaluate results of transition period (2013-17)
    - Commission review and public input were incorporated
    - Expectations of the original long-term policy were not fully realized:
      - Performance of alternative commercial fishing gears have not met expectations
      - Select Area production has increased, but the geographic scope of the areas has not been expanded
      - Changes in allocations resulted in fewer realized recreational fisheries benefits than expected



# PRC – Process

- The Washington and Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commissions met on November 1, 2018 to review the past 5 years of the policies and to discuss next steps
- The Commissions agreed to create the PRC consisting of 3 Washington and 3 Oregon Commissioners
- The PRC was tasked with developing recommendations to the full Commissions in each state
  - Goal – recommend concurrent policy/regulations to both full Commissions
    - Focus first on 2019 seasons in time for North of Falcon/PFMC
    - Strive for recommendation for 2020 and beyond as soon as possible



# PRC – Process

- Meet conservation goals for salmon and steelhead
- Promote orderly fisheries (concurrent rules)
- Maintain or enhance the economic well-being and stability of both the sport and commercial fishing industries
  - Use actual ex-vessel values and angler trips, in comparison to the period prior to 2013
- PRC Commissioners identify range of alternatives for analysis and review both short and long-term potential modifications
  - i.e., recreational/commercial allocation, commercial gear, upriver spring Chinook recreational allocation, unused impacts



# PRC – Meetings

- January 17, 2019
  - Process established
  - Initial 2019 options developed for analysis
  - 2020 and beyond modification discussion
- February 6, 2019
  - Primary focus on analysis of options for 2019
  - Secondary focus on policy and regulatory matters for 2020 and beyond modification
- February 26, 2019
  - Continue primary focus on 2019 policies and regulations
    - Strive for a single recommendation
  - Finalize recommendations for 2019 to present to full commissions
  - Continue discussion of 2020 and beyond





# PRC – Meetings – February 26 recommendation

- The Joint WA/OR staff provided 3 basic modeling options as requested by the PRC, and were subsequently reviewed by the PRC based on the agreed-to objectives/criteria:
  - Option 1: Transition period – 2016
  - Option 2: 2018 Washington policy
  - Option 3: No loss of economic benefit (two versions were provided)
- The PRC agreed on Option 1 (Transition period – 2016) to bring to the full commissions in both states



# PRC – Meetings – February 26 recommendation

- WA Commission approved the PRC recommendation on March 2, 2019, and is as follows:
  - Option 1 – Transition Period with amendment for spring Chinook
  - Transition Period refers to all the allocations and gear types allowed in 2016.
    - Last year moving from gillnets to alternative gear.
  - Change from mandatory barbless hooks to voluntary barbless hooks effective as soon as practical but by June 1, 2019 at the latest.
  - Good faith progress towards recommending a comprehensive Columbia River salmon fishery policy for 2020 and beyond, to be completed as soon as possible. The policies embodied in this motion are intended to be in place until such comprehensive policy is adopted.
  - To be used only in 2019, the motion is amended such that the 80%/20% sport/commercial allocation, with no buffer applied to the commercial share and no mainstem commercial fishing, is to be used unless the Upriver run size update is more than 129% of the Upriver spring Chinook pre-season forecast of 99,300.



# PRC – Meetings

- March 14, 2019
  - Continue discussion on 2020 and beyond
- August 1, 2019
  - PRC overview/update
  - Continue discussion on 2020 and beyond
  - PRC scheduling
- August 29, 2019
  - Progress towards selection and refinement of remaining alternatives
- October 1, 2019
  - Focused analysis and policy consideration of remaining alternatives
  - Consideration of possible policy language alternatives



# PRC – Future work

- Previously scheduled November 18, 2019 PRC meeting was canceled
  - Awaiting who Oregon will appoint to the PRC to replace the Oregon members who are no longer members of the Oregon Commission
  - Future meetings are being rescheduled for early 2020 to continue work on potential long-term modifications for consideration
- Issues expected to be discussed through the joint-state discussions:
  - Allocations and allowable commercial fishing gears
  - Barbless hooks (currently non-concurrent)
  - Commercial license reduction
  - Continued development of alternative commercial fishing gears



# Questions?

