

13. **COLUMBIA RIVER SPRING & SUMMER CHINOOK ALLOCATION
POLICIES - BRIEFING**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Decision Page/"Green sheet" Spring Chinook 1-2

Policy C-3615 Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook
Management and Allocation for Non-Indian Fisheries, 2006-2007 3

Decision Page/"Green sheet" Summer Chinook..... 4-5

Policy C-3616 Mainstem Columbia River Summer Chinook
Management and Allocation for Non-Indian Fisheries, 2006-2007 6

“GREEN SHEET”

Meeting dates: December 7-8, 2007

Agenda item: Columbia River Spring Chinook Allocation

Staff Contact: Cindy LeFleur, Columbia River Policy Coordinator, IRM

Presenter(s): Cindy LeFleur, Columbia River Policy Coordinator, IRM

Background: Spring Chinook destined for areas above Bonneville Dam include two components that are listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Prior to 2001, fisheries were very limited on this run. With the advent of mass-marked hatchery fish, selective fishing techniques, and agreements with the U.S. v Oregon Parties, additional opportunities became available. Sport and commercial fisheries are conducted to minimize mortalities to the ESA-listed stocks, while providing harvest opportunities on the hatchery fish. These fisheries have been operated under strict limits on the allowable level of incidental-mortality of ESA-listed salmon (i.e. the level of unintended fisheries-related mortality), and have been limited to 2% of the run. Both sport and commercial fisheries use selective fishing techniques that require the release of all spring Chinook with an adipose fin intact. Fisheries in the Columbia River are jointly managed with the state of Oregon, requiring coordination in order to have concurrent regulations.

Previous Allocation Decisions

Three two-year policies guiding allocation of the ESA-limits to sport and commercial fisheries have been in place since 2002. The current policy (C-3615, attached), which expires December 31, 2007, includes Guiding Principles and Fisheries Management Objectives, which have changed very little over the past six years. The allocation of impacts to sport and commercial fisheries has also changed very little ranging from 57% sport/43% commercial to 65% sport/35% commercial. The current allocation was negotiated to 57% sport and 43% commercial, because the Washington and Oregon Commissions had adopted slightly different allocations.

Fishery Management

With the re-initiation of spring Chinook fisheries in the main-stem Columbia and the limited allowable impact to ESA listed stocks, there has been spirited debate among the fishing sectors regarding the appropriate allocation of impacts. The allowable impact rate does not satisfy the needs of all of the user groups. In addition, fishery management decisions must be conservative to ensure the ESA guidelines are not exceeded.

Achieving these precise allocation proportions can be difficult because of variations in fishing effort and catch per unit effort and in spring Chinook run timing and run sizes. Moreover, management is complicated by the inability to accurately update the in-season run size until late April, after much of the prime fishing season has passed.

Despite these challenges, in-season management has generally been effective at maintaining fisheries within or very close to limits on allowable incidental-mortality while optimizing harvest opportunity. The recreational fishery has averaged 83% of their allocation over the past six years and the commercial fishery has averaged 99% during the same time frame.

Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

With the advent of the first policy regarding spring Chinook allocation, the Washington and Oregon Commissions have adopted guiding principles and management objectives, which include conservation goals and objectives for fishery management. These principles and objectives have remained relatively unchanged for the past six years. The staff will likely propose a new policy that incorporates many of the components of the existing policy. The staff would also like the Commission to consider a long-term policy (up to 10 years) with the ability to review/update if conditions change.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Staff will meet with the Columbia River Recreational and Commercial Advisory Groups on these issues prior to the proposed February decision. A separate Stakeholder Group has been established by WDFW and ODFW with the goal of a collaborative process to discuss the future of sport and commercial fisheries and in particular, allocation of limited resources. Staff from WDFW and ODFW will meet with this group during November and December – three meetings have been scheduled.

Action requested:

Briefing only. Staff proposes that a detailed briefing occur at the joint Washington/Oregon Commission meeting in January, that public comments are taken at the Washington Commission meeting in January, with a decision at the February Commission meeting.

Draft motion language:

N/A

Justification for Commission action:

N/A

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

POLICY DECISION

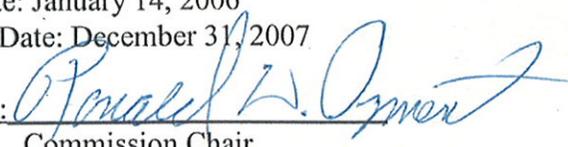
POLICY TITLE: Mainstem Columbia River **POLICY NUMBER: C-3615**
Spring Chinook Management and Allocation for
Non-Indian Fisheries, 2006-2007

Supercedes: C-3613 and C-3614

Effective Date: January 14, 2006

Termination Date: December 31, 2007

See Also:

Approved by: 
Commission Chair

Guiding Principles

- Meet conservation requirements for wild spring chinook and wild winter steelhead, including populations listed under the federal Endangered Species Act.
- Manage non-Indian harvest of spring chinook within the provisions of the *U.S. v Oregon* Management Agreement for upriver spring chinook.
- Manage harvest to meet hatchery escapement goals.
- Focus sport and commercial fisheries' allocation on harvest of hatchery fish by implementing live capture and release of unmarked spring chinook.

Fisheries Management Objectives

- Specific structure of sport and commercial fisheries will be set by the Columbia River Compact on an annual basis to meet adopted allocation policies and fisheries objectives after annual run size forecasts are available.
- Manage the mainstem Columbia River spring chinook fisheries with the intent to limit the wild winter steelhead impact to less than 2%.
- Provide for in-season management flexibility to utilize the non-Indian upriver spring chinook impact allocation to meet the objectives of both fisheries, i.e., upriver impact sharing adjustments in response to in-season information pertaining to catch and run size.
- Adjustments to the sport fishery may occur in-season if it is estimated the fishery will not continue through April. In-season adjustments may include such options as days/week and area closures.
- Recognize economic benefits of sport and commercial fisheries in the Columbia River.
- Provide for sport fisheries throughout the Columbia River downstream of McNary Dam, sport/tribal fisheries in the Snake River and upper Columbia River, and commercial and sport fisheries in select areas.

Allocation of Upriver Spring Chinook Impacts

The Director shall manage Columbia River non-Indian spring chinook fisheries that are covered by the allowable ESA upriver impact rate (currently 2%) based on the following allocation guidelines. The recreational fishery allocation should be 60% of the allowable impact rate with the remainder to the commercial fishery.

Delegation of Authority

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission delegates the authority to the Director, through the Columbia River Compact process, to set seasons for sport and commercial fisheries in the Columbia River, and to adopt permanent and emergency regulations to implement these fisheries.

“GREEN SHEET”

Meeting dates: December 7-8, 2007

Agenda item: Columbia River Summer Chinook Allocation – Briefing

Staff Contact: Cindy LeFleur, Columbia River Policy Coordinator, IRM

Presenter(s): Cindy LeFleur, Columbia River Policy Coordinator, IRM
Heather Bartlett, Fish Management Division Manager Anadromous,
Fish Program

Background: Summer Chinook enter the Columbia River in June and July on their migration to the upper Columbia River basin, above Priest Rapids Dam. Historically, the majority of the spawning occurred in the upper Columbia River above Grand Coulee Dam and access to that area was blocked by the construction of the dam, which was completed in 1941. Since completion of the Columbia River hydropower system, summer Chinook redds are found in the Columbia, Wenatchee, Okanogan, Methow, Similkameen, Chelan and Entiat rivers.

Upper Columbia summer Chinook are not listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and are currently healthy. Population abundance has rebounded in recent years to levels that provide fish for harvest. Guidelines for managing fisheries and allocating harvest have not existed until very recently, since there has been virtually no harvest on summer chinook from the 1960's until numbers rebounded in 2000. An escapement goal and treaty/non-treaty harvest sharing were negotiated in the U.S. v. Oregon process, and were adopted for 2005-2007. The new U.S. v Oregon Management Agreement for 2008 and beyond, includes an escapement goal and harvest sharing schedule that is similar to the one adopted through 2007.

Previous Allocation Decisions

The current policy (C-3616, attached), which expires December 31, 2007, includes Guiding Principles, Fisheries Management Objectives, and an allocation of 50% sport/50% commercial for fisheries downstream from Priest Rapids Dam. Recreational harvest above Priest Rapids Dam was excluded from the allocation policy. The Commission had not provided guidance on allocation of the non-treaty share until 2006, for several reasons:

- Harvest opportunities were non-existent until 2000.
- Prior to 2004, the only harvest opportunity was recreational fisheries above Priest Rapids Dam.
- The non-treaty share below Priest Rapids Dam was not defined until late spring in 2005.

Management Guidelines

The U.S. v Oregon Management Agreement provides a spawning escapement goal for natural and hatchery stocks combined, and a sharing plan for the available harvest between treaty Indian and non-treaty fishers. The management intent is to treat the hatchery and natural fish as one composite group because the fish are genetically similar, and the escapement goal is a combined goal for both. The management period was established as June 16 through July 31 at Bonneville Dam.

On June 5, 2007, WDFW signed the "Agreement between the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife on Jointly managed salmon and steelhead populations". This agreement provides guidelines for harvest sharing of salmon and steelhead stocks originating in areas above Wells Dam. The agreement limits all non-treaty fishing on summer Chinook to minimal levels when the run size is below escapement needs. At levels of low allowable harvest (about 50,000 run size), harvest

opportunity is allocated almost exclusively to upstream areas, to meet Colville and Wanapum needs as well as provide recreational fishing in the upstream areas which otherwise have quite limited salmon angling opportunities.

WDFW has also finalized the "Harvest Framework for Non-treaty Fisheries directed at Salmonids originating above Priest Rapids Dam" – a management plan that details management goals and harvest sharing for salmonids. The harvest measures for summer Chinook are compatible with the measures in the Colville Agreement.

Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration: The staff will likely propose a new policy that incorporates many of the components of the existing policy. The staff would also like the Commission to consider a long-term policy (up to 10 years) with the ability to review/update if conditions change.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Staff will meet with the Columbia River Recreational and Commercial Advisor Groups on these issues prior to the proposed February decision. A separate Stakeholder Group has been established by WDFW and ODFW with the goal of a collaborative process to discuss the future of sport and commercial fisheries and in particular, allocation of limited resources. Staff from WDFW and ODFW will meet with this group during November and December – three meetings have been scheduled.

Action requested:

Briefing only. Staff proposes that a detailed briefing occur at the joint Washington/Oregon Commission meeting in January, that public comments are taken at the Washington Commission meeting in January, with a decision at the February Commission meeting.

Draft motion language:

N/A

Justification for Commission action:

N/A

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

POLICY DECISION

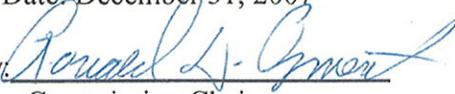
POLICY TITLE: Mainstem Columbia River Summer Chinook Allocation for Non-Indian Fisheries Below Priest Rapids Dam, 2006-2007 **POLICY NUMBER: C-3616**

Supersedes:

Effective Date: March 1, 2006

Termination Date: December 31, 2007

See Also:

Approved by: 
Commission Chair

Guiding Principles

- Meet the conservation requirements for summer chinook, expressed as the escapement goal of 20,000 natural and hatchery spawners.
- Meet treaty/non-treaty sharing objectives in the 2005-2007 *U.S. v Oregon* Management Agreement.
- Address Colville and Wanapum tribal subsistence and ceremonial harvest needs.
- Provide recreational fishing opportunity above Priest Rapids Dam as the highest recreational fishery priority.

Fisheries Management Objectives

- Specific structure of sport and commercial fisheries will be set by the Columbia River Compact following stakeholder consultation in the North of Falcon process on an annual basis to meet adopted allocation policies and fisheries objectives after run size forecasts are available.
- Provide for in-season management flexibility to utilize the non-treaty summer chinook harvest to meet the objectives of both fisheries.
- In shaping fisheries, consult with stakeholders to recognize economic benefits of sport and commercial fisheries in the Columbia River.
- Provide for sport fisheries throughout the Columbia River downstream of Priest Rapids Dam and commercial fisheries below Bonneville Dam.

Recreational and Commercial Allocation of Upriver Summer Chinook Impacts

- The allocation of available harvest downstream of Priest Rapids Dam shall be 50% for the recreational fishery and 50% for the commercial fishery. The Commission recognizes that when allowable harvest is either very large or very small, adjustments may need to be made to the allocation based on the capabilities of each fleet.

Delegation of Authority

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission delegates the authority to the Director, through the Columbia River Compact and North of Falcon stakeholder consultation processes, to set seasons for sport and commercial fisheries in the Columbia River, and to adopt permanent and emergency regulations to implement these fisheries. The Director shall consult with the Commission Chair if it becomes necessary to deviate from the Commission's policy to achieve concurrent regulations with Oregon.