

Commission Guidance
Agenda Item 10. Hatchery and Fishery Reform Policy Review Update.
Friday, December 13, 2019

Timeline Moving Forward

First, regarding the staff request for guidance on the structure of more in-depth discussion of the reports reviewing emerging science and policy performance, the Commission prefers a workshop involving all Commissioners on the shoulder of the March meeting, as opposed to groupings of three Commissioners in separate meetings. A group meeting will allow all Commissioners to hear the reactions of each Commissioner, something not directly possible with separate meetings; it can also result in a synergistic understanding effect. Additionally, it has the benefit of being an open, public meeting and therefore contribute to the goal of having this process be as open and transparent as possible.

Regarding the schedule of Commission meetings and the process to reach finality on the question of any policy language changes to Policy C-3619, the following guidance begins with the end point and moves back in reverse chronological order.

- The October 23-24, 2020 Commission meeting should be scheduled for a final decision on any language changes to Policy C-3619. A strike-out/mark-up version showing proposed language changes should be circulated well in advance of this meeting for public review, and public testimony should be taken at this meeting prior to a decision.
- The July 31-August 1, 2020 Commission meeting should be the point where a strike-out/markup version is authorized for public distribution with notice that a final decision is scheduled for the October Commission meeting. This allows for more than two months for the staff to complete the public review draft and provide the public with ample time to review and comment.
 - As a precursor to the Commission meeting, a Fish Committee meeting of sufficient length should occur to entertain a recommendation for consideration by the full Commission. A Fish Committee meeting on this topic may also be useful at the June Commission meeting.
- The February and April Commission meetings as described in the staff presentation should occur as scheduled and not delayed. Additionally, the April Commission meeting should be noticed to include Commission guidance on policy language change alternatives for staff analysis, as well as consideration of any recommendations for such from staff.

A new document reflecting this guidance should be posted on the website where the Policy review process and schedule elements are available as notice to the public.

Emerging Science Report

As per original direction at the June, 2018 Commission meeting, a report is needed on the emerging and evolving science that is different from that presumed at the time the policy was adopted about 10 years ago. The report should include new information on the multi-generational reproductive success and genetic fitness of progeny from

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hatchery x wild crosses in natural spawning areas when the hatchery fish are of the same genetic strain as the wild fish, with particular reference to chinook salmon. Further, the report should include an update on scientific assessments of the risks of achieving target rebuilding timeframes associated with different PHOS levels, again, with particular reference to chinook salmon.

Policy Performance Report

As indicated in the first bullet of slide 6, it is important for the Commission to see a full review of the performance of the Policy since adoption.

- It is necessary to know whether and to what degree the 11 policy guidelines have been implemented, and a red-yellow-green “report card” format will be a useful illustration. However, narrative elaboration should be included where necessary to document the rationale/basis for the conclusions.
- While Policy action item implementation is an important part of reviewing policy performance, the most important part of the performance evaluation is to gain understanding of whether the Policy has worked successfully, or not, or if it is impossible to determine any conclusions about successful performance. The policy intent has been to make things better—for the conservation and recovery of wild fish and for sustainable fisheries. In simple terms, the policy performance report should evaluate whether the policy has made things better—yes, no, or unknown.
 - As was indicated in original guidance in June 2018, it is important to know
 - where the Policy has been the reason for hatchery reductions beyond those required by federal ESA implementation mandates;
 - where the Policy has been the reason for successful wild population increases; and
 - where the Policy has been the reason for reductions or increases in fisheries.
 - As per the clarifications and guidance at the August Fish Committee and FWC meeting, it is understood that the evaluations of effect cannot be comprehensively quantitative and will need to be somewhat qualitative. Such qualitative evaluations should include such things as the following.
 - Where the first Policy Guideline has been strictly or mostly applied, what happened? Where are these locations and what was the effect on the conservation and recovery of wild fish and downstream fisheries? If there is not a good example of an area in this category, perhaps the Mid-Hood Canal fall chinook stock unit could be used as an example.
 - Where the first Policy Guidelines was not applied, what happened? If there is not a better example, Snake River fall chinook could be used in a qualitative evaluation.
 - Where Policy Guideline #11 has been implemented, what has been the effect on the conservation and recovery of wild fish and fisheries?

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- The staff is urged to examine areas that can illustrate whether the implementing the policy as worded has apparently made a positive difference, has apparently made a negative difference, or it appears that there has been no difference in wild fish conservation and recovery or in fisheries.

Hatchery Benefits report

Based on the description of the Hatchery Benefits report the Commission received at the September Commission meeting, it appears this report would be of similar fundamental importance as the emerging science and policy performance reports. However, slide 7 shows this report being completed in the summer months, after the other two reports and potentially after draft policy language changes are developed. It would be best if this report is completed and presented at the same time as the other two foundational reports—at the April 2020 Commission meeting. If this is not possible, it would be very useful for an outline, description of topics or chapters, or a preliminary draft to be presented at the February and April meetings, coincident with the other elemental reports, so as to have the appropriate influence in the first consideration of draft language changes for Policy C-3619.

Tribal Request for Another Meeting on Hatchery Policy Review

We should respond in the affirmative to the Tribal request for another meeting of similar stature to the prior one; the staff is asked to coordinate appropriate logistics. It is important to get a direct understanding of the Tribal policy positions on the various issues at hand. In the end, the Commission wants to have a hatchery policy that Tribal Co-Managers feel is an improvement; we cannot have a successful hatchery policy if the Tribes are adamantly opposed to its provisions.

Tribal Request to Consider a Joint Policy

The Commission is open to considering a joint policy with our Tribal Co-Managers, but feel it should be a subsequent consideration after we finish the current process to adopt a State policy. It is important to complete the current process in 2020 given the high number of Commissioners that reach the end of their appointments in 2020. The current process has been underway since June 2018 and there is concern that the development process for a joint policy with Tribal Co-Managers would likely extend well beyond 2020, thereby risking the loss of the experience and understanding of the current set of Commissioners.