

2019 Willapa Bay North of Falcon Advisory Meeting

April 9, 2019

Raymond Elks Lodge, Raymond, WA 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

WDFW Staff: Chad Herring, Barbara McClellan, Lyle Jennings, Damon Peterson, Larry Phillips

Advisors: Norm Reinhardt, Bob Lake, Andy Mitby, Lance Gray, Greg McMillan, Tim Hamilton, Marlisa Dugan, Ross Barkhurst (did not want to sit at the table)

Chad:

- Introduction
- NOF statewide perspective
 - South Sound Chum issues have taken up a lot of the time in the NOF negotiations with the tribe
- Commission Comprehensive Policy Review Process guidance
 - Monthly check-ins with the WBSAG. Will that work for the advisors?
- 2019 Commission Fishery Guidance for fishery planning from the Commission Meeting on 4/6/19
 - 20% for Willapa and Naselle river impact rate
 - 10% impact for Chum
 - Suspended #6 in the policy under Fishery Management
 - Gave the Dept the flexibility to decide on the bag limit for the recreational fishery
- Pamphlet layered gear restriction issue
- Models
 - Coho FRAM updated from NOF #2 in all of these proposals but we do not have an official model run that include all treaty and non-treaty fisheries
 - 4 models sent in by the commercial sector, Commercial Proposal #1-4
 - The higher we go with a marine bag limit, the more encounters we have to Lower Columbia River natural Chinook if we open the Control Zone. There is a constraint regarding Stillaguamish and Mid-Hood Canal exploitation rates compared to the Lower Columbia River natural Chinook impacts that we may be limited by.
 - What does the recreational fishery find to be important in the marine fishery, the bag limit or opening the control zone?

Advisor Comments:

- There needs to be a purpose to have any more meetings
- As long as we make meaningful progress meetings are fine
- The recreational sector isn't fairly represented here
- Monthly meetings seem fine
- Some commercial fishermen will be in Alaska so a phone conference would work
- We need to see if we are being constructive at these meetings before having more meetings. What are we supposed to do at these meetings? We need to define the purpose.
- Want 4 fish bag limit in the Nemah River
- Can't support banning bait use in the Middle Nemah River
- Believe the policy does spell out the recreational priority using the bottom page 4 in the policy
- The recreational fishery does not need all of the NOR CHK impacts to prosecute their fishery now

- It is more important to fish in the Control Zone with a 2 fish bag than having a 3 fish bag and the control zone closed. If we cannot maintain the rate for OCN then we shouldn't fish the control zone.
- Why is the ocean not being held accountable?
- Eggtake for Chinook at the facilities – Would like to trim some days off the front of the commercial season and keep 2 fish recreational bag in order to make sure we make egg take and make escapement first.
- Have an issue over this because that we have spent so much time arguing over Lower Columbia River tule impacts
- Commercial sector – Model #2 looks good
- How many years has Nemah or Naselle made eggtake in the last 4 years? None. We are going to continue to put ourselves in a hole with eggtake since Forks Creek can no longer backfill to Nemah and Naselle hatcheries.
- Think we should close the areas below the hatcheries (to be determined by the agency) until we make Chinook eggtake
- Bag limit in freshwater in Willapa River should probably be reduced with the lower return expected
- Naselle River freshwater bag limit could be 2 or 3 fish bag limit
- Nemah River freshwater should start with a 3 fish bag. Nemah weir needs silt removed in order to keep fish alive. The facility needs aerators.
- Nemah freshwater should be a 4 fish bag limit, 3 fish bag to Naselle, 1 fish bag in Willapa, and 3 and/or 2 fish bag limit in marine area
- Do not risk Chinook hatchery escapement or spawner escapement
- Start with a 2 fish bag until we make eggtake then increase bag limit in freshwater
- Support the amended Model #2 that we adjusted at this meeting
- Think we should close the area below the Naselle hatchery until after Oct 15 (Hwy 4 bridge to the hatchery)

Public Comment:

Art Holman

- Clear that the recs have no representation here
- Do not know why we are protecting the fish for the gillnetters
- All of the proposals were commercial proposals and did not allow any recreational proposals

Ross Barkhurst

- Important to get the fish back to the rivers
- Priority
- Need a well placed separating weir in Willapa River
- A week ago, asked for a rule change but this didn't make the agenda
- In the past we have found Columbia fish in 2N and 2M but now they don't count
- Definition of escapement seems to have changed
- Need to consider Bear, Palix and North rivers for Chum
- These meetings do not provide opportunity for the public
- The rec priority is not visible here tonight

Mark Ashley

- Is embarrassed at how this has gone
- Can't believe we can't just scrap this whole thing
- We are upgrading hatcheries but we are taking less fish than ever before
- You can't tell the Commissioners that this is going well
- Find it hard to believe that the coho run is going to be as large as you said. There weren't as many jacks last year.
- Mergansers are taking smolts
- This whole thing is doomed for failure
- Let's go back and produce fish especially for the Orcas

Bruce Ogren

- Do not agree with the current policy by the Commission
- One of the issues is the 4300 natural Chinook spawner goal.
- Does the federal government recognize WB as a hatchery system?
- Outside impacts should be reduced until we make the 4300 with a surplus
- The ocean fishery should be cut back until we get the 4350 back over the bar
- Forks Creek hatchery should produce 3.3 million chinook

Steve Gacke

- Need to manage for egg take baywide. Must close Nemah Valley road to hatchery and Naselle Hwy 4 to hatchery
- Maximum bag limit should be 2 fish baywide

Frank Porembski

- Would like a handout of the DNA samples outside of WB. Pinpoint how many samples were taken, when and where.
- Should not be any gillnets until after Sept 15 or later
- Need a 2 bag limit but open the control zone

Marlisa Dugan

- Would like to thank Norm Reinhardt about pointing out that the policy stipulates how to increase the recreational opportunity through various different methods
- Saturday's Commission meeting was a step backwards
- In-season management is poor
- Recreational fishers do not get the support we need
- There is enough fish for everyone if we manage it properly
- The ocean fisheries takes too much to not allow enough fish back over the bar
- We expected to fish at 14% but now we are back to 20%
- Recreational fishers still expect a priority on Chinook

Tim Hamilton

- Here to speak representing the Twin Harbor Advocacy
- Thought we were going to have an advisory group that would discuss universal issues
- The intent was that the advisors would be provided the options
- We were misled and deceived based on what happened at Saturday's Commission meeting
- This department has a cultural problem with dealing with the public
- I have lost faith that we will meet conservation.
- Will now look at ESA