

Regulations & Seasons

Sportfishing Rule Changes for 2016-2017

Recommended for Public Comment

Rule Change Recommendation Short Title

9. Provide additional year-round fishing opportunity

Rules Category

Not Region Specific

Type of Rule Change Proposal

Recreational

Short Description

Open additional lakes to year-round fishing opportunity.

Explanation

A sector of the public is requesting more year-round fishing opportunity. A number of lakes were proposed by the public and WDFW staff to be considered for this expanded season. See Table.

Proposal 9 Table. Provide additional year-round fishing opportunity.

Number	Lake	County	Current Season	Proposed Season
1	Anderson	Jefferson	Sept. 1 - Oct. 31	Year-round
2	Bay	Pierce	4th Sat. in April - Oct. 31	Year-round
3	Chehalis River Potholes	Grays Harbor	4th Sat. in April - Oct. 31	Year-round
4	Deep	Thurston	4th Sat. in April - Oct. 31	Year-round
5	McIntosh	Thurston	4th Sat. in April - Oct. 31	Year-round
6	Pattison	Thurston	4th Sat. in April - Oct. 31	Year-round
7	Summit	Thurston	4th Sat. in April - Oct. 31	Year-round
8	Tanwax	Pierce	4th Sat. in April - Oct. 31	Year-round
9	Vogler	Skagit	4th Sat. in April - Oct. 31	Year-round
10	Ward	Thurston	4th Sat. in April - Oct. 31	Year-round

LETTER ENCLOSED. PLEASE PUT
COMMENTS ON THE
RECORDS.
THANK YOU
Rob B...
Records
Thank You
Rob B...

THE HONORABLE JAY INSLEE
GOVERNOR OF WASHINGTON STATE
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

DEAR GOVERNOR INSLEE

I apologize in advance for the length of this letter but with only an average talent for prose fewer words seemed inadequate to relate the subject of this letter.

Opening Summit Lake to year round fishing by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife should not be allowed. At the very least, several conditions must first be met before this action is allowed. The following points beg serious consideration prior to the WDFW taking this action.

- 1) Protect Summit Lake as the primary water source for area residents. This should be the principal goal of the WDFW. Any compromise to the quality of the public's drinking water cannot be tolerated. The WDFW insists they do not have to file an environmental impact statement or coordinate this action with any other agencies. Without comprehensive review by other vested governmental agencies the WDFW is in effect acting autocratically with absolute authority. Other agencies and the public have little influence on the WDFW's intended course of action.
- 2) Strengthen criminal penalties for introduction of non- native species into our environment. This should apply to all environments not just aquatic.
- 3) Educate the public, particularly the fishing public, of the harm being caused to our environment from the illegal introduction of non- native species into our waters.
- 4) End the dumping and flushing of boat bilges, boat septic systems, and marine engines into Summit Lake by making it illegal to do so. Establish criminal penalties for these activities. Summit Lake is a water source. No other justification for legislation which imposes and enforces these regulations should be required.
- 5) Increase policing and supervision of boats using the launch facilities and parking area.
 - a. Additional signage
 - i. More prominent than existing signage.
 - ii. Signage that employs most rigorous language.
 - iii. Informational signage that stresses the importance of preserving and protecting Summit Lake as a water source.
- 6) Increase sheriff patrols and overall police presence in the area.
 - a. History with other lakes dictate there will be a predictable rise in criminal activity as a direct result of providing year round access to Summit Lake. Increased ease of surveillance of homes due to easy accessibility leaves area residents vulnerable. Homes are vacant during the winter months and provide easy targets if unencumbered access to the lake, resident's "back yards", is allowed.

Summit Lake is located in Thurston County fifteen miles west of Olympia toward Aberdeen north of highway #8. It is a deep, pristine, naturally carved glacial lake. Summit Lake serves as the community water source. Prior to choosing McAllister Creek Summit Lake was being

considered for Olympia's water source. Increased boating and associated pollution from providing year round access are viable concerns. But these activities by themselves do not pose the most significant threat to water quality. It is common knowledge that substandard homeowner septic systems and lawn, garden fertilizers pose the greatest threats to our lakes. Strengthened permitting requirements and more rigorous enforcement by Thurston County have helped. Continuing education regarding utilization of chemicals and periodic septic inspections would be invaluable.

But other negative activities and conditions that have and will be affecting Summit Lake's water quality have not been considered or addressed by WDFW. Several of these issues are directly or indirectly in the purview of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Inaction and apparent indifference by WDFW is indefensible in these matters.

In-transit fishermen returning from ocean fishing destinations use the public boat launch to purge salt water from their engine cooling systems and replace it with fresh lake water. Bilge water is routinely flushed into the lake. Residents have witnessed vessel sewage systems being emptied into the lake. These boats are often washed in Summit Lake. The frequency of these activities is alarming. Documentation and photographic evidence of these activities was presented at a recent community center meeting held before a standing room audience and attended by the Director of WDFW, Jim Unsworth. Mr Unsworth's response to community concerns which included damaging emails authored by WDFW employees, photographic evidence and witness testimony regarding the negative activities included in this letter, and obvious outrage and distrust by the community in attendance, was to affably state how much he loved to fish. He left the community seething without offering one convincing reassurance our voices would be heard relative to the fishing interests proposing year round access to the lake.

Summit Lake is located between ocean fishing destinations such as Westport and the population centers of Olympia, Tacoma, and Seattle. It is the most convenient location for fishermen to flush, dump, wash and perform other boat maintenance chores; chores that require access to the public boat launch owned and regulated by the WDFW. Although WDFW owns this boat launch it is voluntarily policed and maintained by the Summit Lake community. Increased opportunities for pollutants to be dumped or flushed into the lake will be a predictable result of providing year round lake access. With the exception of dumping septics there is no law against these activities. There should be a law. Legislative action must be taken to stop these flushing activities. One can simply review the penalties if one were to attempt flushing boat bilge and engine water in Seattle's Cedar River Watershed or Portland's Bull Run Watershed. Besides being closed to the public, the integrity of these municipal watersheds is strictly protected by laws. This is the distinct dissimilarity between Summit Lake and most other lakes. Summit Lake is a water source. Residents have water rights. Those water rights should give residents a voice. As a source of public drinking water the department of ecology should have a voice. As a possible future source of water for other communities Thurston County should have a voice. The community's health concerns should be given priority from WDFW over the pleasures of local anglers. The concept of fishermen having equal footing on this proposal, equal to concerns of area residents about the safety of their drinking water, is preposterous.

An equally important concern speaks to quality in government and calls to question the integrity of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Washington's neighboring states, Oregon, California, and Montana, are fighting to preserve native species in their lakes, rivers and streams. Other states recognize the threat posed by the onslaught of non-native species being criminally introduced into their waters. Illegal introductions of non-native fish, termed bucket biology, pose a critical threat to the conservation and protection of native fish and aquatic species. Legislators in Oregon and California have made these acts of "bucket biology"; tossing a bucket of bass into a lake for example, a felony. Conservation and protection of native fish and wildlife is the number one stated goal of the WDFW. However there has been little resistance to bass fishing interests that most assuredly are behind these devastating acts of bucket biology.

Two decades ago the bass fishing industry was a \$64 million dollar industry in Washington. Between 1996 and 2006 the industry saw its earnings decrease to \$32 million. The obvious and most efficient way to increase profitability is from the proliferation of bass through bucket biology. These practices do not seem to be a big thing among bucket biologists, a group one former Washington State trout manager disparages as "bassholes." Montana officials describe efforts responding to these illegal introductions as similar to "chasing smoke". Native species of trout are disappearing at an alarming rate due to bass proliferation. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks management have made significant efforts to prevent illegal introductions. Efforts include boat check stations to make sure people aren't bringing in invasive organisms, educating the public on the damage caused by bucket biology, and diligently monitoring pristine waters to help prevent the further introduction of non-native species. Montana officials are also pushing for stiffer penalties and enforcement since often the damage from bucket biology is permanent. Conversely, there is little evidence Washington is effectively responding to this ecological disaster in any way other than to increase fishing opportunities for fishermen.

Threats to salmon populations from bass in northwest lakes and rivers have been intensely studied for decades. The University of Washington has published numerous papers regarding the enormity of this threat. Total eradication of bass in lake Washington, Lake Sammamish, John Day Reservoir and other northwest bodies of water has been seriously evaluated as a viable solution. These studies clearly show the magnitude of this proliferating environmental disaster. Much of the salmon fry used as lake stock serve as nothing more than bass food. The same is true when stocking trout in northwest lakes. Bass consume large portions of the stock. Taxpayers essentially pay a large percentage of these salmon and trout stocking costs just to feed the bass.

The first bass escaped its native waters in 1825 upon the completion of the Eerie Canal. Prior to that small mouth bass were only native to the Great Lakes and Mississippi drainages of the central United States. New Hampshire was seeded in the mid 1800's and now is almost entirely a bass state. Overwhelming evidence dictates that for decades bass fishermen, fishing clubs, and the bass fishing industry have been planting bass throughout our western states to bolster industry pocketbooks and fulfill avid bass fishermen's passions. Over the last two decades nearly all of Thurston County's lakes have seen the introduction and proliferation of bass. Native trout populations in these lakes have declined radically over this same period of time. WDFW indicated bass were first introduced into Summit Lake around 2004. They cannot identify who did it. Only ten years after this act of bucket biology trout populations in Summit Lake have all but disappeared. A female bass can lay over 21,000 eggs. Bass are an aggressive

predator fish and multiply at an alarming rate. Bass are voracious eaters and will eat small trout, salmon, kokanee, baitfish, crawfish, worms, insects, salamanders...

Meanwhile, the WDFW ignores its own mission statement, virtually enabling the eradication of native species by turning a blind eye to the spread of bass in our lakes. Bass fishing interests are behind the proposals to open area lakes to year round fishing. Following the bass interest's seeding of area waters the WDFW further encourages these criminal acts by providing access to year round bass fishing. In effect, WDFW's rewards criminals and supports a criminal enterprise providing favor to those that advance the proliferation of bass.

None can deny this is a perfect recipe for profitability. Seed the waters, expand fishing grounds, and propose increased fishing seasons and increased access to the fishing grounds; all of which result in increased boat and equipment sales. Meanwhile the WDFW collects increased revenues through permitting, licensing, and associated fees. This would be a perfect partnership if it were not for the responsibilities of environmental stewardship the WDFW ignores in the process. This partnership influences actions by WDFW that are irresponsible, unethical, and, from an environmental perspective, reprehensible. WDFW employee emails reveal management personnel bragging about their coolers being full of bass from Summit Lake once they open it up to year round fishing. Emails also state the community's residents will not represent a roadblock or problem to this stated goal. If I wrote analogous emails in my workplace my term of employment would be short lived. If these emails from a management employee represent departmental attitudes it would appear WDFW's most important goal is to expand fishing opportunities for its employees as opposed to addressing the gravity of an environmental threat which will result in the extinction of several aquatic species. Forget consideration of protecting the public's drinking water. It is difficult to trust and respect the unsupervised fox that is guarding the henhouse. The fox in this instance is undeniably the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

When revenue and special interests influence the political process and prevent government officials from making responsible and ethical decisions we are lost as a society. When departments such as WDFW ignore their mission statement, act dishonorably as an all powerful independent fiefdom, admittedly motivated by self interest and apparently without fear from scrutiny, is it any wonder why the public loses trust in government?

Governor I appeal to your sense of honor and emphasize my firm belief in your predilection to do the right thing. I would not and am not asking you to flail at windmills. The sum of political calculus on this matter equates to dealing with an important issue, an issue that has the potential to go sideways rapidly, and an issue that is easy to get on the right side of. I urge you to increase government efforts promoting public education to help prevent the continuing degradation of our environment. Please help to prevent the extinction of our native aquatic species in our state's waters, specifically at Summit Lake, through legislative action and enforcement and education. I also urge action by the legislature to impose severe penalty for acts of bucket biology. Please stop the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife from acting with impunity on this issue. Their attitudes and culture reveal corrupted values and misguided direction. Our concerns deserve and require a response that amounts to more than patronization with the intent of doing whatever suits the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Action is required.

Please help. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Robert N Brebner
12 Year Summit Lake Resident

253-405-8730



Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is dedicated to preserving, protecting and perpetuating the state's fish and wildlife resources. The department operates under a dual mandate from the Washington Legislature to:

- Protect and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitats.
- Provide sustainable, fish- and wildlife-related recreational and commercial opportunities.

Our Mission

To preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities.

Vision

Conservation of Washington's fish and wildlife resources and ecosystems

WDFW defines "Conservation" as:

Protection, preservation, management, or restoration of natural environments and the ecological communities that inhabit them; including management of human use for public benefit and sustainable social and economic needs.

Department Goals

To achieve its mission, WDFW will continue to focus its activities on the following four goals:

Goal 1: Conserve and protect native fish and wildlife

Goal 2: Provide sustainable fishing, hunting, and other wildlife-related recreational and commercial experiences

Goal 3: Promote a healthy economy, protect community character, maintain an overall high quality of life, and deliver high-quality customer service.

Goal 4: Build an effective and efficient organization by supporting our workforce, improving business processes, and investing in technology.