



November 3, 2015

Kirt Hughes, Biologist  
Washington State Fish and Wildlife  
600 Capitol Way North  
Olympia, WA 98501-1091

RE: North Coast Steelhead Advisory Group's Recommendations

Dear Mr. Hughes:

We are writing to you today to voice the positions of the Olympic Peninsula Guides' Association (OPGA) pertaining to the recommendations from the North Coast Steelhead Advisory Group regarding steelhead management on the Olympic Peninsula.

Following are recommendations we support and respectfully request your sincere consideration.

1. Adopt the barbless hooks rule.
2. Adopt the prohibition of internal combustion and/or electric motors on all North Coast Rivers. This practice is very uncommon with the exception of Tribal Fisherman.
3. Adopt and enhance the education efforts to encourage anglers to practice "catch and release fishing," while also educating anglers on proper handling and releasing of fish.
4. Adopt a voluntary endorsement for North Coast steelhead, as long as the funds are directed back into our fisheries (*without the use of General Fund*).
5. Limit the number of guides working on the rivers of the Olympic Peninsula (*ex. suggest a minimum residency requirement*).

Following are recommendations that **do not** warrant adoption across the entire north coast Olympic Peninsula.

1. The one hook with up to three points rule. We would be in favor of this rule only in the event that a "no bait" rule is adopted.
2. The prohibition of using floating devices (*boats*) on the Hoh River above Morgan's Crossing. We believe this might be an option in the future **ONLY** after a two year comprehensive Creel Survey. This would create an actual base line to determine success or failure.

**Olympic Peninsula Guides' Association**  
PO Box 919 ▪ Forks, WA 98331

OlympicPeninsulaGuidesAssociation.com | info@OlympicPeninsulaGuidesAssociation.com

3. The adoption of a “no retention of wild steelhead” rule is questionable on a North Coast-wide basis. Where escapement is meeting the agreed upon numbers of both Co-Managers, there is no need for requiring no retention of wild steelhead. Adopting such a rule would not allow any extra fish to spawn; it could just shift the harvest allocation to the Co-Managers. If rivers are not making escapement goals, we want to implement not retaining wild steelhead until goals are met, specifically on the Hoh River.
4. Limiting the use of bait. We believe if this recommendation process is given more time and discussion for collection of scientific data, we will be able to provide solid recommendations in the areas where it is deemed necessary to make escapement. If rivers are not making escapement goals then we would recommend implementing “no bait” until goals are met, specifically on the Hoh River.

It is *imperative* that the absence of WDFD law enforcement in our area be addressed immediately. ***We strongly feel this whole process is utterly useless without proper enforcement!*** Our understanding is that we currently do not have any Wildlife Officers. We consider creating and filling these positions to be a top priority on the Olympic Peninsula. We respectfully request your immediate attention to this urgent matter for the welfare of the area fish and wildlife. We are very willing to work together with WDFW and its enforcement in any way possible.

As residents of the majestic Olympic Peninsula, we are committed to protecting and enriching the opportunities of our world-class fisheries. Thank you for taking the time to review our recommendations for managing our local rivers.

Sincerely,

Bill Meyer, President  
Olympic Peninsula Guides' Association  
(206) 697-2055 cell  
(360) 374-5550 home