

# Washington's Wild Future

## *A Partnership for Fish and Wildlife*

### **Mill Creek Regional Forum (Region 4)**

August 10, 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 Mill Creek Regional Forum. Approximately 28 participants attended the event, one of six regional forums conducted around the state.

#### **HUNTING**

- Improve the hunt by reservation system for waterfowl.
- Explore permit system for use of dog training area, especially Snoqualmie Wildlife Area. That way, responsible users could get permits and irresponsible users could be identified.
- Audubon should be a part of an alternative funding effort/blue ribbon panel.
- Use hunter deferral system to reward adult taking out the new hunter.
- Really like youth hunts!
- Grizzly Bear recovery can't occur without fish recovery.
- Speak to Return on Investment.
- WDFW staff are doing a good job!
- Youth engagement.
- More enforcement officers (x10).
- Better communication to public on WDFW efforts to address elk hoof rot.
- Why aren't shed collectors charged a fee?
- Why aren't butterfly watchers and mountain bikers charged a fee?
- Enforcement is important.
- Partner with trail clubs and other groups to share the message about paying their way on the Wildlife Areas.
- Look into Colorado's "Hug a hunter" initiative.
- Better use of social media - National hunting & fishing day video, etc.
- Increase predator management.
- We don't trust WDFW. We would if you fulfilled your promise for replacement lands for hunters.
- Regarding your restoration piece, no more fish projects until you fulfill your obligations to upland bird hunters.
- Tweak the cost of Discover Pass to increase funds.
- Defenders of wildlife should be involved in panel.
- Select a set age (i.e. 35 yrs, 57 yrs, 23 yrs), annually for a chance to hunt for free.

## **FISHING**

- Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFEG) support catch record plan & fee increases.
- Will fishing fees only be spent on fishing needs?
- Concerned about a tuna license when we don't manage the fishery.
- Where are the chum going in the Snohomish & Skagit river systems?
  - Why can't sport anglers catch them?
- North of Falcon process needs more transparency.
- Guide fee is too high given the reduction in opportunity.
- Consider using volunteer groups to help collect spawner escapement data.
- Expand the 200-mile fishing limit to 500 miles, like other countries. It will help restore salmon abundance, as well as food for the Orca and sustain a future Grizzly Bear population. (x2)
- Specialty fisheries.
- There needs to be a community outreach person/team in each region.
- Coded Wire Tag Program > Cost recovery from Alaska!
- Use Coded Wire Tag reporting by hatchery/fishery as a marketing tool.
- Why do tribes get an earlier start to the season than recreational anglers for fish and crab?
- Should be required for people to sign up for email updates when purchasing a license, to be aware of fishing/hunting rule changes. (x2)
- Enforcement needs more undercover personnel working to catch poachers and those snagging fish - especially early hours.
- \$1.4M for Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFEG) is positive (x3)
- Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFEG) can help! Especially working with kids/youth.

## **FISHING LICENSE FEE PROPOSAL**

- Not seeing any reference to a lead shot/sinker ban within the 2017-2019 proposals. Are they included in plans for the next two biennia (2019-21, 2021-23)?
- Collaborate with Retailers
  - Don't cram bans down our throat. We order equipment 9-12 months in advance and get stuck with product that is unusable. Instead, collaborate with retailers to develop alternative solutions.
- "Pay to Play" Pass
  - Recreation user fee card for public lands (i.e. the US Park system).
  - Intent to identify land usage based on recreational interest at the time of procurement.
  - To aid in agency distribution of funds for each recreational level/service.
  - Fees partially for general use, and adding sub-fees for each recreational use.
- There should be no cost for catch record cards.
- Increases should be made incrementally.
- Catch record card fees are a good idea.
  - Enables tracking of salmon anglers.
- Any increases in fees need to go to support/enhance fisheries/habitat.

- Increased fishing fees may push families away from fishing.
- Discount for 1<sup>st</sup> time license buyers or those that haven't purchased in the last 5-10 years.
  - Or discounts from dealers for tackle.
- Catch record card costs should be reconsidered, there needs to be more opportunity to justify charging for a catch record card.
- Use pie charts to illustrate where budget money flows.
- Basic fact sheet on budget FAQ's.
- Would like to see more than a dollar from license fees adjust for inflation after 20 years.
- How will increased fees be spent on the resources?

### **COMMERCIAL FISHING**

- Commercial license fees are too small and should be proportional to the number of fish taken or impact to resource.

### **CONSERVATION**

- More funding for Family Forest Fish Passage Program (FFFPP).
- Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) program needs continued support.
- WA fishing license gives annual membership to Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFEG).
- Mountain forests - expand treatment and burnings on wildlife areas for better hunting.
- Focus on game and non-game species - public, biodiversity.