

Summary Sheet

Meeting dates: June 28, 2019

Agenda item: Petitions – Colville River Fishing Season

Presenter(s): Bill Baker, District 2 Fish Biologist

The Department has received a petition to reinstate the year-round fishing season on the Colville River in Northeast Washington (Figure 1).

Prior to 2018, the section of the Colville River from its mouth upstream to the bridge at the town of Valley was managed as a year-round fishery. During the sportfishing rule simplification process, the entire Colville River was changed to an opening day season (Saturday before Memorial Day-October 31) to reduce the complexity and number of different stream seasons. The petitioner and other anglers have voiced concern that the shorter, standard stream season unnecessarily limits angling opportunity for both youth and adults in the Colville River. Since the rule change went into effect, anglers have said that much of the trout fishing opportunity in the Colville River occurs in the late winter and early spring, prior to the current season opener. During this time, fishing conditions are more favorable than later in the spring and summer when excessive turbidity and warm water temperatures make fishing difficult. Given that, there is little conservation risk with reinstating a year-round fishing season; staff recommend that the Commission accept the petition to reinstate the year-round fishing season on this section of the Colville River.

Staff recommendation:

Accept the petition and initiate rule-making concurrent with rule-making for HB 1579 (2019) implementing recommendations of the southern resident killer whale task force related to increasing chinook abundance. The completion date for rule-making is targeted for December 2019.

Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:

Pursuant to RCW 34.05.330 Should the Commission:

- a) Deny the petition in writing, stating the reasons for the denial, specifically addressing the concerns raised by the petitioner, and where appropriate, the alternative means by which it will address the concerns raised by the petitioner;

or-

- b) Initiate rule-making proceedings?
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Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:

None

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

No public process has been conducted on this petition.

Action requested and/or proposed next steps:

Accept the petition and initiate rule-making to consider changing the fishing season for the Colville River from the Saturday before Memorial Day through October 31 to a year-round season.

Draft motion language:

I move to accept the petition and direct the Department to initiate rule-making concurrent with the rule-making for implementation of HB 1579 (2019).

Is there a "second"?

If so, then motion maker discusses basis for motion; other Commissioners discuss views on motion; amendments, if any, proposed and addressed

Post decision communications plan:

Communicate the outcome of the Commission Decision to the petitioners and other commenters.



Figure 1. Section of Colville River, Washington petitioned for regulation change from the Saturday before Memorial Day – October 31 to a year-round season.