

Willapa Bay Salmon Advisory Group Meeting  
August 14, 2019 6 pm – 8 pm  
Raymond Elks Lodge, Raymond, WA

Topic: Willapa Bay Salmon Policy (C-3622) Comprehensive Review Update

Staff: Chad Herring, Barbara McClellan, Damon Peterson

Advisors: Marlisa Dugan, Ross Barkhurst, Jack Hollingsworth, Bob Lake, Mara Zimmerman, Steve Boerner, Tim Hamilton, Norm Reinhardt, Andy Mitby, Francis Estalilla

Public: 11 Individuals

- Opening statements/Introductions
- Update on addition of Mara Zimmerman/removal of Jess Helsley due to change in jobs (handout of contact information)
- Comprehensive Review Timeline (handout)
  - How do we move forward to collect advisory group comments in Sept and Oct?
    - Options: Mid-week, Saturday, conference call –send out doodle poll
- Staff Presentation on the Comp Review Analysis to-date, which is to answer the question does reducing fishing pressure on Chinook in Willapa Bay result in a measurable conservation benefit.
  - Willapa Bay experienced a 48.9% reduction in harvest but only a 4.97% increase in wild spawner escapement and 17% in hatchery escapement.
  - Advisor Comments:
    - The agency did not consider in this analysis all of the preseason or in-season modifications to the policy
    - Want to see the output of AHA if we didn't have the policy, AHA with the policy now if followed as written, and what AHA would show with the policy but with the modifications that were made to the policy
    - This analysis is the recreational and commercial together. Want those analyzed separately
    - The result of not seeing additional Chinook in natural-origin escapement might be due to what this harbor can hold, a carrying capacity issue.
    - Low flow water issues and disease could be a cause for a low increase in escapement
    - After being caught, the fish are more susceptible to stress and mortality

- This analysis is incomplete. It omits externalities such as compliance with the policy, habitat removal, eelgrass spraying, herring spawning biomass, first time we have reached escapement in Willapa River, and reached pHOS in Naselle River.
- Pre-spawn mortalities would be a factor to account for the 10K fish not accounted for. i.e. carcass recovery is low for Chinook
- Add a disclaimer that members of the advisory group do not agree with this analysis
- Fish and Wildlife Commissioners will likely have a lack of comprehension of this report
- Don't see the variables parsed out and captured fully in this analysis so not sure the Commissioners, who will make a final decision, will understand
- We did not take the initial recommendation of going to 14%. If we did, what would the response be and what would the data show then?
- Want to see the next four-year time step without the number of variables as the first time step did.
- Add an addendum summarizing the advisor comments regardless of validity for the Commissioners to see
- Did they take in all the mitigating factors in this analysis?
- What are the other questions and analyses going to be?
  - Did the policy increase the quality of the marine and freshwater recreational fisheries?
- Four years of data is not enough for this analysis. Tell that to the Commission. The 14% needs to be implemented in the next few years.
- Want it noted that the commercial fishery is where most of the reductions were taken
- The commercial fishery was reduced in the Humptulips fishery.
- Highlight the statement on the PowerPoint on the last slide regarding not finding a pattern does not mean there is not a pattern.
- An advisor has been turned down twice about commenting prior to speaking to the Commission
- We are exceeding MSY. Show what the decline in productivity at the hatcheries (smaller fish with less eggs that results in a need for more fish)
- Pre-spawning mortalities due to disease needs to be included in conclusions
- What happened to the commercial fishery and the amount of money lost needs to be added as well as the loss of revenue to Pacific County

Public comments:

Clark Cottrell:

- One of the policy goals listed is to achieve restoration of wild salmon. Even though that's an admirable, that seems to be at the cost of hatchery salmon
- Would like to see as a policy goal to increase the harvest

Allan Hollingsworth:

- Seals are a problem in the bay that harvest a good amount of salmon
- Runsize was overestimated preseason. That is the reason the escapement did not show the increase.

Mark Hermes:

- Supports getting rid of this policy
- Maximize hatchery production
- Support commercial fishing in August and September but not November. Leave those November late coho for the recreational fishery

Brent Soule:

- A lot of bickering
- More work needs to be done with user groups
- More work needs to be done with predators

Dale Beasley:

- President of Columbia River crab association
- Policy decisions have changed more than anything else has. The people are being left out of fisheries management.
- People want more harvest
- Things need to change
- Need more hatchery production

Tim Hamilton

- Recognize who the audience is in the presentations given
- Do not point the finger at the advisors when talking with the Commission

Art Holman:

- The agency has ruined the sport fishery
- Sport fishery no longer has priority

Ross Barkhurst:

- The analysis was well done within its parameters but it does not adequately address everything that needs to be addressed. By not addressing those additional things, the analysis can be misleading.
- The impression that you get is that all these sacrifices were made but since the wild fish did not get anything out of it, we should dump the policy.
- I have a way to determine the difference between the wild fish experience in the bay vs the freshwater.
- Advisory process has deteriorated
- Region 6 staff is isolated from the recreational and commercial fishers

Marlisa Dugan:

- The analysis is incomplete to bring in broader ramifications of things that created the smaller than expected wild fish escapement to the gravel.
- Recommend looking at more years, 4 – 8 years, with the lower 14% impact rate

Bob Lake:

- Snagging for eggs is a concern.
- Enforcement needs to stand up
- Needs to shut down the freshwater systems where fish are spawning to protect them.