

Fish & Wildlife Commission Meeting

Willapa Bay Policy C-3622

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Meeting Outline

1. Overview of Policy revision process since Comprehensive Review finalized (Dec 2020)
2. Review of Alternative 1
3. Review of Alternative 2
4. Review of Alternative 3
5. Policy Questions for Public Comment



Policy Revision Process Overview: 2020-2021

Year	Meeting ¹	Date	Purpose	Topic	Materials with links
2020	FWC	5-Dec TVW	Briefing; Public Comment; Decision	Overview of Comprehensive Review Document; Items for possible Policy revision; Public Comment	Summary Sheet ; Presentation
2021	FWC	30-Jan TVW	Briefing; Public Comment	Timeline and process for Policy revisions; Background on policy for interim guidance; Review of Policy issues for revision	Summary Sheet ; Presentation
	FWC	27-Feb TVW	Briefing; Public Comment	Review of key Policy revision issues; Review of WB hatchery production; Report on 2020 fisheries performance; Briefing on potential interim guidance	Summary Sheet ; Presentation
	FWC	12-Mar TVW	Briefing; Decision	Review of history of Willapa Bay Policy and revisions; Briefing on staff recommendations for interim guidance	Summary Sheet ; Presentation
	FC	20-May Watch	Briefing	Overview of possible Policy revisions	Presentation
	FWC	25-Jun TVW	Briefing; Public Comment ²	Review of Willapa Bay hatchery and fishery backgrounds including data pre- and post-Policy implementation, and possible Policy revisions	Summary Sheet ; Presentation
	FC	16-Sep TVW	Briefing	WB Policy review of successes and challenges; Staff recommendations on Policy revisions	Presentation
	FC	2-Nov TVW	Briefing	Review of Policy revision items identified in Dec. 2020; staff recommendations for Policy revisions	Presentation ; Staff recommended Policy draft ; Table of original Policy language vs. recommended language and justification ³
FC	2-Dec TVW	Briefing	Review of Commissioner's questions/answers	Presentation ; Handout	

¹FWC=Fish and Wildlife Commission; FC=Fish Committee

²No public comment participants

³Combined in one PDF in listed order



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Policy Revision Process Overview: 2022

Year	Meeting ¹	Date	Purpose	Topic	Materials
2022	FC	13-Jan Watch	Briefing	Continue review of Commissioner's questions on WB Policy revisions	Presentation ; WBP Alts & Analytical Framework v2 ; Alternative 2: Manage for a Combination of Hatchery and Wild Fish ; Fish Program responses to Commission questions associated with the WB Policy
	FC	17-Feb Watch	Briefing; Decision	Review WB Policy revision process and schedule; Staff request for rollover interim guidance	Handout ; Presentation
	FC ²	17-Mar	Briefing	Review WB Policy questions and analytical approach for alternative 2	Willapa Draft Schedule ; Policy alternatives analysis ; Willapa analytic alternatives framework
	FC	1-Apr TVW	Briefing	Committee discussion on Alt 2 and alternatives analysis	Willapa Draft Schedule ; Policy alternatives analysis (staff questions) ; Willapa analytic alternatives framework
	FC	13-May TVW	Briefing	Brief review of spawner-recruit based Chinook spawning escapement goals; Initial staff efforts on comparative analysis assignment; development of alternative 2 Policy language	Presentation ; Fish Committee Policy Discussion Draft ; WBP Alts Brief Summary and Analysis Targets ; C-3622 WB Draft Policy Schedule ; Staff Questions
	FC	10-Jun TVW	Briefing; Public Comment	Fall Chinook natural spawning escapement goal and spawner-recruit analysis; Comparative analysis of alternatives; Policy language questions; Public Comment	Current Goal Source Document ; Spawner-Recruit Analysis ; Alternatives Summary and Analysis Targets ; Presentation ; Alternative 1 ; Alternative 2 ; Alternative 3 ³ ; Response to Questions ; Schedule and Process
	FC	23-Jun TVW	Briefing	Comparative analysis of alternatives	Presentation
	FC	10-Aug TVW	Briefing	Continuing discussions of WB Policy alternatives; Comparative analysis of alternatives	Presentation ; Policy-staff comments

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¹FWC=Fish and Wildlife Commission; FC=Fish Committee

² Agenda went overtime: WB postponed by Fish Committee

³ See page 21



Current WB Salmon Management Policy (C-3621)

Alternative 1

Purpose Statement: The objective of this policy is to achieve the conservation and restoration of wild salmon in Willapa Bay and avoid ESA designation of any salmon species. Where consistent with this conservation objective, the policy also seeks to maintain or enhance the economic well-being and stability of the commercial and recreational fishing industry in the state, provide the public with outdoor recreational experiences, and an appropriate distribution of fishing opportunities throughout the Willapa Bay Basin.

-Prescriptive hatchery production

-Fisheries Management

- Strict time and area restrictions
- Sets impact rate regardless of forecasts



Alternative 2 (As Revised)

Purpose Statement: The over-arching purpose of this Policy is to guide management of wild and hatchery salmon populations in Willapa Bay in a manner that achieves stated spawning escapement conservation goals; significantly enhances and improves both recreational and commercial sustainable fishing in comparison to those that would be provided for by predecessor Policy C-3622; and promotes orderly fisheries.

Compares fisheries outcomes to 2015 Policy

- “Management of natural spawning and hatchery populations shall strive to achieve significantly higher aggregate abundance and sustainable catch in fisheries than that which would have been produced by full implementation of Policy C-3622...”

Prescriptive Hatchery Operations

- Chinook: Forks Creek: 3.5M+; Nemah: 0; Naselle 5M+
- Coho: Forks Creek: Goals TBD, but at least at current levels
- Chum: Nemah hatchery only: 2M+

Fishery Management

- Manage for a range of fishery impact rates until a scientifically defensible goal is developed
- “first and last crack” for recreational sector; no specific allocation; relaxed time/area controls
- Uses enhanced weirs to manage pHOS.



Alternative 3

Purpose Statement: Similar to Alternative 1 (Staff have revised this purpose statement in a new potential Alternative 4)

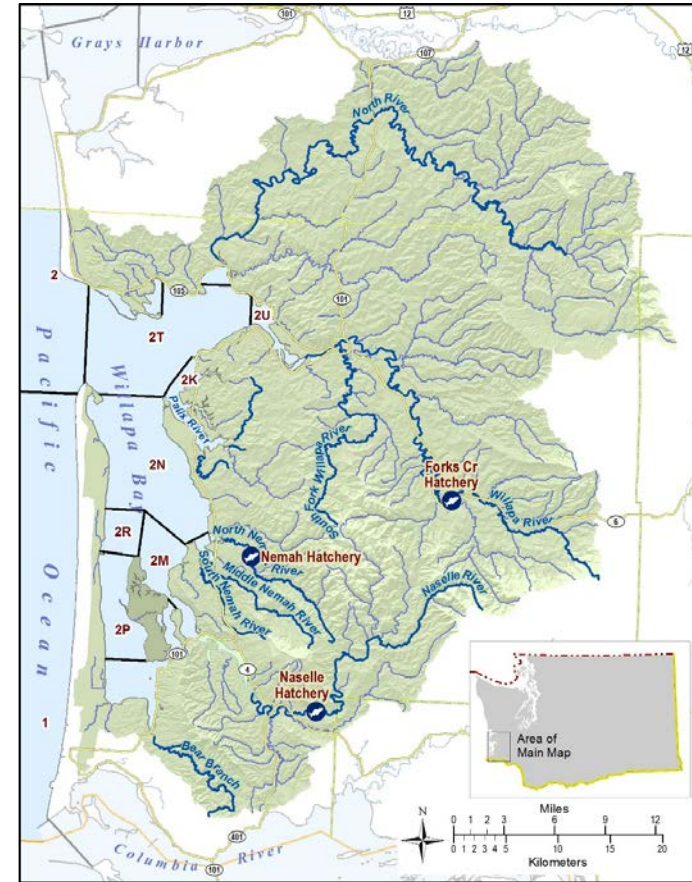
Main Revisions:

- **Hatchery Operations**

- Until HMPs are developed, production levels based on existing program (existing program has been modified from 2015 policy by legislature and Commission)
- HMPs for WB are high priority for development

- **Fisheries Management**

- Meeting escapement goals consistently & positive preseason forecasts
- If conditions are not met, manage to impact rate of 20%
- Relaxes time and area restrictions for an enhanced commercial fishery while still maintaining North Bay for recreational anglers
- Allow commercial Chinook fisheries in 2M, 2N, 2P, and 2R before Labor Day
- Continue with no commercial fisheries in 2T and 2U before September 16



Fall Chinook Spawner Escapement Goals

Biologically based (e.g., spawner recruitment curves) spawner escapement goals need to be developed using current data.

- Appendix 1 of comp. review and $S_{msy}=1,700$ are not defensible
- Current policy spawner escapement goal of 4,353 is outdated and not currently defensible (based on habitat assessment from the 1980s)



Policy Questions for Public Comment

1. How should the level of hatchery production be determined?

2. Regarding hatchery production, should the policy determine specific production levels at Willapa hatcheries, or should the production be based on objectives stated within the policy? Hatchery production numbers will be set in the policy by the Commission and held constant each year. An alternative approach would have hatchery production numbers set through the Commission's Hatchery Policy (C-3624) processes and designed to achieve the policy objectives.

3. Regarding the escapement goals for Chinook salmon, should the policy be prescriptive in setting specific numeric goals? Another approach would be to allow DFW Staff to conduct Management Strategy Evaluations for stocks to evaluate alternative harvest control rules including, but not limited to, Smsy escapement goals. One approach would be for the policy to state an escapement goal range for Chinook. This range would be set in the policy by the Commission and held constant each year. Alternatively, the policy could direct DFW Staff to determine biologically based spawner escapement goals (e.g., using spawner escapement curves) using current data. For this latter alternative changes in escapement goals would not require changes to the policy.

4. Should the policy be prescriptive in stating a specific impact rate for each species with which to manage harvest, or should it be flexible based on preseason forecasts and evolving environmental conditions? The current approach is to manage to a specific impact rate regardless of pre-season forecasts. Another approach would be to allow flexibility when stocks are performing well consistently over time to increase the allowable impact rate based on pre-season forecasts.

5. Should the policy relax time and area opportunity for commercial fisheries in the south of Willapa Bay or remain under current restrictions (No commercial Chinook fisheries shall occur in areas 2M, 2N, 2P and 2R until after September 7)? The current date and time restrictions on Commercial fisheries are intended to allow for an enhanced recreational opportunity on Chinook salmon. Alternatively, allowing commercial fisheries in the south bay would allow more flexibility for the commercial fleet while still maintaining priority for recreational anglers in the north bay. Furthermore, an earlier south bay fishery would assist in removing hatchery fish in the Naselle where there is currently a high percentage of hatchery-origin spawners.

6. Regarding the inclusion of enhanced weirs, should the policy language dictate that research and development of enhanced weirs occur? The current policy alternatives do not include the development of enhanced weirs. New policy language could direct the Department to conduct feasibility studies for new enhanced weirs that would allow for better control over pHOS numbers in the future. Design and implementation of the weirs may take ten or more years. There is a new weir going in at Naselle in the summer of 2023 which will add to trapping efficiency of hatchery fish in that system.





Questions and Discussion