

13. Columbia River Summer Chinook Policy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Decision Page/"Green sheet"	<i>i-ii</i>
Policy C-3618	1-2

“GREEN SHEET”

Meeting dates:	February 5-6, 2010, Commission Meeting
Agenda item #13:	Columbia River Summer Chinook Policy – Briefing and Public Hearing
Staff Contact:	Cindy LeFleur, Columbia River Policy Coordinator, Intergovernmental Resource Management Program
Presenter(s):	Cindy LeFleur, Columbia River Policy Coordinator, Intergovernmental Resource Management Program Heather Bartlett, Hatcheries Division Manager, 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. Since completion of the Columbia River hydropower system blocked their access to spawning areas upstream of Chief Joseph Dam, 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 1960s until numbers rebounded in 2000. An escapement goal and treaty/non-treaty harvest sharing were adopted in the new *United States v Oregon* Management Agreement.

Management Plans/Guidelines

Conservation guidelines are included under the “2008-2017 *United States v Oregon* Management Agreement for upriver Chinook, sockeye, steelhead, coho, and white sturgeon”, which provides for a biologically-based 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.

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” (Colville Agreement) was signed in 2007. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) has also developed 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. These agreements/plans provide guidelines for harvest sharing of salmon and steelhead stocks originating in areas above Wells Dam, and provides for harvest opportunities above Priest Rapids Dam as the highest priority, especially when the abundance is at low levels (near 50,000). This ensures that sport fisheries in the upper Columbia have a chance to harvest salmon in an area where very few opportunities exist. It also ensures that Colville tribal needs will be met.

Summer Chinook Summits

The Department participated in four meetings in 2009 focusing on summer Chinook which were called “Summer Chinook Summits”. The other participants included the Colville Tribe, Yakama Nation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission. The summits were convened following completion of the Hatchery Scientific Review Groups (HSRG) recommendations for summer Chinook. The

purpose of the summits was to review the current management framework and to determine the appropriate conservation, artificial production and harvest management objectives. The joint meetings covered a broad range of information, including the recent assessments by the HSRG, observations of adult returns, spawning levels and productivity estimates, harvest and exploitation rates, modeling of population response to increased hatchery production from the upcoming Chief Joseph Hatchery and other mitigation programs, population structure, and conservation objectives.

The results of the summits will be summarized in a report that is expected to be completed within the next few months. The recommendations from the summit will need to be shared with other *United States v Oregon* members and the various constituent groups. There will be changes to the current escapement goal to account for the new production for Chief Joe Hatchery (beginning in 2011) and recommendations for implementation of some Mark-Selective Fisheries (MSF).

Previous Policy C-3618

The previous policy, C-3618, (Attachment 1), which expired December 31, 2009, included Guiding Principles, Fisheries Management Objectives, and an allocation of 50 percent sport/50 percent commercial for fisheries downstream from Priest Rapids Dam. Recreational harvest above Priest Rapids Dam was excluded from the allocation policy because the agreements with the Colville Tribe provide the majority of the harvest to areas above Priest Rapids Dam.

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

Department staff is recommending extension of the current policy for one more year, without change. During the upcoming year, staff will share the results of the summits with the *United States v Oregon* Parties, co-managers in Oregon, sport fishing groups in the Upper Columbia, and sport and commercial advisor groups in the Lower Columbia. A new policy for 2011 and beyond would likely be based on changes to the management framework that result from the Summit process and subsequent public input, would provide harvest management objectives that include MSF options and would revisit the allocation between commercial and recreational sectors.

For the 2010 fishery, Department staff will discuss options for recreational MSF with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and constituents during the North of Falcon process in March and April and with the Upper Columbia Recreational Fishery Group in January - March.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

There have not been any public meetings regarding the Department staff recommendation to extend the policy for an additional year; copies of the greensheet and associated briefing materials will be provided to the advisors before the February Commission meeting.

As described above, Department staff is planning an extensive outreach program through spring and summer 2010 as part of the implementation process for the results of the Summer Chinook Summit, which will likely result in recommended changes to the policy.

Action requested: N/A

Draft motion language: N/A

Justification for Commission action: N/A

Communications Plan:

Results of commission decision will be shared with co-managers and appropriate constituents.

Form revised 10/16/2008 - sdy

**FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION
POLICY DECISION**

**POLICY TITLE: Mainstem Columbia River
Summer Chinook Allocation
for Non-Indian Fisheries below
Priest Rapids Dam, 2009**

POLICY NUMBER: C-3618

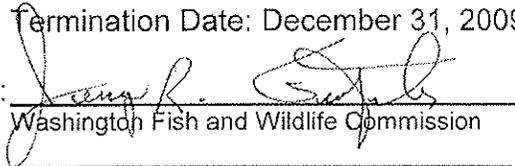
Effective Date: January 1, 2009

Supersedes: C-3618, 2008

Termination Date: December 31, 2009

See Also: C-3617, 2009

Approved by:


Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

Discussion: *This policy is the same as the previous two policies on summer Chinook. The recommendation of the Columbia River Fish Working Group (CRFWG) was to maintain this policy through 2013. The CRFWG will likely discuss summer Chinook in Phase 2.*

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 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 percent for the recreational fishery and 50 percent for the commercial fishery. The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission (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 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 work with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to achieve implementation of this Commission action in a manner that results in concurrent regulations between the two states. 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.