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FISH AND
WILDLIFE COMMISSION

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission
600 Capitol Way N.
Olympia, WA 98501-1091

October 15, 2015

RE: Rule Change Recommendation #10 Increase Trout fishing opportunity in streams

Puget Sound Fly Fishers opposes opening both Flett and Leach Creeks, tributaries to Chambers Creek, to fishing and instead urges the Commission to retain the current regulation of CLOSED.

Puget Sound Fly Fishers is a 128 member strong fly fishing organization headquartered in the Tacoma area. Our club logo features the Coastal Cutthroat Trout prominently and the majority of our members enjoy pursuing these fish and adhere to the catch and release regulations, supporting that wholeheartedly.

Regarding both Flett and Leach Creeks there is currently no known data on the presence and abundance of Coastal Cutthroat Trout (hereafter CCT) in the Chambers Creek Watershed. There is no data on the number of redds or the available habitat to support spawners. There is no data on the use of the watershed by CCT by individuals who have out migrated to the salt and have returned to the streams outside of the spawning season.

Catch and Release regulations for CCT are currently in place in Puget Sound, an enormous body of water providing CCT individuals and populations ample opportunity to escape angling pressure. Opening Flett and Leach Creeks which are both mere yards in breadth and never reach depths of over 4 feet, to fishing pressure is inconsistent with the efforts to protect CCT in Puget Sound. The fish in these creeks are, if you will pardon the pun, sitting ducks for harvest.

Neither Flett Creek nor Leach Creek have been surveyed to see if they can support increased angling pressure. Both are small feeder streams with the potential to be overly impacted if opened to fishing. In addition these streams are surrounded by urban development and their habitat is strongly influenced by non-point source pollution during rain events. Adding fishing pressure to the environmental contaminants they have to contend with may be more than they can manage.

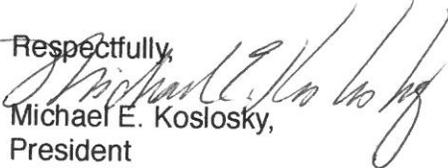
Although Selective Gear rules are now in place in the Chambers Creek watershed, evidence (personal observation) of bait use and retention of under-sized CCT by anglers is rampant.

Without adequate safeguards to protect both the main stem of Chambers Creek and the smaller feeder streams of Flett and Leach Creeks, CCT, *Washington's signature wild native trout*, will have an ever increasing struggle to survive and spawn in this urban environment.

As the only significant spawning stream for CCT between the Puyallup River and the Nisqually River, it is imperative that the Chambers Creek watershed and its attending feeder streams receive as much protection and WDFW resource attention as possible. If research shows Flett and Leach Creeks are used for spawning by CCT, they should instead be protected as refugia where developing fish can find safety from predation.

Puget Sound Fly Fishers 128 members unanimously oppose opening Fleet Creek and Leach Creek as proposed for the 2016/2017 Sportfishing Rules.

Respectfully,



Michael E. Koslosky,
President
Puget Sound Fly Fishers.

mikek1801@gmail.com