

12. Columbia River Summer Chinook Policy – Public Input

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Allocation for Non-Indian Fisheries below Priest Rapids Dam, 2010-133-5

“GREEN SHEET”

Meeting dates: January 7-8, 2011, Commission Meeting

Agenda item #12: Columbia River Summer Chinook Policy – Public Input

Staff Contact: Cindy LeFleur, Columbia River Policy Coordinator, Region 5

Presenter(s): Cindy LeFleur, Columbia River Policy Coordinator, Region 5
Bill Tweit, Columbia River/Distant Waters Policy Lead, Director’s Office

Background:

Summer Chinook are destined for escapement areas upstream of Priest Rapids Dam and are not listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). In the last decade, population abundance has rebounded to levels that provide fish for harvest. The Columbia River harvest is carefully managed to allow directed summer Chinook fisheries only when returns exceed natural and hatchery escapement goals.

Management Plans/Guidelines

Conservation and harvest guidelines are included under the “2008-2017 *United States v Oregon Management Agreement for upriver Chinook, sockeye, steelhead, coho, and white sturgeon*” (MA). 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” was signed in 2007 and provides harvest sharing amongst non-treaty fisheries.

Considerations for new policy

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) has proposed new natural escapement goals for the Wenatchee, Methow, and Okanogan systems which are being reviewed by the co-managers. A new escapement goal is expected to be adopted by the *United States v Oregon* parties in 2011 to incorporate the needs of the Chief Joseph Hatchery. The harvest sharing matrix is expected to be adjusted to incorporate changes to the escapement goal. The ocean harvest accounting of summer Chinook suggests that the harvest in ocean fisheries may be considerably greater than originally thought, and will require additional discussions with the Colville Tribe and the *United States v Oregon* parties on harvest sharing. The non-treaty harvest allocation within the Columbia River will likely be reduced somewhat to account for the ocean harvest.

Current Policy C-3618

The current policy, C-3618, (Attachment 1), was extended through December 31, 2010 and 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 provided a new draft policy for consideration by the Commission in December. The draft policy was shared with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and the Columbia River Recreational and Commercial Advisory Groups in December. The policy includes: 1) conservation principles, 2) fishery management principles, 3) fishery management objectives, 4) harvest allocation, and 5) delegation of authority. Department staff are recommending a three-year policy (2011-2013) and adoption of new policy at the February Commission meeting.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

The Columbia River Recreational- and Commercial-Advisory Groups supported the Status Quo option for harvest allocation, which is the same as the current policy. Some members of the Recreational Advisory Group wanted a delayed start of the commercial fishery and emphasized the importance of having sport fishing opportunity in the late June and early July time frame. There was mixed support for mark-selective fisheries as well as the importance of having the season continue through July. The Commercial Advisory Group members supported the Status Quo option based on the current average run sizes and wanted flexibility on when the commercial fishery began—that it should be determined annually. Some members thought it would be worthwhile to revisit these options when Chief Joe Hatchery starts producing fish. ODFW staff members expressed concern with the timing of the new options and preferred that any options that include changes to the current fishery allocations be revisited after the Chief Joe Hatchery comes on-line.

Action requested:

None. Public input.

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.

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

POLICY DECISION

**POLICY TITLE: Mainstem Columbia River
Summer Chinook Allocation
for Non-Indian Fisheries below
Priest Rapids Dam, 2009-10**

POLICY NUMBER: C-3618

Supersedes: C-3618, 2008

Effective Date: January 1, 2009

Termination Date: December 31, 2010*

See Also: C-3617

*Extension approved, March 13, 2010,



Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

***Discussion:** On March 13, 2010, the Fish and Wildlife Commission extended this policy through Dec. 31, 2010. 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.

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.

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION POLICY DECISION

**POLICY TITLE: Mainstem Columbia River
Summer Chinook Allocation
for Non-Indian Fisheries
Below Priest Rapids Dam, 2011-2013**

POLICY NUMBER: C-3618

Supercedes: C-3618

Effective Date: January 1, 2011
Termination Date: December 31, 2013

See Also: N/A

Approved by: _____
Chair, Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for management of upper Columbia River summer Chinook.

Definition and Intent

Upper Columbia River summer Chinook migrate through the lower Columbia River during June and July and are destined for areas above Priest Rapids Dam. The intent of the policy is to manage upper Columbia summer Chinook in a way that promotes a healthy population and is consistent with management agreements developed under *U.S. v Oregon* or with other co-managers.

General Policy Statement

Manage the Upper Columbia summer Chinook population with conservation and fishery management objectives that are consistent with a healthy population.

Policy Guidelines

Conservation Principles

- Manage the upper Columbia summer Chinook populations for sustainable natural production as well as the artificial production programs which are necessary to meet mitigation requirements and to provide conservation safeguards; consistent with the provisions of Commission Policy C3619 (Hatchery and Fishery Reform).
- Manage for population specific performance goals for Wenatchee, Methow and Okanogan natural populations, and for Eastbank, Turtle Rock, Wells, and Chief Joseph hatchery programs.
- Manage for the natural and hatchery aggregate escapement goal as required by *U.S. v Oregon* Management Agreement.

Fishery Management Principles

- Meet treaty Indian/non-treaty harvest sharing objectives described in *U.S. v Oregon* Management Agreement.
- Meet Colville tribal subsistence and ceremonial harvest needs, consistent with the 2007 "Agreement between the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and the

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Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife on jointly managed salmon and steelhead populations.”

- Provide Wanapum Band fishing opportunity consistent with RCW 77.12.453 “Salmon fishing by Wanapum (Sokulk) Indians.”
- Impacts in the Washington ocean fishery will be managed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) based on the Pacific Coast Salmon Plan.
- The highest priority for state managed fisheries is recreational fishing opportunity above Priest Rapids Dam.
- Consistent with conservation objectives, provide recreational fishing opportunity throughout the Columbia River and commercial fisheries below Bonneville Dam.

Fishery Management Objectives

- Season objectives for recreational fisheries:
 - Fishery above Priest Rapids Dam. The full season is July 1 through October 15, and the base season objective is July through the Labor Day weekend.
 - Fishery below Priest Rapids Dam. The full season is from June 16 through July 31, and base season objective is late June through July 4. If July 4 is on Friday or Saturday, the fishery would continue through Sunday.
- Season objectives for commercial fisheries:
 - Objectives are to maximize ex-vessel value and harvest opportunity.
 - Option 1: First opening as soon after June 16 as abundance and allocation allow, with subsequent openings weekly until the allocation is harvested.
 - Option 2: First opening does not occur until after June 23 as abundance and allocation allow, with subsequent openings weekly until the allocation is harvested.

Harvest Allocation – Recreational and Commercial

- No directed fisheries and no allocation when abundance is below *U.S. v Oregon* escapement goal.
- Limited or base level recreational fisheries when 90% of non-treaty harvest is allocated to fisheries above Priest Rapids Dam.
- Allocate harvest between commercial and recreational sectors, when 10%-50% of harvest is allocated below Priest Rapids Dam, as necessary to provide:
 - Option A: Balanced opportunity to both sectors; measured using all recreational and commercial catches, including recreational catches above Priest Rapids Dam.
 - Option B: Implement fisheries in the following priority order:
 - Base level recreational fisheries at lower run sizes (when harvest allocation below Priest Rapids Dam is nearer to 10%).
 - Full season mark-selective recreational fisheries with remainder to commercial fisheries (when harvest allocation below Priest Rapids Dam is nearer to 25%-30%).
 - When allocation below Priest Rapids Dam is greater than 35% and catches below Priest Rapids Dam are approximately equal (50/50), allocate fish greater than the 50/50 sharing:

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- Sub-option 1: Allocate 100% to commercial fishery – provides full recreational fishery with remainder to commercial
- Sub-option 2: Allocate 50% to commercial fishery and 50% to escapement – provides greater abundance of fish for recreational fishery to fish on.
- Option C: Balanced opportunity to both sectors; measured using amount of non-treaty harvest available below Priest Rapids Dam.
 - Status quo. Defined as 50/50 sharing below Priest Rapids Dam.
- When developing recreational and commercial options for fisheries below Priest Rapids Dam, the Department shall consider catch opportunity, stability and duration of fisheries.
- Implement mark-selective fisheries as necessary to:
 - Contribute to natural conservation objectives.
 - Fishery season objectives.
- Specific structure of recreational 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. 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.
- In shaping fisheries, consult with stakeholders to recognize economic benefits of recreational and commercial fisheries in the Columbia River.

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 recreational 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.