



Fish and Wildlife Commission Presentation Summary Sheet

Meeting date:

9/24/2022

Agenda item:

Willapa Bay Salmon Management Background and Revisions

Presenter(s):

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Background summary:

In the fall of 2014, the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC), supported by Department staff, initiated a process to develop a salmon management policy for Willapa Bay. The intent of the policy was to provide Department staff with general guidance and management objectives for salmon management in Willapa Bay.

In June 2015, the Policy was adopted by the FWC as the Willapa Bay Salmon Management Policy – C-3622. The objectives of the Policy are “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. Enhanced transparency, information sharing, and improved technical rigor of fishery management are needed to restore and maintain public trust and support for management of Willapa Bay salmon fisheries.” The Policy recognizes uncertainty in implementation, so depends on continued economic and biological analysis, and relies on an adaptive management approach.

The Commission requested a thorough review of the implementation and performance of the Policy and in December 2020, the Comprehensive Evaluation of the Willapa Bay Salmon Management Policy C-3622, 2015-2018, was accepted as final by the Commission and key aspects for policy revision were discussed. Since then, the Commission has held 16 meetings on Willapa Bay Policy revisions during which Department staff were asked to provide alternative policy language incorporating those topics of revision (Alternative 3). The Fish Committee also provided another version of a policy document for Willapa Bay salmon management (Alternative 2) after reviewing Alternative 3. The Commission further requested a comparative analysis of these alternatives in the spring of 2022. This meeting will provide Commissioners with a timeline and overview of the revision process since December 2020, a briefing on the three alternatives in their current state, and a list of probing policy questions for public input that include key topics such as fisheries sector prioritization and hatchery production.

Staff recommendation:

Review of the three alternatives and Commissioner discussion on what objectives they want for Willapa Bay policy including the potential for an Alternative 4.

Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:

The Commission will need to review the proposed options and determine what steps to take moving forward.

Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:

Not applicable.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Public involvement in the review was included throughout the Policy Review process and Department staff sought public input through twelve public or advisory group meetings as well as through the Willapa Bay Policy Review webpage. The meetings began in January of 2018 and concluded with a public meeting held via webinar on August 18, 2020. Since the Comprehensive review process was completed in December of 2020, the Commission has heard public comment four times on Policy revisions, most recently on June 10, 2022. Public comment is a part of this meeting’s agenda and will continue at public meetings later in the year. Department staff continue to take comment through the Willapa Bay Policy Review webpage.

Action requested and/or proposed next steps:

Department staff will seek Commission recommendations on the Willapa Bay Salmon Management Policy objectives. The next steps will be determined by the Commission upon reviewing the possible revision trajectories.

Draft motion language:

Not applicable

Post decision communications plan:

If the Commission requests analysis or development of potential new revisions, those requests should be communicated to stakeholders via the webpage developed for the Willapa Bay Salmon Management Policy Review on the Agency website as well as through a post meeting press release.
