

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Ad-Hoc Coastal Steelhead Advisory Group

Meeting #4 Summary

Tuesday, June 14, 2022

Time: 5 – 8 p.m.

Attendees

Advisory Group Members

Robert “Bob” Kratzer WA State Guides Association
Chris Ringlee Private angler
Geoff McMichael Mainstem Fish Research, LLC
Jason Rolfe The Flyfish Journal
Jessica Helsley Wild Salmon Center
Jonathan Stumpf Trout Unlimited
Luke Probasco Private angler
Mara Zimmerman Coast Salmon Partnership
Rich Simms Wild Steelhead Coalition
Roy Morris Retired fishing guide

Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Staff

Toby Harbison WDFW
James Losee WDFW
Eryn Couch WDFW

Facilitation Team

Greer Maier Triangle Associates, Facilitator
Olivia Smith Triangle Associates, Facilitation Support

Meeting Materials

- [June 14 Meeting Agenda](#)
- [June 14 Meeting Slides](#)
- [June 14 Meeting Recording](#)
- [April 28 Meeting Summary](#)

<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Updated Homework Assignment: Read the artificial production section of the Statewide Steelhead Management Plan. <u>Come to the next meeting</u> prepared to discuss. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Optional: Provide feedback/ideas for freshwater test fishery and/or any additional feedback on the Monitoring and	Advisory Group Members	2 weeks prior to August Advisory Group meeting (date TBD on doodle poll)

Evaluation and Fisheries Regulation sections		
Incorporate Advisory Group feedback and produce a revised/track-changed draft and update the response to comment matrix for Advisory Group members to review ahead of the next meeting.	WDFW	1 week prior to August Advisory Group meeting (<i>date TBD on doodle poll</i>)
WDFW to update and share Advisory Group members the CSAG Advisory Group Syllabus. _____	WDFW	Done
Draft a meeting summary and begin scheduling August meeting.	Triangle Associates	June 28

Welcome and Introductions

The facilitator, Greer Maier with Triangle Associates (Triangle), gave a brief overview of the meeting agenda and objectives before reviewing the action items from the April 28 meeting. Olivia Smith, Triangle, then led a round of introductions.

James Losee, WDFW, gave an update on the budget for the Coastal Steelhead Proviso Implementation Plan (CSPIP), noting the Governor will review a new budget September 2022 to be approved in 2023. WDFW has been discussing funding needs internally within the Fish Program and emphasizing the budget request relating to steelhead work. James reiterated that things will be clearer in November 2022.

The facilitator took live notes during this portion of the meeting on topics of interest and encouraged members to add notes during and after the meeting for WDFW to consider.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Baseline M&E

The facilitator took live notes during this portion of the meeting and encouraged members to add notes during and after the meeting for WDFW to consider. Additional summary notes are provided below.

Toby Harbison, WDFW, introduced the WDFW staff in attendance; reviewed the five subject areas included in the Coastal Steelhead Proviso Implementation Plan (CSPIP) (monitoring and evaluation, fishing regulations, habitat, hatchery operations, and socioeconomics); and then gave an overview of the CSPIP timeline ([slides 2-3](#)).

Questions and Discussion:

- In response to a question from Geoff McMichael about access to otolith samples and obtaining heads from Tribal fish for otolith analysis, WDFW responded they have age

structure from scales and don't collect otoliths as a standard practice. James Losee suggested that Advisory Group members with studies or management questions requiring otoliths could send those ideas to WDFW.

- In response to a question from Jason Rolfe about the regime concept as they relate to monitoring and evaluation baseline data collection, WDFW explained the intent is for the monitoring and evaluation baseline to include a comprehensive set of tools that may or may not be applied to all of the systems. WDFW is working to make the baseline more robust than past efforts and is considering more creel surveys for more precise impact estimates and working toward a better understanding population escapement.
- Roy Morris commented on the need to increase student research and volunteer participation to carry the burden of data collection and to increase public involvement beyond just fishing for steelhead.

Test Fisheries

The facilitator took live notes during this portion of the meeting and encouraged members to add notes during and after the meeting for WDFW to consider. Additional summary notes are provided below.

Amy Edwards, WDFW, presented the idea of hook and line test fisheries to produce a standardized estimate of catch and harvest independent of current methods (creel, catch records, etc.). WDFW is considering hiring staff to implement a test fishery using a standardized approach that varies by day and method (guide vs. non-guided and boat vs. shore) ([slide 5](#)).

Questions or Comments:

- Geoff McMichael agreed with the hook line and test fisheries objectives but cautioned introducing extensive variability to the design. Geoff emphasized the importance of having the best guides for data collection and including sampling as part of the effort (e.g. scales).
 - There were several comments on how information would be skewed with the best available guides as they would find fish every time regardless of run size.
- In response to a question about if this program has been used elsewhere in the state, WDFW responded there are staff in the Columbia River system considering this approach and fisherman on the Columbia who are contracted with a pilot program to test equipment. It was noted the Cowlitz River creel and test fishing study was set up in a similar way.
- Roy Morris suggested setting up a test fishery working group to discuss this further given the complexity of the program.
- Rich Simms commented on the timing of the test fishery and noted the difference in fish behavior on quiet vs. busy rivers.

Fisheries Regulations

Homework Report Out

- James Losee, WDFW, shared there are currently not escapement estimates for smaller scale independent streams and WDFW is striving to understand those systems better.
- Roy Morris recommended closing the Dickey River for 5 years and negotiating with co-managers downstream to cease gill fishing near Mora Park.
- Luke Probasco emphasized trusting the science and adding catch limits per day/year on the Willapa River.
- Mara Zimmerman expressed support for measures to build steelhead populations when run sizes are low; recommended doing river by river closures based on solid creel; and implementing cost effective catch record cards. Mara noted the importance of hatchery fish harvest opportunities and the frustration when rivers like the Wynoochee River are closed. There is also a need for hatchery scaling to improve that.
- Jason Rolfe shared a desire to learn more about when anglers and guides will be at certain locations on the Wynoochee and Satsop Rivers, Jason expressed concern with the exploitation he has witnessed on the Wynoochee River.
- Rich Simms commented on the need for better handling of steelhead and suggested the Hoh River be a wild steelhead gene bank.
- Bob Kratzer noted that the steelhead season was still closed on the Deschutes River despite existing bans on fishing from a boat and encouraged the group to consider what regulations will result in the benefits needed to help steelhead. Bob then suggested reducing pressure in certain areas, like the Chehalis River.

Topics of Interest

The facilitator took live notes during this portion of the meeting and encouraged members to add notes during and after the meeting for WDFW to consider. Additional summary notes are provided below.

Questions and Discussion:

- In response to a question from Jonathan Stumpf about the Town Halls, coordination with co-managers, and considerations for resident rainbow trout, James Losee shared once the CSPIP is developed WDFW would like to move away from the pre-season Town Hall meetings but wants to continue to try and increase public engagement.
- Toby Harbison explained they are working to finish spawning ground surveys in spring and finalize escapement numbers by August to be used in forecasts with co-managers. In October 2022 WDFW is hoping to come to forecast agreements and plans with co-managers.

- Bob Kratzer suggested time limits for anglers to be on the water (ex. until 1:00pm)
- Geoff McMichael suggested limiting entry (ex. lottery systems) in circumstances when expected returns are poor.
- Jason Rolfe commented on the need to understand impacts further before implementing regulations (ex. gather data on fishing from a boat before banning it). James Losee added the baseline M&E mentioned at the beginning will help test impacts.
- Luke Probasco suggested catch limits by day or year.
- Rich Simms shared a preference for seeing the fishery managed properly and emphasized the need to protect resident rainbow trout.
- Bob Kratzer commented that up until recently he was familiar with what co-managers caught, but it seems like that has changed. He asked if there was a change in tribal policy or management and if information from tribes is still shared. James Losee responded there has been no change in policy and they are still legally required to get tribal consent before sharing data. He noted the norms for sharing tribal data varies across the western side of Washington.
- In response to a question from Rich Simms about how fish are accounted for on the Queets River, James Losee responded there are not systems in place like Skagit County and Region 6 who operate creel programs to summarize their catch information.

Hatchery Operations

Toby Harbison, WDFW, gave an overview of hatchery production, noting that WDFW is working to understand how many fish they can release while staying within pre-existing Statewide Steelhead Management Plan (SSMP) genetic influence thresholds ([slide 9](#)).

Anja Huff, WDFW – HEAT unit, shared a presentation on the hatchery analysis her team is currently working on and how they relate to the SSMP. Anja explained the All-H Analyzer (AHA) Model, which uses hatchery and natural population data to provide estimates of pHOS and PNI. She gave an overview of data from the late Winter Steelhead Program, demographic geneflow model (DGM), geneflow model assumptions, and mean spawning dates and cutoff dates ([slides 10-20](#)).

Questions and Discussion:

- In response to a question from Bob Kratzer about how current the data is, Anja Huff responded the data is from 2016/2017 with additional data from 2020. There was additional discussion on redd count data in the Hoh River system.
- In response to a question from Jonathan Stumpf about how the WDFW hatchery steelhead modeling objectives align with the SSMP and other coastal programs, Anja Huff responded the results section is under WDFW policy review. James Losee added the

goal of this presentation was to describe the concepts and links to SSMP guidelines. WDFW is extremely interested in meeting those guidelines.

- WDFW is currently reviewing the hatchery modeling white paper (Marston & Huff 2022) and hatchery section of the CSPIP per a standard technical reviewal process.
- In response to a question from Jonathan Stumpf about when the hatchery section will be available and the level of input Advisors will have, James Losee responded WDFW will share this section as soon as it is ready to go public, but they need to approve the content internally before sharing publicly. He noted this section is integral to the CSPIP that is due in December.
- Toby Harbison explained there will be time for additional dialogue at the next meeting and that WDFW is being mindful of how the CSPIP will fit into and meet the objectives of the SSMP even with closed fisheries. Toby agreed to update the Syllabus for the remainder of the meetings for this group.

Action item: WDFW to update the Syllabus and send with the meeting summary.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

The facilitator thanked the Advisory Group for their engagement and thoughtful questions. A meeting date for August will be chosen based on results of the Doodle poll and a meeting invite will follow.

Public Comments:

- Guy Fleischer: Commented on the resident trout issue, noting that resident O.mykiss are important. He couldn't find any reference in the SSMP for these fish. He said that if WDFW is doing gene banks they need to allow protection of freshwater fish. James Losee explained the resident Rainbow Trout produce anadromous smolts and highlighted that in the last three years anglers have not been allowed to harvest resident Rainbow Trout under emergency rules. However, these are not permanent rules. He noted there is also language on resident rainbow trout in the Proviso Implementation Plan.
- Rich Simms: Can we make these rules permanent? Especially in summer and with gear restrictions to reduce mortalities.
- Grer Fitz: Asked if in the regimes for season setting, will previous years' returns be a factor in regulation setting? For instance, if a system missed escapement goals previously, but forecasts look good now, does that influence the path forward? James Losee responded that if WDFW wants regimes to push us into the positive for returns.
- Jonathan Stumpf followed up with a comment on the management regimes, noting that he would like to add a fourth column. He asked if WDFW can clarify where the crosswalk is with the SSMP? Toby shared what is stated in the SSMP and noted that there can be impacts above escapement, if meeting 10% of run. WDFW can also have the ability to

close fisheries if they can't meet management objections. Toby told Jonathan she would connect offline.

The meeting officially adjourned at 8:08 p.m. PST.