



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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**ADDENDUM 20-044 TO DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS) 12-084
DATED: JANUARY 11, 2013**

Name of Proposal: DNS 12-084: WASHINGTON FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION
POLICY ON COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN SALMON MANAGEMENT

Description of Original Proposal:

The intent of the policy is to implement an alternative management framework for non-tribal Columbia River recreational and commercial fisheries. Both of the fish and wildlife commissions of Washington and Oregon are considering similar, but independent framework actions. The two frameworks are intended to enhance the economies of Oregon and Washington as a whole, ensure the long-term viability of recreational and commercial fisheries and those communities that rely on them, and contribute to fish conservation and recovery. In the off-channel fishing areas it may expand existing seasons, boundaries, increase production or provide new production and allow increased harvest where the likelihood of impacting ESA-listed stocks is lower than the mainstem.

In Washington state, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (which includes the Fish and Wildlife Commission) proposal contains non-project and project elements. Non-project elements include the restructuring of sport fisheries and the development and implementation of fisheries using selective alternative gear such as purse seines and beach seines in the mainstem would optimize area-specific opportunity to target harvest on abundant hatchery stocks, reduce the number of hatchery-origin fish in some natural spawning areas, and provide commercial fishing opportunities. In addition, as a non-project action, WDFW is undertaking preliminary investigations related to future siting of new net pens for acclimation/release of hatchery salmonids. The Department does not anticipate significant adverse environmental impacts from the reallocation and restructuring of fisheries or the preliminary investigations related to future siting of new net pens.

The project component of this proposal involves a change in salmon species released and the expansion of acclimation/release of coho salmon from the current WDFW net pen site at Deep River. Net pens are non-permanent floating structures used to hold fish for several months, for feeding and monitoring, until they reach sufficient size and are released to enhance public sport and commercial fishing in lakes, rivers and marine areas. The construction and operation of net pens may have impacts on the environment, but as described below, such impacts are not anticipated to be significant.

The construction of new pens is not anticipated to cause significant adverse environmental impacts. Most net pen structures consist of a narrow wood or metal frame that rests on floats on the surface of the water with a mesh net extending into the water. There is minimal shading of the water surface below. Some net pens have net covers to reduce avian predation of juvenile fish. While it's

possible that wildlife could get entangled in the netting, current operations and past experience suggest this rarely occurs. Net pens are secured by attaching directly to a dock, pilings or other floating structure, with cables attached near the shore or, in a few cases, by anchoring directly to the bed of the water body. Most net pens are incorporated into an existing dock structures so any additional navigational or safety hazards would be minimal. An individual net pen would encompass no more than 400 ft² (20' x 20') of surface area with a net no deeper than 20 ft. These net pens are currently used to acclimate and release spring Chinook and coho as part of increased off channel production for harvest opportunity).

At the existing Deep River net pen site, WDFW is proposing to eliminate the acclimation/release of spring Chinook salmon and to increase the acclimation and release of coho salmon. Neither the elimination of release of spring Chinook nor the increased release of coho salmon are expected to result in significant adverse environmental impacts.

The operation of the net pens at Deep River, restructuring of the fisheries, and preliminary new site investigations are not anticipated to cause significant adverse environmental impacts because the Department already performs the following measures to manage the fisheries and production, including net pen releases:

- Status reviews occurring since 1991 have resulted in the majority of Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead stocks being listed under the ESA. The *U.S. v Oregon* TAC has prepared Biological Assessments (BAs) for combined fisheries based on relevant *U.S. v Oregon* management plans and agreements. The TAC has completed BAs for ESA-listed stocks for all mainstem Columbia River fisheries since January 1992.
- The current Biological Assessment (BA) concerns Columbia River treaty Indian and non-Indian fisheries, as described in the “2008-2017 *U.S. v Oregon* Management Agreement for upriver Chinook, sockeye, steelhead, coho, and white sturgeon” (2008-2017 MA). The BA was submitted during the spring of 2008, and a Biological Opinion (BO) was subsequently issued by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) later that year. The current BO expires December 31, 2017, concurrent with the 2008-2017 MA.
- The parties to *U.S. v Oregon* are currently operating under the 2008-2017 Management Agreement (MA). This agreement provides specific fishery management constraints for upriver spring, summer, and fall Chinook, coho, sockeye and steelhead.
- Columbia River fisheries downstream from Bonneville Dam are sampled and monitored by the Joint Staff of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Sport fisheries are sampled nearly seven days per week and commercial fisheries are sampled nearly each day of the fishery.
- All fisheries are managed to remain within the ESA constraints and analysis of impacts to ESA-listed stocks are conducted throughout the fishery to ensure fisheries are managed consistent with ESA standards.
- All hatchery programs are operated consistent with ESA requirements.
- Technical information on fishery management is reviewed by the *U.S. v Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee, which is made up of representatives from the four treaty tribes, NMFS, US Fish and Wildlife Service and the state of Oregon.
- Test fisheries are conducted during the spring Chinook fishery prior to the start of any commercial opening.

- Additional test fishing will occur to help determine the site of the new net pens. Test fishing will occur in the spring of 2013 in the Cathlamet Channel.
- Water quality issues are not expected – see checklist for information on Deep River net pens
- Spring Chinook fisheries below Bonneville Dam are managed to provide a 30% buffer to the run size. This buffer is in place to provide assurance that fisheries upstream from Bonneville Dam are not denied access to the share of the harvest that has been allocated. This includes sport and tribal fisheries in Washington, Oregon and Idaho.
- The policy under review includes an adaptive management section. The fishery plans will be reviewed as the season progresses and on an annual basis to ensure the policy and plans are consistent with the objectives.

Reference

Parties to *U.S. v Oregon*. 2008. 2008-2017 Management Agreement. Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission. Portland, OR.

Description of Addendum 20-044:

WDFW proposes to modify existing Policy C-3620 to a revised policy based on the adaptive management provision. Staff developed a five-year policy performance report during 2018 with stakeholder input. OR and WA Commissions created the Joint-State Fishery Policy Review Committee (PRC) to make progress on concurrency, short-term, and long-term adjustments to the policy, which WA modified the interim policy in 2019. WA Commission created the Columbia River Fishery Policy Workgroup (CRW) to continue work as the PRC was suspended. The CRW developed a long-term policy recommendation (June 10, 2020) for the Commission to consider based on what has been learned through the policy review and both PRC and CRW analyses based on meeting conservation objectives, concurrency with Oregon, and maintain/enhance the economic well-being of both sport/commercial fisheries.

In short, the policy review concluded that “The large economic benefits for both commercial and recreational fisheries expected from the Policy were not observed during the implementation period. Commercial Select Area enhancements and alternative gear development have not replaced mainstem fisheries. Recreational fisheries have only seen marginal benefits to changes in allocations. The expectations in the development of the Policy were not met.” Conservation objectives are expected to continue to be met, and if/when additional mark-selective fisheries for sport and commercial fisheries are implemented, additional hatchery fish would be removed from the spawning grounds. Concurrency is a high priority for both states and is anticipated to be addressed through commission decisions, director delegation, and/or adaptive management as necessary. Staff analyses during both the PRC and CRW processes resulted in relatively minor reductions in angler trips for the recreational fishery and increased ex-vessel value for the commercial fishery.

The proposed changes compared to the existing Policy C3620 can be found in ‘Columbia River Policy Comparison attachment’. The proposed changes allow for flexibility of gears to be used (i.e., any zone/catch area downstream of Bonneville Dam) and time period, and provides flexibility on unused impacts by either the sport or commercial fishery. Spring Chinook allocation shifts from an 80% recreational/20% commercial to an abundance-based matrix approach (70%/30% average). Summer Chinook allocation shifts from an 80% recreational/20% commercial to an abundance-

based matrix approach (70%/30% average) for fisheries downstream of Priest Rapids Dam (above Priest Rapids Dam allocation remains unchanged). Abundance-based matrix is defined as an allocation tool that shifts the sharing of catch/impacts as run sizes increase or decreases, and as in this case increases recreational priority at lower run sizes. Fall Chinook allocation shifts from no more than 80% recreational/ no less than 20% commercial to an no more than 70% recreational/ no less than 30% commercial. Proposed changes compared to the existing Policy C3620 also increase the hatchery and natural production goals, limit recreational fishing guide/charter licenses discussion with Oregon, and conduct thermal angling sanctuaries discussion with Oregon. Though most of these topics/issues are addressed in other aspects of WDFW's on-going work, Policy C-3620 proposed changes would no longer address logbook requirements for recreational fishing guides, sustainable commercial fishery certification, and predation on salmonids.

Proponent/Applicant: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
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Location of Proposal: Policy will impact fisheries in all portions of the Columbia mainstem from Chief Joseph Dam to the mouth, and in the Snake River mainstem from the Idaho border to the confluence. This includes Pacific, Wahkiakum, Cowlitz, Clark, Skamania, Klickitat, Benton, Yakima, Grant, Kittitas, Douglas, Chelan, Okanogan, Franklin, Whitman, Columbia, Garfield, and Asotin Counties.

Lead Agency: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

This addendum is being distributed pursuant to WACs 197-11-600 and 197-11-625. The updated information provided above does not substantially change the analysis of significant impacts in the existing environmental checklist. Based on the original SEIS and the updated information provided in this addendum, we have determined that a new threshold determination is not warranted. There is no comment period associated with this SEPA addendum.

Responsible Official: Lisa Wood

Position/Title: SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Habitat Program, Protection Division

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If you have questions about this addendum or the details of the proposal, contact Lisa Wood at SEPADesk2@dfw.wa.gov.

DATE OF ISSUE: September 10, 2020

SIGNATURE:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Liji Wood". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "L".

SEPA Log Number: 20-044 add to DNS 12-084

Individuals who need to receive this information in an alternative format or language, or who need reasonable accommodations to participate in WDFW-sponsored public meetings or other activities may contact Dolores Noyes at (360-902-2349), or TTY 771, or email (dolores.noyes@dfw.wa.gov). For more information https://wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/reasonable_request.html.