6. 2011 North of Falcon Policy C-3608 – Briefing/Public Hearing

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Decision Page/"Green sheet"..... *i*

Current North of Falcon Policy C-3608 exp12.31.2010 1-3

Placeholder for North of Falcon Policy C-3608 DRAFT ..... x - x
(draft revised policy to follow by email and provided as meeting initiates)

"GREEN SHEET"

Meeting:	January 7-8, 2011, Commission Meeting
Agenda item #6:	2011 North of Falcon Policy C-3608 – (Briefing/Public Hearing)
Staff Contact:	Pat Pattillo, Special Assistant to the Director (Director's Office) John Long, Statewide Salmon Manager, (Fish Program)
Presenter(s):	Pat Pattillo, Special Assistant to the Director (Directors Office)

Background:

The Commission's North of Falcon Policy provides direction and guidance to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) as it conducts the annual process for defining salmon fishing seasons in Pacific Ocean, Columbia River, Puget Sound, and Washington Coastal marine and freshwater areas.

Department staff briefed the Commission in December on the current North of Falcon Policy (C-3608), but provided no recommendations for modification. A public involvement process was identified by staff members, including meetings with recreational and commercial advisors to be conducted prior to the January Commission meeting, when public comments on the North of Falcon policy will be received.

Department staff will provide a summary of public comments or recommendations for modification received, and will provide a tentative proposal for the Commission's consideration.

Policy issues:

Policy guidance to the Department for defining annual salmon fishing seasons in Washington State that meets conservation and fishery management objectives for non-treaty commercial and recreational fishing opportunity.

Public involvement process and outcome:

Public meetings with recreational and commercial fishery advisors were conducted by the Department to review the current North of Falcon policy. Public comments will be received at the January Commission meeting.

Action requested:

Public comments and staff tentative recommendations only. The Commission will adopt a North of Falcon policy at the February Commission meeting.

Draft motion language:

N/A

Justification for Commission Action:

N/A

Communications Plan:

N/A

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION
POLICY DECISION

POLICY TITLE: 2009-2010 North of Falcon **POLICY NUMBER: C-3608**

Supercedes: C-3608, 2007-2008

Effective Date: February 6, 2009
Termination Date: December 31, 2010

See Also: **POL-C3001**

Approved by: Miranda Weeker

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

North of Falcon Policy

This Policy will guide Department staff in considering conservation, allocation, in-season management, and monitoring issues associated with the co-management process known as North of Falcon. When considering management issues, Department staff will insure that decisions are made consistent with the Department's statutory authority, *U.S. v. Washington*, *U.S. V. Oregon*, the Endangered Species Act, the Puget Sound Chinook Harvest Management Plan, the Pacific Salmon Treaty, the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Framework Salmon Management Plan, pertinent state/tribal agreements, and the applicable Fish and Wildlife Commission policies.

The Department will implement this Policy consistent with the purposes and intended outcomes described in the 21st Century Salmon and Steelhead Planning Project including:

- WDFW shall manage salmon and steelhead to recovery and sustainability in a way that is science-based, well-documented, transparent, well-communicated, and accountable.

- Fisheries are managed to meet or exceed ESA, recovery, and conservation goals; and harvest management measures protect and promote the long-term well-being of the commercial and recreational fisheries.

Harvest Management

General

- On a statewide basis, fishing opportunities will be provided when they can be directed at healthy wild and hatchery stocks.
- Selective fishing methods and gears that maximize fishing opportunity and minimize impacts on depressed stocks and species will be utilized to the fullest extent possible within legal constraints of implementation and budgetary limits associated with required sampling, monitoring and enforcement programs.
- When assessed from a statewide perspective, fishing directed at chinook, coho, pink, sockeye, or chum salmon will not be exclusively reserved for either sport or commercial users.
- When managing sport fisheries, meaningful recreational fishing opportunities will be distributed equitably across fishing areas and reflect the diverse interests of fishers, including retention and catch and release fisheries.
- The Department will seek non-treaty fishing access to unutilized portions of treaty harvest allocations through the implementation of pre-season agreements, taking into consideration changes in abundance, fishery conflicts, and factors that may influence attainment of spawning escapement objectives.

Sockeye, Chum, and Pink Salmon

- Marine area harvest management objectives for chum, pink, and sockeye stocks, except for Puget Sound-origin sockeye, in priority order, are to (1) provide the majority of harvest to the commercial fisheries, and (2) identify and provide meaningful recreational opportunities.
- For fisheries directed at Lake Washington sockeye, the first 200,000 non-treaty harvest will be provided to recreational fishers. If the allowable non-treaty is above this level, commercial harvest directed at this stock may be considered.

Chinook and Coho Salmon

- The Puget Sound harvest management objectives for chinook and coho stocks, in priority order, are to (1) provide meaningful recreational fishing opportunities, and (2) identify and provide opportunities for commercial harvest. When managing sport fisheries in this region, recreational opportunities will be distributed equitably across fishing areas, considering factors such as the: uniqueness of each area, the availability of opportunities for various species in each area throughout the season, desire to provide high levels of total recreational opportunity, and biological impacts.
- Grays Harbor harvest management objectives shall include opportunities for both the recreational and commercial fisheries.
- Columbia River harvest management regimes shall be developed in cooperation with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife representatives. Commercial and recreational fishing opportunity will be scheduled to optimize the non-treaty harvest of chinook and coho and to provide a balanced opportunity to each fleet. When developing recreational and commercial fishing options, the Department shall consider fair and reasonable catch opportunity, stability and duration of fisheries, as well as sharing of the conservation responsibility.
- Willapa Bay harvest management shall be consistent with Willapa Bay Framework management objectives. The following general intent shall apply: Willapa Bay harvest management objectives shall include meaningful opportunities for both recreational and commercial fisheries.
- Pacific Ocean harvest shall be managed consistent with the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Framework Salmon Management Plan and the National Standards that provide for fair and equitable allocation of fishing privileges among various fishers.

In-Season Management

- When in-season management actions are taken, they will be implemented in a manner that is consistent with pre-season conservation and harvest management objectives, and the fishery intent developed through the North of Falcon process.

Monitoring, Sampling and Enforcement

- Monitoring, sampling and enforcement programs will be provided to account for species and population impacts of all fisheries and to ensure compliance with state regulations.
- Fishery participants will be required to comply with fishery monitoring and evaluation programs designed to account for species and population impacts.

Gear and Fishery Conflicts

- Recreational and commercial fisheries shall be structured to minimize gear and other fishery conflicts. Unanticipated fishery interaction issues identified in-season, including conflicts with fisheries directed at other species, shall be resolved by involving the appropriate sport and commercial representatives in a dispute resolution process managed by Department staff.

Incidental Mortalities

- The Department will manage fisheries to minimize mortalities on non-target species (e.g. rockfish, sea birds, etc.). Management regimes will include strategies to limit seabird mortalities consistent with the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Communications

- The Department shall strive to make ongoing improvements for effective public involvement during the North of Falcon planning process and annual salmon fishery implementation, incorporating the following intents:

  - include North of Falcon participants as observers during appropriate state/tribal discussions of fishery issues.

  - maintain a timely record of all significant fishery discussions and decisions during North of Falcon process to all interested parties, both at the meetings and following the process.

  - use a variety of communication tools to effectively communicate with the public and receive timely input on pre-season planning and in-season fishery implementation, including use of recreational and commercial advisory groups, public workshops addressing key issues, the WDFW North of Falcon web site, and in-season tele-conferencing.

Other Species

- The Fish and Wildlife Commission's policy on Lower Columbia Sturgeon Management (POL-C3001) shall guide pre-season and in-season planning of Columbia River and coastal sturgeon fisheries and related incidental impacts. Management of Willapa Bay sturgeon fisheries will be further guided by Willapa Bay Framework management objectives.

Delegation of Authority

On November 10, 1999, the Fish and Wildlife Commission permanently delegated the authority to the Director to make harvest agreements with Northwest treaty tribes and other governmental agencies, and adopt permanent and emergency regulations resulting from the agreements made during the annual North of Falcon process.