

WDFW 2020 Supplemental Operating Budget Requests

June 14, 2019

For Commission Review

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Maintenance Level Requests

These will be presented at the August meeting.

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*The following budget proposals include draft estimates of funding needs. Estimates in this document will be further refined during budget development this summer.

Maintenance Level Requests

These will be presented at the August meeting.

Performance Level Requests

#1-8 Buy Back At-Risk Work Partially Funded in Biennial Budget

	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
Estimated Cost:	\$0	\$10,548,000

Fund Source: GF-S

Recommendation Summary:

Eight areas of core WDFW work are at risk of ending due to a structural deficit. The Department presented each as part of its 2019-21 biennial budget request, and the 2019 Legislature provided enough General Fund-State to buy back all work in the biennium’s first year and a small portion of in the second year. These eight decision packages request the balance of funding to continue the essential work. Work areas include: conservation; hatchery production and fisheries; hunting; wildlife conflict response; shellfish and public health; Columbia River salmon and steelhead; land management; and customer service.

#9 Monitoring for Puget Sound Salmon, Co-Management Agreements

	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
Estimated Cost:	\$833,000	\$854,000

Fund Source: GF-S

Recommendation Summary:

WDFW strives to provide the maximum amount of fishing opportunity in the Puget Sound and coastal recreational fisheries, consistent with meeting ESA and conservation objectives, by monitoring salmon in the Puget Sound. In addition, WDFW must monitor coastal fisheries to meet tribal North of Falcon annual agreements and maintain non-tribal fishing opportunities on the coast. Reduction in federal funding and historically one-time funding for North of Falcon requirements leave WDFW without the means to monitor as required. This request will fund staff to provide the greatest fishing opportunities possible while satisfying ESA and conservation needs.

#10 Skagit River Steelhead Catch & Release

	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
Estimated Cost:	\$271,000	\$276,000

Fund Source: GF-S

Recommendation Summary:

The Skagit River catch-and-release steelhead opportunity matters to the public, so much so that an Occupy Skagit movement organized demonstrations on the Skagit River to protest the last of a catch and release fishery directed at native steelhead. The Department has also met with officials from the city of Darrington to discuss possible way to create economic benefits from local recreational fishing opportunities. However, in order to provide this fishery, the Department will be required (by federal permit) to monitor the fishery and collect harvest data. The specific amount of creel interviews is unknown at this point, but expected to be significant given the strong desire for this opportunity.

#11 Mobile App for Fishing in Washington

	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
Estimated Cost:	\$0	\$311,000

Fund Source: GF-S

Recommendation Summary:

WDFW has developed a new fishing mobile device application (app) that creates efficiencies around the rule making process and delivers information in real time to the app users. It also includes interactive maps that show where all of the fishing opportunities are statewide. Ongoing support and maintenance are required to ensure that these cutting edge tools can continue to deliver high quality information to its users. The anticipated number of application users is between 300,000 and 500,000. In addition to fishing openings, these applications will be used as a platform to create efficiencies around other cumbersome processes such as the annual rule creation process, post-season rules effectiveness analysis, and recreational and commercial fish and crab catch. This mobile device application and supporting infrastructure can also serve as an effective real time communications platform between the Department and its constituents, offering promotional content, emergency alerts, and location directed content.

#12 Columbia River Pinniped Predation

	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
Estimated Cost:	\$0	\$830,000

Fund Source: GF-S

Recommendation Summary:

The public is more and more concerned about declining salmon fishing opportunities and the declining southern resident killer whale population that is dependent on salmon as a primary food source. One direct action that Washington can take is to reduce pinniped predation on Chinook in the Columbia River. WDFW is working with tribal co-managers and other state fish and wildlife agencies to request a permit from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to expand sea lion removal efforts in the Lower Columbia River, consistent with the 2018 amendments to the Marine Mammal Protection Act. This work would increase from the current 6-8 weeks per year for removal efforts to 10 or more months per year, increasing Chinook salmon abundance to meet recovery objectives, aid in harvest opportunity, and promote recovery of southern resident killer whales.

#13 Nisqually River/Centralia Diversion Trap

	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
Estimated Cost:	\$0	\$188,000

Fund Source: GF-S

Recommendation Summary:

Recovery and harvest management of ESA-listed Chinook salmon and steelhead in the Nisqually River are dependent on the success at the Centralia Diversion Dam. With Nisqually River designated as a wild steelhead gene bank, recovery is all the more critical. Success at the dam requires the enumeration of upstream migrating fish and the identification of origin (hatchery vs. wild) and, in coming years, the culling of hatchery origin fish at the dam. The Nisqually Indian Tribe has agreed to fund the building and construction of the trapping facility with the understanding that WDFW will staff the trap year round. Funding two staff at the dam will enable the cooperative collection of Chinook and steelhead data for future recovery and harvest management of these species.

#14 Coastal Dungeness Crab Fishery

	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
Estimated Cost & FTEs:	\$0	\$242,000

Fund Source: GF-S

Recommendation Summary:

The coastal crab fishery uses pot gear to cleanly target Dungeness crab and has operated for several decades without interactions with ESA-listed species. There has been an increase in entanglements of humpback whales over the past four years in fisheries throughout the West Coast due in large

part to increasing whale populations, and changing ocean conditions affecting the availability and distribution of their prey. While most of the humpback whales that are present off the Washington coast are not listed under the ESA, two of the 14 ESA-listed distinct population segments are occasionally present in Pacific Ocean waters off Washington. As such, WDFW is required to secure an ESA incidental take permit from NOAA to authorize the fishery. This request funds staff to develop an ESA Section 10 incidental take permit application, habitat conservation plan, and accompanying environmental analysis for submission to NOAA for review and approval. This position will also work with the Washington Whale Working Group. Work will ultimately reduce the likelihood of humpback whale entanglements in the crab fishery, ensure compliance with the ESA, and keep the crab fishery open.

#15 Columbia River Policy Implementation

	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
Estimated Cost:	\$0	\$1,013,000

Fund Source: GF-S

Recommendation Summary:

Two elements of the Fish and Wildlife Commission’s Columbia River Policy promise to improve harvest opportunity and protect wild populations: alternative gear development and commercial license buy-back to reduce fleet size and keep it economically viable. WDFW wants to work with the commercial fishing industry for best options for pound nets, for example, as well as valuing existing licenses. Only with dedicated staff, science-based site research, and facilitated conversations will we be able to maintain viable commercial fisheries in the Lower Columbia River and achieve objectives of the Columbia River policy.

#16 Suction Dredging

	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
Estimated Cost:	\$0	\$268,000

Fund Source: GF-S

Recommendation Summary:

Recent restrictive mining laws in other western states have likely encouraged more suction dredge mining in Washington, a significant concern to WDFW when mining grounds are home to species of conservation concern and ESA-listed species. This increased pressure on aquatic grounds is parallel to increased conflict between parties who are either for or against rising levels of restriction. To make matters worse, parties are working without enough information, such as hydraulic permit approval (HPA) consistency and adequacy, HPA compliance levels, and poor communication of prospecting activities. WDFW proposes a three-phase process to alleviate the

conflict, providing important information about mining to WDFW and concerned stakeholders. Staffing this process will mend relations and provide a path for future mining and wild fish protection to co-exist.

#17 Hydraulic Code Civil Compliance

	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
Estimated Cost:	\$0	\$1,435,000
Fund Source:	GF-S	

Recommendation Summary:

The Hydraulic Code requires people planning projects in or near state waters to get a Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) from WDFW, ensuring that construction is done in a manner that protects fish and their aquatic habitats. Where instances of noncompliance with the hydraulic code are found, WDFW is newly authorized by the state to take administrative (civil) enforcement actions and conduct criminal investigations, or both. WDFW does not take enforcement lightly but lacks compliance inspectors to implement this responsibility. Eight compliance inspectors can help the regulated community understand how to comply with the code through education and technical assistance as they advise and consult on permits, conduct inspections, and perform on-site technical visits. Improved compliance will increase protection of fish life as well as, secondarily, improve protection of tribal treaty rights.

#18 Issaquah Staff Office

	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
Estimated Cost:	\$0	\$135,000
Fund Source:	GF-S	

Recommendation Summary:

Eight staff recently moved to temporary space in a Department of Ecology-leased facility in Bellevue. However, Ecology will be vacating the facility in December, 2020. Therefore, WDFW staff will need to relocate. The Department of Enterprise Services is assisting with locating new office space, and at the time of writing this request for moving costs, staff are reviewing proposals in the Issaquah area.