

Washington's Wild Future

A Partnership for Fish and Wildlife

Spokane Regional Forum (Region 1)

August 2, 2016

The following public comments were offered by participants at an open forum on fish and wildlife issues sponsored by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) at the Spokane Regional Forum. Approximately 17 participants attended the event, one of six regional forums conducted around the state.

HUNTING

- Concerned about the lack of public access to public (government) lands – Bureau of Land Management, Department of Natural Resources, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, etc...- especially in the Columbia Basin
- Ambiguity with easements and right of way. How does the public maintain their legal right to access public lands? What about Section Corners? (see example land “plot” below)

BLM	Private
Private	DNR

How do you cross this parcel legally?

- How to educate Law Enforcement on this? – County sheriff, WDFW Officers, etc.
- Can this issue be more completely addressed by WDFW private lands staff. Lands Staff?
- Landowners that “tie up” public land access should be contacted and agreements reached that protect the public's rights to access public lands
- Can WDFW expand private lands access- and- develop block management areas?
- Improve Hunting Access
- Wants to be able to utilize Road Right of way for bird hunting (example) (this is done in South Dakota and Montana). Will need to address hunting rules so this is not illegal
- Restructure special permit applications to allow applications for multiple hunts but pay for each hunt choice – include points for each application
- Supportive of the Northeast Washington Predator/Prey study
- Offer discounts to members of non-litigious conservation groups (Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Ducks Unlimited , Pheasants Forever) and/or active mentors
- Raise youth hunting age to 18
- Develop family hunting license packages

- Re-activate former hunters
- Increase number of hunters instead of big fee increases
- Cheaper to hunt in Idaho as disabled hunter than to stay here in WA; same in Montana
- Our proposal is pricing future generations out of woods
- Put Dan McKinley on Recruitment, Retention and Re-engagement (RRR) committee (to Dave Whipple) (Mule Deer Foundation)
- Master Hunter program doesn't do anything for WDFW, instead consider a model like Utah's Dedicated Hunter Certification- hours of service to state, and based on retention. Use them as advocates to recruit hunters
- Could provide permit point benefits as enticement to help recruit hunters
- Families are being priced out of hunting. Will no longer afford to take all family hunting (combo big/small game licenses, and Discover Pass)
- Don't want kids to lose (the hunting heritage). Wants kids to have what he has had with hunting
- Hunting fees should be made proportional to personal income – current hunting fees are not affordable (and on federal land already supported with taxes)
- Ranchers w/ depredations and range-riders that are trying to protect livestock have not yet been paid by WDFW and yet asking for more \$ in hunt/fish fees
- WAG mediator not \$ well spent- could be used for compensation and range-riders

FISHING

- Requests a Wild Future Meeting in Clarkston in September/October (Regional Program Manager Donley and Regional Director Pozzanghera will cover, Olympia participation would be welcomed) (CCA Clarkston)
- Need a dock at the Waitts Lake public access site (Regional Program Manager Donley looking into why there was no dock, post access redevelopment that occurred in 2013)
- Need a lake clean-up at Waitts Lake (Regional Program Manager Donley will coordinate clean-up with Access Manager and Region 1 Fish Program staff for spring/summer 2017)
- Regulation pamphlets too complicated
- Youth recruitment/Youth retention

FISHING LICENSE FEE PROPOSAL

- Broader application of senior discounts to all or a subset of licenses
- Snake River-boundary water is cheaper to fish in other state
- Need to lower price for youth to keep them in the woods
- Need more ways to get monetary support from non-hunters/non-fishers
- Concerned that even if we get the license increase in WL-S dollars that the Legislature will reduce our budget by that same amount in the General Fund and recommends that we have an "agreement" to prevent that from happening

- Opposed to any proposed fee increases (hunting and all others) because last increase resulted in significant hiring and program expansion (Columbia Plateau Wildlife Management Association – CPWMA)
- Need to identify new fund sources before hunting/fishing fees go up (e.g., wolf license plate or Discover Pass expansion - CPWMA)
- Doesn't want to buy steelhead or salmon punch card -- feels \$17 is too much;
 - Increasing the cost of a salmon or steelhead CRC from 0 to \$17 is too much; a more reasonable increase would be from 0 to \$10 – they could support that

CONSERVATION

- Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group's support the proposed 1.4 mil under the new fee structure because of the 7-1 return over the 25 years of the RFEG Program existence. That is for every \$1 received they see a return of \$7. \$1.4 million = approximately \$10 million for state fisheries (Tri-State Steelheaders and RFEG).
- Needs to see the Agency FTE's from 2011 to current (concerned for a glut of staff hired) before they can support the proposal (NW Sportsman Club)
- Increase eyes in the woods/CORT Program- better advertisement
- Use more volunteers
- Upset with the Department's wolf plan and lack of support for significant amendments to that plan and this is related to their lack of support for new fees; "if you can't manage wolves or cougars...how can you manage new programs" - CPWMA