

Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries Plan – (Briefing)

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Summary

Meeting dates: March 18, 2016

Agenda item: Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries Plan - (Briefing)

Presenter(s): Pat Frazier, Region 5 Fish Program Policy Coordinator
Cindy LeFleur, Region 5 Fish Program Manager

Background summary:

Development of the Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries Plan (CSF) began in about 2008 with the recommendations from the Hatchery and Scientific Review Group (HSRG) on hatchery reform and the adoption of the "Hatchery and Fishery Reform Policy" (C-3619). The goal of the CSF is to 1) support efforts to return natural origin lower Columbia salmon and steelhead to healthy, harvestable levels and 2) to sustain important fisheries. In 2012, the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board (LCFRB) agreed to partner with the department to continue development of the plan, submit it for public review and finalize and publish the plan.

The CSF plan encompasses the tenets of the Lower Columbia Recovery Plan and acknowledges that all "all H" (Habitat, Hatcheries, Harvest, Hydro) approach to recovery is necessary. The CSF plan focuses on hatcheries and harvest and describes how these two components will be used to facilitate a trajectory towards recovery of salmon and steelhead populations in the lower Columbia River.

The CSF provides:

- background information on recovery planning efforts
- population assessments and recovery objectives
- species summaries and recovery targets
- hatchery and harvest impacts on natural populations
- hatchery and harvest reform
- detailed summary and hatchery and harvest actions
- projected fitness improvements
- implementation
- monitoring and adaptive management

The CSF is the document that describes how hatchery and fishery reform will occur in the lower Columbia River and how Region 5 is implementing the Commission's Hatchery and Fishery Reform Policy (POL-C3619).

Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

Briefing only.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

The CSF plan was made available to the public via the LCFRB website and WDFW news releases. The public had the opportunity to review and provide comments from December 4, 2015 through January 22, 2016 via email or postal mail. Comments were reviewed and summarized by the LCFRB and agency staff and the plan is being modified as needed based on comments received.

Action requested:

None. Briefing only.

Draft motion language:

NA

Justification for Commission action:

NA

Communications Plan:

The CSF plan will be available on the department and LCFRB websites once it is finalized.

Form revised 12/5/12

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

POLICY DECISION

**POLICY TITLE: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Hatchery and Fishery Reform**

POLICY NUMBER: C-3619

Effective Date: November 6, 2009

Supersedes: N/A

See Also:

Approved by: Miranda Wecker, Chair
Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

Purpose

The purpose of this Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife policy is to advance the conservation and recovery of wild salmon and steelhead by promoting and guiding the implementation of hatchery reform.

Definition and Intent

Hatchery reform is the scientific and systematic redesign of hatchery programs to help recover wild salmon and steelhead and support sustainable fisheries. The intent of hatchery reform is to improve hatchery effectiveness, ensure compatibility between hatchery production and salmon recovery plans and rebuilding programs, and support sustainable fisheries.

General Policy Statement

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) shall promote the conservation and recovery of wild salmon and steelhead and provide fishery-related benefits by establishing clear goals for each state hatchery, conducting scientifically defensible-operations, and using informed decision making to improve management. Furthermore, it is recognized that many state operated hatcheries are subject to provisions under U.S. v. Washington and U.S. v. Oregon and that hatchery reform actions must be done in close coordination with tribal co-managers.

Artificial production programs will be designated as one of the following:

- Conservation Programs. Artificial production programs implemented with a conservation objective shall have a net aggregate benefit for the diversity, spatial structure, productivity, and abundance of the target wild population.
- Harvest Programs. Artificial production programs implemented to enhance harvest opportunities shall provide fishery benefits while allowing watershed-specific goals for the diversity, spatial structure, productivity, and abundance of wild populations to be met.

State commercial and recreational fisheries will need to increasingly focus on the

harvest of abundant hatchery fish. As a general policy, the Department shall implement mark-selective salmon and steelhead fisheries, unless the wild populations substantially affected by the fishery are meeting spawner and broodstock management objectives.

In addition, the Department may consider other management approaches provided they are as or more effective than a mark selective fishery in achieving spawner and broodstock management objectives.

Hatchery reform should be implemented as part of an “all-H” strategy that integrates hatchery, harvest, and habitat actions. Although this policy focuses on hatchery and harvest reform, in no way does it diminish the significance of habitat protection and restoration.

In implementing the policy guidelines the Department shall work with the tribes in a manner that is consistent with U.S. v. Washington and U.S. v. Oregon and other applicable state laws and agreements or federal laws and agreements.

Policy Guidelines

1. Use the principles, standards, and recommendations of the Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) to guide the management of hatcheries operated by the Department. In particular, promote the achievement of hatchery goals through adaptive management based on a structured monitoring, evaluation, and research program.
2. The Department will prioritize and implement improved broodstock management (including selective removal of hatchery fish) to reduce the genetic and ecological impacts of hatchery fish and improve the fitness and viability of natural production working toward a goal of achieving the HSRG broodstock standards for 100% of the hatchery programs by 2015.
3. Develop watershed-specific action plans that systematically implement hatchery reform as part of a comprehensive, integrated (All-H) strategy for meeting conservation and harvest goals at the watershed and Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU)/Distinct Population Segment (DPS) levels. Action Plans will include development of stock (watershed) specific population designations and application of HSRG broodstock management standards. In addition, plans will include a time-line for implementation, strategies for funding, estimated costs including updates to cost figures each biennium.
4. Externally mark all Chinook, coho and steelhead artificial production that is intended to be used for harvest except as modified by state-tribal agreements or for conservation or research needs.
5. Secure necessary funding to ensure that Department-operated hatchery facilities comply with environmental regulations for passage facilities, water intake screening, and pollutant control systems.

6. Implement hatchery reform actions on a schedule that meets or exceeds the benchmarks identified in the 21st Century Salmon and Steelhead Framework.
7. Provide an annual report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission on progress of implementation.
8. Develop, promote and implement alternative fishing gear to maximize catch of hatchery-origin fish with minimal mortality to native salmon and steelhead.
9. Seek funding from all potential sources to implement hatchery reform and selective fisheries.
10. Define “full implementation” of state-managed mark selective recreational and commercial fisheries and develop an implementation schedule.
11. Work with tribal co-managers to establish network of Wild Salmonid Management Zones (WSMZ)¹ across the state where wild stocks are largely protected from the effects of same species hatchery programs. The Department will have a goal of establishing at least one WSMZ for each species in each major population group (bio-geographical region, strata) in each ESU/DPS. Each stock selected for inclusion in the WSMZ must be sufficiently abundant and productive to be self-sustaining in the future. Fisheries can be conducted in WSMZ if wild stock management objectives are met as well as any necessary federal ESA determinations are received.

¹ Wild Salmonid Management Zone is equal in meaning and application to the term of ‘Wild Stock Gene Bank’ as used and defined in the Statewide Steelhead Management Plan.