

Willapa Bay Salmon Advisory Group Meeting

October 24, 2019 6 pm – 8 pm

Raymond Elks Lodge, Raymond, WA

Staff: Chad Herring, James Losee, Barbara McClellan, Lyle Jennings, Jenny Allan

Advisors: Marlisa Dugan, Tim Hamilton, Ross Barkhurst, Lance Gray, Bob Lake, Norm

Reinhardt, Mara Zimmerman, Francis Estalilla (via phone), Andy Mitby (via phone)

Public: 13 Individuals

Jenny Allan:

- Opening statements about meeting
- Walks through ground rules that were chosen at previous meeting
 - Agree to 3 minute comments
 - Ground rules will apply to the public that attend meeting (not advisors) as well
 - Advisor topics for agenda

Chad Herring:

- Ground rules are important to be productive in order to have advisor input for agenda and stay on topic
- Agenda – suggests saving some time at the end of the meeting to discuss other topics of importance and advisors provide feedback
 - Possible topic for tonight for Chinook egg take
 - #11 on handout – Public can comment on any topic (not just the agenda). They will comment first and all of the advisors will stay for those comments. Then the advisors can comment afterwards.

Advisor #1 – feels as though we have already hashed this out at a previous meeting

Advisor #2 – doesn't care for it. Thought we were supposed to be reviewing the policy.

Need to stop wasting time. Advisors shouldn't be allowed to comment on record at the end of the meeting. Advisors have had their chance to comment. At the end of the meeting should be left for just the public.

Advisor #3 – agree that we have gone over this already. We don't have enough time in two hours. We need 5 – 8 pm or 6 – 9 pm.

Advisor #4 – Everyone needs a break every hour. Need a ground rule that we will not routinely exclude the 4 H's in our policy discussion. Public should be allowed to comment on any topic.

Advisor #5 – takes offense to #6 on the handout (Flip Chart Notes from Ground Rules Discussion Sept 10, 2019 meeting). This is being portrayed as our problem. It was not. The leadership that ran these meetings has the problem. Public has the right to talk about anything they want relative to #11 on the handout

Advisor #6 – an agenda item has been suggested and that came from the Fish Committee.

The agenda items should be predetermined based on their importance base on what

the Fish and Wildlife Commission needs to make a decisions on this policy. Why aren't we focusing on how to build a better fishery?

Advisor #7 – Would life to see my time spent on reviewing the policy. Likes the round robin. Providing agenda items in advance is helpful so that I have a chance to think about them prior to the meeting.

Chad Herring – we are going back over the rules because things weren't working within this group. We need some certainty in how we operate. We are trying to put together something so we all know what is expected and everyone has a say in how we move forward over time.

Discussion:

- Egg take discussion (20 minutes) – Barbara McClellan walked through egg take handout provided
 - What is the plan for extra Chinook eggs from Forks Creek Hatchery?
 - This body does not make decisions. This body provides input to WDFW.
 - Future Brood Document (FBD) is our agency guiding document. In FBD, it has been identified that extra eggs are used to backfill Nemah Hatchery.
 - For Naselle, we are trying to make 5 million eggs off of an 800,000 brood year. It was always a tough goal to reach 5 million this year. We still have more fish to come over the next several weeks at Naselle and Forks Creek. Nemah will not make program. It is difficult to keep these Chinook alive at Nemah. Nemah has requirements through the Clean Water Act with affluent discharge to the river using formalin. It's also about the structure of the adult pond.
 - Some rec advisors sent a letter to allow those additional eggs to be released from Forks Creek Hatchery rather than move them to another facility so that it would help the recreational marine fishery.
 - A decision has yet to be made regarding these additional eggs from Forks Creek Hatchery.
 - Smolt to Adult Return (SARs) for Chinook from Forks Creek Hatchery is about 0.5 % and 0.4% from Naselle Hatchery
 - Advisor - We are constantly changing what we do and don't manage for eggtake or the fishery. You are a manager for a policy not the fishery. Have no issues with adding more fish at the north end of the bay but how will you harvest them? Can't manage from a piece of paper.
 - Advisor – these additional eggs should be split at Forks and Naselle. Spring Chinook eggs are available at Marble Mount.
 - It is not approved to bring eggs from Puget Sound relative to spring Chinook.
 - Advisor – what is the level of mortality assumed from egg to release? 10%
 - Advisor – In-season management is supposed to be divided equally and shared by salt and freshwater

- Advisor – want to talk about solutions? 2019 is a disaster for Chinook egg take. In-season management was not utilized. We are not getting enough fish back to sustain our own production. There should not have been any commercial fishery on Chinook prior to Sept. 16.
- Advisor – should have shut the rivers down for Chinook retention. Need to get the policy where it benefits everyone. Need to stop the snagging females for eggs in the river.
- Advisor – We keep losing fish at Nemah. The rebuild at Naselle hopefully should make the return and survivability better.
- Advisor – except for egg take there is nothing wrong with putting out fish from Nemah
- We are currently in this pattern of low flows and warm water in September and October now. We need to be adaptable to these issues.
- Advisor – Formalin was not used every day that he was there. Commercial fishers were violating the rules fishing bank to bank and set netting.
- Advisor – What is the return rate for the Nemah?
 - The problem is that we use coded wire tags and we have not had a return of coded wire tags since 2006 brood. The older data suggests that it's about 0.3% but we now have tags starting in 2016.

There has been a lack of funding for the Nemah Hatchery. There is not enough depth on the gravel bar below the weir. A minor change needs to be made so that Chinook will volunteer into the pond.

Advisor Input for what to do with the additional egg take at Forks Creek Hatchery:

Advisor #1: Backfill to both Naselle and Nemah hatcheries

Advisor #2: Split the additional eggs 60% and backfill to Naselle and 40% stay in Forks Creek. Take all the eggs in Nemah Hatchery and split those 60% to Naselle and 40% to Forks. Do not release any Chinook from Nemah Hatchery.

Advisor #3: Agree with Advisor #2.

Advisor #4: Figure out where the best return is and use them there.

Advisor #5: Split additional eggs above 400K evenly between all three facilities

Advisor #6: Half should stay in Forks Creek and half should go to the Nemah Hatchery

Advisor #7: Backfill to Nemah and get all three hatcheries to stand on their own. Get 2.5 million first Forks Creek first then move the additional above 2.5 million to Nemah hatchery.

Advisor #8: Leave them all at Forks Creek hatchery – Whatever we get at each facility, release from that facility without backfilling.

Advisor #9: Agree with #8 by releasing what each facility gets. Moving more eggs to Nemah without dealing with the mortality issues, would not be wise. Don't kill the run but need to deal with the mortality issue first.

- Comp review process (10 minutes)
 - We have collected a lot of data. It is going to take a while to analyze data.
 - The hatchery reform policy (HSRG) is currently being reviewed as well. Do not know when that will be presented to the FWC.
 - Possible final product of summer 2020
 - How do we prioritize resources to get all of the work completed given staffing and time issues
 - The guidance for 2020 NOF has yet to be determined
 - It's more important to have a quality product that has been vetted through technical review

- Weekly Update – Did not get to this topic

Public Comment:

Ezra McCampbell

- Used to fish with tribes
- Raymond has been out of compliance with waste water. Need to follow environmental laws.
- Herbicides and pesticides kill juvenile salmon
- Clear cutting results in silt to move
- Need to get everyone to work together

Harvest McCampbell

- If we can't close the fisheries when the returns are low then we won't have fisheries at all
- There are lots of environmental laws broken and nothing seems to be regulated or enforced. This needs to be fixed.
- The meeting notices need to be here in Pacific County not Grays Harbor County.

Lisa Olson

- Coming to educate herself
- Hope that the recommendation to the Commission is to get rid of the policy. Money is being lost in revenue locally but sales tax is going up for the County.
- There is a way to have revenue for everyone if we just work together.

Karen Carter

- Prior to three years ago, salmon were everywhere. Since then there is an obvious decline in salmon returns.
- Why is the program goal for Chinook lower at Forks Creek hatchery than the other two facilities?

Marlisa Dugan

- Preterminal interceptions took too many
- Willapa commercial fishery should not have been allowed to fish with such a low run using in-season management

Bob Lake

- Part of the lower end of the bay was removed from the commercial fishery
- Chum was also taken away from the commercial fishery
- Need Chum fisheries in the third and fourth weeks of October

Ross Barkhurst

- Don't kill the only rec priority we have
- In-season manage what we have

Mark Miller

- Issues with predators (seals) in the river now. Cormorants as well.
- Need to take care of these predator issues too.
- If the hatchery isn't getting fish, then cut the season.
- Need to pump rivers full of fish.
- Why no plants of steelhead in the SF Willapa since 2012?

Last topic, Do we want to keep the Nov 21st meeting? Lets think about it.

Possible Agenda:

History of Chinook transfers

Disease and problem solving (regional pathologists?)

