Long-term Vision

Conservation of the White Sturgeon population:

• Improve abundance of spawning adult sturgeon.
• Enhance future fisheries.
• Ensure long-term viability of the population.
Recommended Rule Proposals

1. Expand Columbia River sturgeon spawning sanctuaries.
   - Extend time of spawning sanctuaries through August 31.
     - Full closed period would be May 1-August 31.
     - Aligned with sanctuary rules below Bonneville.
   - Expand area of sanctuaries below McNary Dam and Priest Rapids Dam.
     - Below McNary Dam – Extends to Grain Elevators at Patterson Ferry Road (+12 miles).
     - Below Priest Rapids Dam – Extend to Vernita Bridge (+7 miles).
JOHN DAY RESERVOIR STURGEON SANCTUARY BOUNDARY
CURRENT BOUNDARY AND PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES

Current Boundary: Hwy 82/395 Bridge (RM 290)

Alternative 1: Irrigon Hatchery (RM 279)

Alternative 2: Grain Elevators (RM 278)
From the grain elevators at Patterson Ferry Road on the Oregon shore, straight across to a marker on the Washington shore at the West end of the old concrete foundations.
Recommended Rule Proposals

1. Expand Columbia River sturgeon spawning sanctuaries.
   - Extend time of spawning sanctuaries through August 31.
   - Expand area of sanctuaries below McNary Dam and Priest Rapids Dam.

Public Comments (online and at public meetings):
   - Few objections raised regarding extending the time of the sanctuaries.
   - Several objections raised regarding extending the area of the sanctuaries.
   - Concern over lost fishing opportunity – popular catch and release oversize sturgeon fishery below McNary Dam.
   - Frustration over lack of recent data in McNary Pool.
   - Concern of impact of tribal fishing in John Day Pool.
Recommended Rule Proposals

2. Move to catch & release fisheries only upstream of McNary Dam.
   • Precautionary approach, consistent with policy guidelines.

Public Comments (online and at public meetings):
   • Disagreement over whether there is a conservation issue.
   • Concern over lost fishing opportunity.
   • Frustration over lack of recent data in McNary Pool.
   • Strong support for establishing a volunteer program.
   • Recommendation for electronic catch-report-cards to improve monitoring.
Recommended Rule Proposals

3. Statewide night closure for White Sturgeon fishing.
   • Closes night fishing in the Chehalis River – currently only area open to night fishing for sturgeon in WA.
   • Meets conservation objectives outlined in F&W Commission Policy.

Public Comments (online and at public meetings):
   • Concern over lost fishing opportunity.
   • Concern with the impact of tribal gillnet fisheries.
   • Petition received—129 signatures opposing closing night fishing.
Recommended Rule Proposals

4. Improve clarity on sturgeon catch-and-release regulations.
   • “Any sturgeon that cannot lawfully be retained must be released immediately.”
   • Goal to provide clarity of what fish must be released in both areas where a slot-limit is or is not in effect.
Recommended Rule Proposals

5. Define oversize sturgeon—greater than 55” Fork Length.
   - Aligns with definition for take of an illegal-size sturgeon in RCW 77.15.370.
   - Goal to improve clarity on the definition of “Oversize Sturgeon” for anglers, fishery managers, and enforcement personnel.
Recommended Rule Proposals

   - Aligns with state rule simplification standards.
   - Directionality, rules read in the upstream direction.
   - Section breaks align with GIS layers associated with the Fish Washington App.
   - Organization, improving readability and clarity.
Questions?
Draft Motion Language

Please refer to draft motion language as listed in summary sheet.