2014 WILLAPA BAY NOF PUBLIC MEETING
MARCH 25, 2014
RAYMOND ELKS CLUB 6 - 9 pm

WDFW Staff: Ron Warren, Steve Theisfeld, Kirt Hughes, Mike Scharpf, Barbara McClellan, Chad Herring

Steve T. – Intro / Opening statements

Powerpoint:

- Agenda
- APA Process
- Meeting Schedule
- Management Objectives
- Release Mortality (IFSP)
- Drop out/off mortality
- 2014 Forecasts
- 2014 Fishery Issues
- Ideas and Fishery Suggestions from the public
    - Naselle Petition – Advisory Group recommendation was to keep the area to the hatchery closed
    - Nemah Petition – Advisory Group had a mix reaction to this proposal
- Equitable Reduction Option – equal reduction in fisheries, 32%, from where we were last year. This will get us to the 20% impacts on the Naselle Chinook stock
    - Commercial (See handout)
    - Recreational
        - MA 2.1 closed south of the Nemah River through Sept. 15
        - Naselle River closed until Oct. 1

In the APA Process, does this process include both fisheries?
ST: emergency rule would be used if needed
RW: the pamphlet will be good for 15 months this time until the end of June. The following year it will begin July 1 through June 30 in order to match the WAC and pamphlet process.

Based on the settlement agreement, it says that if it's not completed by February then they will produce a final document for 2015.

If the reduction is going to be equitable then the MA should be taking some of that burden rather than just in the Naselle River.

Close the commercial until Oct. 1

Keep 2T closed until Sept. 15 for commercial

Should we have a lower hatchery escapement goal on Naselle if we are changing our objectives?
If we don't need them for egg take then there would be more available for harvest.
ST: we could review this

ST: we are not suggesting reducing fisheries based on egg take goals

ST: 20% of the 3112 forecast is 600 fish

There are no true wild fish in WB, only natural spawners. Are all the fish released marked?
ST: Yes

The usual amount of action is how we got in this situation in the first place. Last was the first year all Chinook were marked in the Naselle. The problem with the proposed commercial schedule is that all those Chinook have to pass through Area 2N to get to the Naselle.

- 3 day no nets in area 2N

Why doesn't Region 6 request fish from the ocean fisheries? The recreational and commercial ocean fisheries take a large number of our WB fish. This causes inside conflict.

Logging causes silting. Why can't we include that in the management program? Get those waters clearer. I agree that we should push on the ocean fisheries
ST: WDFW are not the managers of the habitat.

North Nemah – surplus of fish – shouldn't all be given to the commercial side.

- Re-open Nemah Valley Rd upstream to the hatchery bridge for Chinook and late coho – more opportunity
- 17 parcels owned by 11 individuals

Recreational fisheries can't fish if Area 2T is open for 84 hours in early August

Is there a natural run? It seems like it fluctuates with hatchery production.

What does the agency plan to do with the fish that make it back to the weir?

- ST: nutrient enhancement

This doesn't seem like the best use of those fish

- KH: 2600 predicted escapement for natural Chinook – 500 above weir, 700 for egg take so only a few hundred will be nutrient enhanced

There is no reason for those fish to die below the weir when they could be fished on.
Open lower Naselle River upstream to 400' below the weir

- ST: if we open that section how do we manage for those fish and meet objectives

Late Dec Chinook?
ST: do not believe there is a true late Chinook run

Chinook production will now be 300K. We told WDFW years ago that if you reduce that hatchery production the natural production will decrease. Nemah now gets those 3 mil chinook from Naselle. If we don't fish those fish returning to the Nemah you will end up with over 20K up the river to the hatchery. Very small amount will get harvested. There is no point in Nemah production if we can't harvest those hatchery fish. We don't think we should continue this hatchery revisions program.

What was caught in the sport fishery in the lower area of WB?

The reduction in the number of fish being put upstream is being reduced to 500. Why don't we try to put only those 500 fish upstream for 4 years and see what happens in the return.

Recreational Suggestion

- Net free Area 2T until Sept. 15

Commercial Suggestion

- Aug 16 – 2 days, 12 hrs
- Aug 21 – 3 days, 12 hrs
- Aug 26 – 3 days, 12 hrs
- Sept 2 – 4 days, 12 hrs
- The rest of the schedule on handout starting Sept. 9 is the same
- This gets us the 20% on Chinook Naselle

Restricting fishers in Willapa, North or Nemah rivers isn't going to save a single Naselle Chinook but can understand spreading out the restrictions so they aren't fully taken by the Naselle fishers.

We should have Naselle hatchery produce chinook again.

The Naselle Petition is a good petition. The pain should be shared. That petition is important.

Does WDFW make final decisions on this?

- ST: WDFW is authorized to make fisheries decisions. The Commission has delegated this NOF process to the Director but other fish changes go through the Commission and the legislature.
- ST: There is no current proposal to close any facilities in WB. It's usually a budget issue.

November 20 – 30 commercial fishery – concern for steelhead impacts

Take the weir out of Naselle and let those fish go upstream.

How many of the early fish were local in the early?

- KH: 57.7% were local based on genetics in 2002-03 work

Supports the suggested commercial fishery but drop to 1 day in Area 2T in July – Aug. 15

Do we have plans to re-evaluate this release mortality results?
ST: do you have compelling evidence

The reduction on the sports fishermen should be eliminated.

Public Testimony:

Tim Hamilton:

- The settlement was that we would re-open the WB plan and make it fair to the public
- This equitable reduction proposal doesn't provide data for each fishery
- Don't punish the recreational fishers who can practice MSF

Art Holman

- Dip-in commercial restricts recreational fishery
- This equitable proposal is not equitable to the sports fishermen
- Support the Nemah petition

David LaPierre

- Naselle Petition - Hwy 4 Bridge to hatchery – Should try to get those fish harvested in that stretch of the river instead of dying or being sold

Ross Barkhurst

- 3 day gap in Area 2N to allow those fish to pass through
- Chum – restriction isn't necessary
- Naselle and Nemah need to be open to the hatchery
- All H's – habitat – draft environment impact statement on removing eel grass in WB. Removable is unlimited

Marlisa Williams Dugan

- Nemah Petition - open opportunity from Nemah Valley Rd to the hatchery

Steve Gacke

- Naselle Petition – does not take into consideration the natural population
- Submitting signatures that oppose the petition
- Email submitted by Deborah Sandvall?
- Do not open the lower Naselle until Oct. 16
- Nov 16 – Jan. 31 – 2 wild coho
- Do not support the reduction of the hatchery chinook in the Naselle
- Concern for high surplus at the Naselle hatchery
- The 20% impact being used this year is not based on data.
- Conservation closure until Sept. 30 for recreational, marine, commercial
- One chum daily for recreational fishers

Lance Gray

- Recommend a mark study in Area 2M to reevaluate the mortality study done
- All fisheries next year have a mortality study completed for sport fisheries
- Have WDFW look at hatchery fish waste in Nemah River

Woody Pierson

- North Nemah landowner – opposed to the proposal in the Nemah Petition. Disregard for property and illegal practices going on.

Bob Lake

- Support Steve Gacke's comments
- Opposed to the release mortality panel used and asks the dept to evaluate the recreational mortality in WB
- Recreational fishers do not fish Area 2T as much as they say they do in early August timeframe
- Need to find a way to harvest those Nemah fish

Dave Hamilton

- Economics and value…
- I don't accept equitable reduction option. It is not equal. Recreational harvest should not have the burden until the commercial side comes down to that level.

Woody Pierson Jr.

- Oppose the opening of the Nemah River Petition

Allan Hollingsworth

- Settlement agreement with Hamilton and Co. – asks the Dept to follow the settlement. All you currently have is draft result of release mortality so until you have a final copy I ask that you use the original release mortality rates

? LaPierre

- Naselle Petition does not suggest to open property the public
- Naselle hatchery staff are wonderful and do a great job

Steve Gray

- Get away from the hatchery reform practices
- To protect the natural chinook in Naselle, the river would need to close
- Its incorrect to say that the sport fishers can't catch fish before or after a commercial opening
- Recreational fishers do not have the ability to harvest those fish

Entering 2 letters into the record