

7. San Poil Sixteen Walleye Daily Limit -
(Decision)

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Summary

Meeting dates: January 10, 2014

Agenda item #7: Sport Fishing regulation proposal – San Poil River Walleye Daily Bag Limit Increase – (Decision)

Presenter(s): John Whalen Region 1 Fish Program Manager

Background summary:

The Lake Roosevelt walleye population remains overabundant following the liberalization of harvest regulations in 2007, which were intended to reduce the abundance of walleye in the reservoir. Fall walleye index netting (FWIN) catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) monitoring data indicates walleye abundance has not declined and fish continue to exhibit slow growth and sub-par condition values due to a predator/ prey imbalance within the reservoir. In addition, predation on other game and non-game fish species is a concern at the present abundance level. Creel data indicate that angler harvest (about 50,000 walleye annually) is not sufficient to achieve management objectives. Modeling suggests that an increase in angler harvest to 150,000 annually is necessary to meet management objectives. The WA Fish and Wildlife Commission approved a 16 fish daily limit for Lake Roosevelt, and the lower Spokane River associated with Lake Roosevelt, in 2013. Increasing the daily bag limit of walleye in the lower portion of the San Poil River inundated by Lake Roosevelt (below 1310 feet elevation mean sea level) to 16 fish daily limit will align walleye fishing regulations with current Lake Roosevelt walleye regulations. This action will also contribute toward native fish restoration work in the San Poil River directed at kokanee and red band rainbow trout, by reducing walleye numbers and associated predation upon juvenile fish emigrating out of the San Poil River and into Lake Roosevelt.

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

Modify WAC 232-28-619 San Poil River (Ferry County)

Fishing regulation proposal to increase the daily bag limit for walleye on the lower San Poil River from 8 fish to 16 fish.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Public Meeting(s) held

September 3, 2013 Public meeting held at WDFW's Spokane Regional Office, 2315 North Discovery Place, Spokane Valley. One member of the public attended this meeting. No formal comments were submitted

Public Comment was accepted via WDFW Website: Sportfishing Rules Changes for 2014 – 2015 through November 29, 2013. On Line Comments Received: Do you agree with this rule proposal?
Yes: 4; No: 0; No opinion: 1

The public also had an opportunity to provide testimony on the proposed rule changes during the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission's December 6, 2013 meeting in Olympia. No testimony was provided.

WDFW Inland Fish Policy Advisory Group Input: General support and / or understanding of the need.

Written Comment(s) received by WDFW: Colville Confederated Tribes not in agreement with rule proposal – the CCT would prefer a no-limit approach on walleye harvest regulation.

Action requested:

Modify WAC 232-28-619 San Poil River (Ferry County) to increase walleye daily bag limit from 8 fish to 16 fish on the lower San Poil River.

Draft motion language:

Move to adopt permanent amendments to: **WAC 232-28-619 Washington food fish and game fish— Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules** to increase the daily bag limit for walleye on the lower San Poil River from 8 fish to 16 fish as presented by staff.

Justification for Commission action:

This action is justified under RCW 77.12.047.

Communications Plan:

Please refer to public involvement process on previous page.

Form revised 12/5/12

(337) **San Poil River (Ferry County):**

(a) From the western shoreline at the mouth of the San Poil Arm (as marked by a regulatory buoy) directly eastward across the San Poil Arm to the eastern shoreline of the San Poil Arm (as marked by a regulatory buoy) upstream to the north shore of the outlet of French Johns Lake (Manila Creek) northeast across the San Poil Arm to the north shore of the outlet of Dick Creek:

(i) It is unlawful to fish for or retain sturgeon.

(ii) Open April 1 through January 31 for kokanee, smallmouth bass, trout, and walleye:

(A) Kokanee: Limit 2 fish in addition to the trout limit; no minimum size requirement.

(B) Smallmouth bass: Limit 10; it is unlawful to retain more than one over 14 inches.

(C) Trout:

(I) Limit 5; it is unlawful to retain more than 2 trout over 20 inches.

(II) Release all rainbow trout with adipose fins intact.

(D) Walleye: Limit 16; no size restrictions.

(iii) Open year-round for other game fish, salmon, and carp:

(A) Carp: It is unlawful to fish for carp with bow and arrow.

(B) Salmon: Landlocked salmon rules apply.

(b) From the north shore of the outlet of French Johns Lake (Manila Creek) northeast across the San Poil Arm to the north shore of the outlet of Dick Creek to approximately 5 miles upstream from the outlet of French Johns Lake, as marked by regulatory buoys:

(i) It is unlawful to fish for or retain sturgeon, kokanee, and all other trout.

(ii) Open April 1 through January 31 for walleye and smallmouth bass:

(A) Smallmouth bass: Limit 10; it is unlawful to retain more than one over 14 inches.

(B) Walleye: Limit 16; no size restrictions.

(iii) Open year-round for other game fish, salmon, and carp:

(A) Carp: It is unlawful to fish for carp with bow and arrow.

(B) Salmon: Landlocked salmon rules apply.

(c) The waters from approximately 5 miles upstream from the outlet of French Johns Lake, as marked by regulatory buoys, to all waters north of the regulatory buoy line at or above 1,310 feet mean sea level elevation are managed under the regulatory authority of the Colville Confederated Tribe of Indians.

(d) From above the Colville Confederated Tribe of Indians Reservation northern boundary, upstream to the headwaters, including tributaries: Open the Saturday before Memorial day through October 31.