

From: [Behen, Kenneth P. \(DFW\)](#)
To: mudlakes12@ncidata.com
Cc: [SEPADesk2 \(DFW\)](#)
Subject: Re: Comment on SEPA no. 21023
Date: Monday, June 28, 2021 1:46:15 PM

Ms. Burbery,

Thank you very much for your interest and response on our State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) public comment opportunity for the proposed rotenone treatments of Fish Lake and Schalow Pond. We take all public comments into consideration before our agency makes a final decision. Your comments are part of the official record of the 2021 proposed treatments.

Fish Lake and Schalow Pond have been managed as “trout-emphasis” for decades. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife contracts an angler preference survey with a private contractor, who supplies the agency with their findings on a five to eight year cycle. Results consistently show that approximately three quarters of anglers fish for trout and prefer fishing for them in lowland lakes. These preference surveys are what WDFW uses to guide fish management and why Fish Lake and Schalow Pond are managed as “trout-emphasis” waters.

We acknowledge and understand the influence that seasonal water temperatures play in both the success and quality of our lowland trout fisheries. Several of our “trout-emphasis” waters are less productive during the summertime due to high water temperatures. This fact doesn’t mean those lakes should be managed as “trout-emphasis” or that do not provide quality fishing opportunity. Fishing success and trout palatability is just seasonal. We don’t measure the success of quality trout waters by their summer catch rates, rather we consider the full breadth of the year and fishing season.

We apply rotenone to a number of eastern Washington waters, as this management strategy is extremely efficient and cost effective with a return to fishery quality within a year of treatment and a return on investment for Washington State license holders within a range of two to four years following treatment. This years proposals include the treatment of Schalow Pond as its surface water connectivity to Fish Lake introduces the potential for reinfestation source of undesirable . In preparation for treatment we have begun the process of reducing the total volume of water in Schalow Pond to reduce the quantity of rotenone product needed for an effective treatment rate.. If the treatment is not approved, Schalow Pond will be refilled, but if approved will be refilled following treatment. Furthermore, while Schalow Pond is a hike in only lake and participation is limited, it is inexpensive to stock with Brooke Trout to provide additional opportunity consistent with our management goals of the complex.

As you noted the presence of Largemouth Bass, we have found it is very unlikely their presence to be a result of survival following prior treatments, as rotenone is extremely effective on their populations. Unfortunately, illegal introductions of spiny-ray fishes into these “trout-emphasis” waters as well as resilient populations of bullhead catfish, introduces unsustainable amounts of interspecific competition and predation which directly conflicts with the “plant grow and take” management strategy we utilize in these lakes.

While Washington state offers some of the most abundant and diverse angling opportunities in the North America, there are relatively few lakes along the westside of Highway 97. Fish and Blue Lakes are managed as traditional opening day "trout-emphasis" waters, whereas, the Conconully's are managed for mixed species (e.g. bass and trout), Chopaka is mostly utilized by fly anglers, Whitestone and Palmer Lakes are primarily bass waters. We believe we have the right mix of fishing opportunities in this area of Okanogan County.

Thank you again for your comments and personal investment of your local lakes

v/r

Kenny Behen

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