

Chelan River Rulemaking

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Background Summary

- On January 11, 2022, the WDFW received a Petition for Adoption, Amendment, or Repeal of a State Administrative Rule for the Chelan River
- The petitioner requests the Commission:
 - Open the currently closed portion of the Chelan River
 - Under catch-and-release rules for all species
 - Prohibit the use of bait
 - Require barbless hooks
- Commission accepted the petition on February 25, 2022 and directed staff to initiate rulemaking

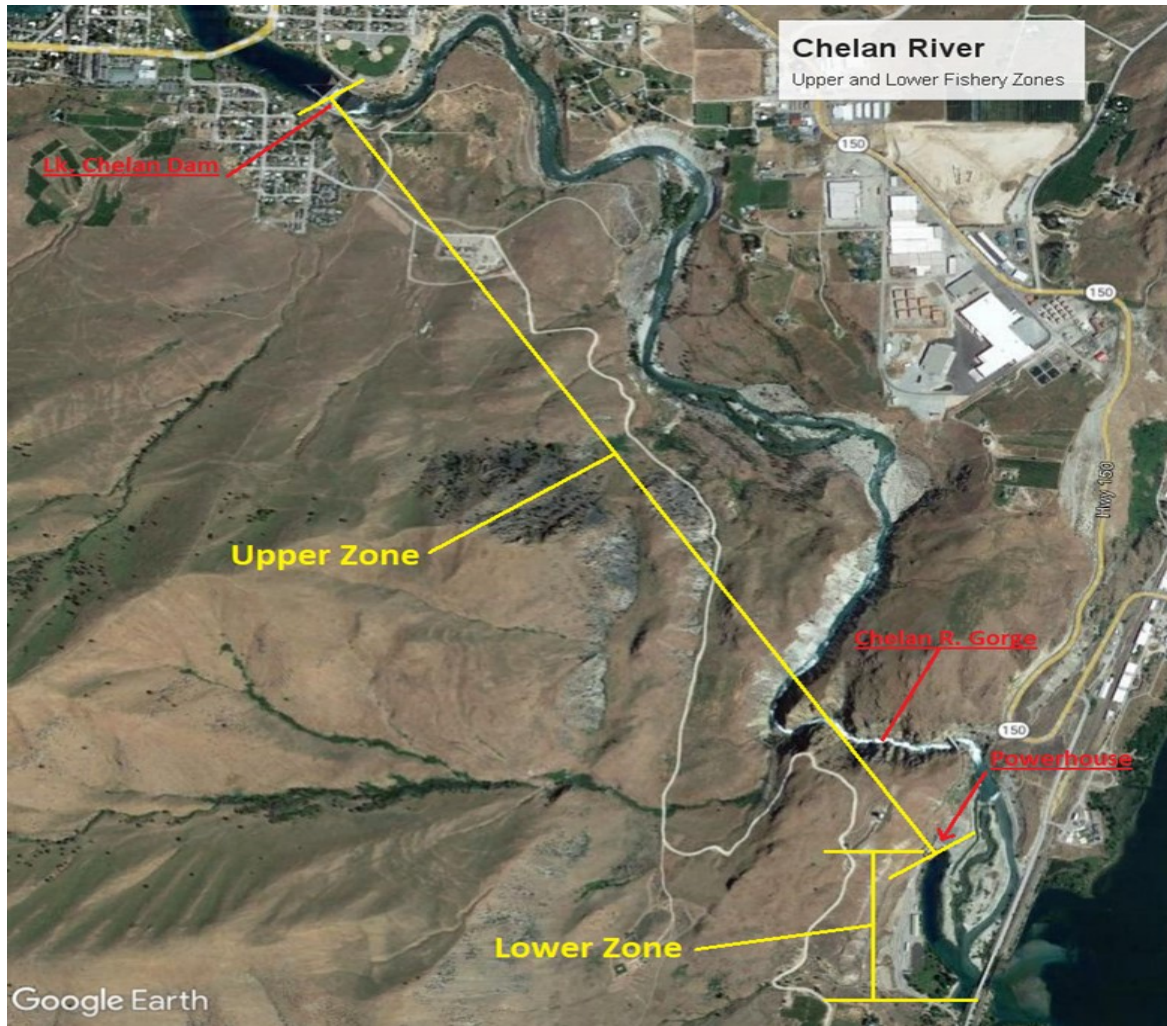


Background Summary

- From a fishing rules perspective there are two reaches of interest on the Chelan River:
 - A lower reach that flows from the railroad bridge near the confluence with the Columbia River (i.e., mouth) upstream to the Chelan PUD powerhouse (0.5-mile). This reach is accessible by anadromous salmon and steelhead (primarily summer Chinook). Fishing is open under permanent WAC.
 - An upper reach from the Chelan PUD powerhouse up to the Lake Chelan Dam (3.6-miles). This reach is inaccessible by anadromous salmon and steelhead due to a 0.4-mile steep gorge area with several waterfalls (5-20 feet). This reach is closed to fishing under permanent WAC.



Chelan River



Background Summary

- Pre-2015, the Upper Chelan River was open to fishing under Statewide General Rules
- In 2015, fishing was closed in this reach to facilitate a multi-year evaluation of resident fish restoration efforts
- Evaluation completed and most observed fish species (highest to lowest) include smallmouth bass, cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, and northern pikeminnow
 - Other species observed include tench, dace, bluegill, suckers, peamouth chub, and whitefish
- Recreational fishing opportunities exist in the Upper Chelan River



Rulemaking

- The Commission directed staff to initiate rulemaking separate from, but concurrent with the 2022 North of Falcon rule making process
- Rulemaking timeline:
 - Commission accepted petition on February 25, 2022 ✓
 - CR-102 filed July 20, 2022 ✓
 - Public comment period July 21-September 24, 2022 ✓
 - **Commission briefing & public hearing September 23, 2022**
 - Commission decision on October 7, 2022
 - If a rule is adopted, it takes effect 31-days after filing with the Code Revisor Office



Proposed Rule

- WAC 220-312-050 Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules-Eastside
- From the Chelan PUD safety barrier below the powerhouse upstream to Lake Chelan
- Open the Saturday before Memorial Day through October 31
- Catch-and-release fishing only
- No bait allowed
- Barbless hooks are required



Public Comment

- Public comment period from July 21-September 24, 2022
- Virtual public meeting held on September 14, 2022
- Public can submit comments online, in writing, by voicemail, at the virtual public meeting, and during today's public hearing
- Summary of public comments (online, written, verbal, & public meeting) received through September 22, 2022



Questions?

