

Draft for Fish Committee Discussion

***Alternative 2: Manage for a Combination of Hatchery and Wild Fish***

*The boxes below represent tasks assigned to staff to develop revised policy language for future consideration.*

**FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION  
POLICY DECISION**

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**POLICY TITLE: Willapa Bay Salmon Management      POLICY NUMBER: C-3622**

Cancels or  
Supersedes:

Effective Date: TBD  
Termination Date: TBD

See Also: Policy C-3622

Approved {Date} by:

Chair  
Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

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**Purpose**

The objective of this policy is to achieve the conservation and restoration of wild salmon in Willapa Bay and avoid ESA designation of any salmon species. Where consistent with this conservation objective, the policy also seeks to maintain or enhance the economic well-being and stability of the commercial and recreational fishing industry in the state, provide the public with outdoor recreational experiences, and an appropriate distribution of fishing opportunities throughout the Willapa Bay Basin. Enhanced transparency, information sharing, and improved technical rigor of fishery management are needed to restore and maintain public trust and support for management of Willapa Bay salmon fisheries.

*Re-write with language describing a purpose of managing for a combination of hatchery and wild salmon production goals so as to enhance fisheries in comparison to the 2015 Policy 3622 language (Alternative 1); delete last sentence of this paragraph.*

**Definition and Goal**

This policy sets a general management direction and provides guidance for Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) management of all Pacific salmon returning to the Willapa Bay Basin. The Willapa Bay Basin is defined as Willapa Bay and its freshwater tributaries.

*Consider eliminating this section by inclusion of necessary language in the Purpose section.*

**General Policy Statement**

This policy provides a cohesive set of principles and guidance to promote the conservation of wild salmon and steelhead and improve the Department's management of salmon in the

Willapa Bay Basin. The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) recognizes that management decisions must be informed by fishery monitoring (biological and economic), and that innovation and adaptive management will be necessary to achieve the stated purpose of this policy. By improving communication, information sharing, and transparency, the Department shall promote improved public support for management of Willapa Bay salmon fisheries.

State commercial and recreational fisheries will need to increasingly focus on the harvest of abundant hatchery fish. Mark-selective fisheries are a tool that permits the harvest of abundant hatchery fish while reducing impacts on wild stocks needing protection. As a general policy, the Department shall implement mark-selective salmon fisheries, unless the wild populations substantially affected by the fishery are meeting spawner (e.g., escapement goal) and broodstock management objectives. In addition, the Department may consider avoidance, alternative gears, or other selective fishing concepts along with other management approaches provided they are as or more effective than a mark-selective fishery in achieving spawner and broodstock management objectives.

Fishery and hatchery management measures should be implemented as part of an “all-H” strategy that integrates hatchery, harvest, and habitat systems. Although the policy focuses on fishery management, this policy in no way diminishes the significance of habitat protection and restoration.

*Reword the first two paragraphs of this section to be consistent with the Purpose section and the policy direction below. Strive for more concise language and a reasonably short section.*

### **Guiding Principles**

The Department shall apply the following principles in the management of salmon in the Willapa Bay Basin:

*Significantly reduce the size of this section to reflect high-level policy principles particular only to Willapa Bay salmon fisheries, and either contain principles describing complicity with other policies and processes (see \* below) all in one principle or delete them.*

- 1) Prioritize the restoration and conservation of wild salmon through a comprehensive, cohesive, and progressive series of fishery, hatchery, and habitat actions.

*Reword to reflect the Purpose statement; orient prioritization of wild salmon populations to reflect the significance to overall ESU health and population structure given historical abundance and current profile in comparison to original genetic characteristics.*

- 2) Work with our partners (including Regional Fishery Enhancement Groups, nonprofit organizations, the public and Lead Entities) to protect and restore habitat productivity. \*
- 3) ~~Implement improved broodstock management (including selective removal of hatchery fish) to reduce the genetic and ecological impacts of hatchery fish and improve the fitness and viability of salmon produced from Willapa Bay rivers (see Hatchery and~~

~~Fishery Reform Policy C-3619). Achieve Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) broodstock management standards for Coho and Chum salmon by 2015, and work toward a goal of achieving standards for Chinook salmon by 2020.~~

- 4) Investigate and promote the development and implementation of alternative selective gear. The development of alternative selective gear may provide an opportunity to target fishery harvests on abundant hatchery fish stocks, reduce the number of hatchery-origin fish in natural spawning areas, limit mortalities on non-target species and stocks, and provide commercial fishing opportunities.

*Reword to include the principle of mark selective recreational fisheries, so both sport and commercial are in one principle; add emphasis language on encouraging a fresh approach to the development of alternative commercial fishing gear.*

- 5) Work through the Pacific Salmon Commission to promote the conservation of Willapa Bay salmon and, in a manner consistent with the provisions of the Pacific Salmon Treaty, pursue the implementation of fishery management actions necessary to achieve agreed conservation objectives. \*
- 6) Within the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) process, support management measures that promote the attainment of Willapa Bay conservation objectives consistent with the Council's Salmon Fishery Management Plan. \*
- 7) Monitoring, sampling, and enforcement programs will adequately account for species and population impacts (landed catch and incidental fishing mortality) of all recreational and commercial fisheries and ensure compliance with state regulations. Develop and implement enhanced enforcement strategies to improve compliance with fishing regulations and ensure orderly fisheries.\*
- 8) If it becomes apparent that a scheduled fishery will exceed the aggregated pre-season natural-origin Chinook mortality (impact) expectation, the Department shall implement in-season management actions in an effort to avoid cumulative mortalities of natural-origin Chinook in excess of the aggregated pre-season projection.\*
- 9) Salmon management and catch accounting will be timely, well documented, transparent, well-communicated, and accountable. The Department shall strive to make ongoing improvements in the transparency of fishery management and for effective public involvement in planning Willapa Bay salmon fisheries, including rule-making processes. These shall include: a) clearly describing management objectives in a document available to the public prior to the initiation of the preseason planning process; b) enhancing opportunities for public engagement during the preseason fishery planning process; c) communicating in-season information and management actions to advisors and the public; and d) striving to improve communication with the public regarding co-management issues that are under discussion.\*

- 10) Seek to improve fishery management and technical tools through improved fishery monitoring, the development of new tools, and rigorous assessment of fishery models and parameters.\*
- 11) When a mark-selective fishery occurs, the mark-selective fishery shall be implemented, monitored, and enforced in a manner designed to achieve the anticipated conservation benefits.\*

*Add a Guiding Principle, positioned at #2, with language about the intent to have significant recreational and commercial fishery opportunities.*

*Add a Guiding Principle about the goal of hatcheries being to support meaningful fisheries, including mitigation for unrecoverable habitat losses.*

*Add a Guiding Principle about seeking funding for enhanced weirs for the Willapa and Naselle Rivers, and perhaps the Nemah River, and the direction to mass-mark all hatchery produced fish (using something other than a adipose fin clip for chum salmon); note such actions as an implementation measure from Policy C-3624 if/as appropriate.*

### **Fishery and Species-Specific Guidance** *Policy Goals and Direction*

Subject to the provisions of the Adaptive Management section, the following fishery-and species-specific sections describe the presumptive path for achieving conservation **and management** objectives and an appropriate distribution of fishing opportunities.

### **Fall Chinook Salmon**

Subject to the adaptive management provisions of this policy, the Department will manage fall Chinook ~~salmon fisheries~~ and *wild populations*, hatchery programs *and salmon fisheries* consistent with the Guiding Principles and the following additional **policy** guidance.

*Replace sections 1 – 8 below with 3 sections.*

- 1) *Natural Production*
- 2) *Hatchery Programs*
- 3) *Fishery Management*

*Develop draft language on the following goal concepts.*

- 1) *Natural Production*
  - a. *The ESU connection.*
  - b. *A numerical goal or goals.*
  - c. *Rivers with no hatchery releases.*
  - d. *Enhanced weir capabilities.*
  - e. *The relationship of natural production goals to fishery stability.*
  - f. *Long term evaluation of wild/hatchery parentage, comparing no-hatchery production rivers with weired rivers.*
- 2) *Hatchery Programs*

- a. *Goal statement regarding support of sport and commercial fisheries, mitigation, and the SRO initiative.*
  - b. *Hatchery by hatchery numerical goals.*
    1. *Forks Creek: 3.5+ M smolts*
    2. *Naselle Hatchery: 5+ M smolts*
    3. *Nemah Hatchery: TBD*
  - c. *Weirs operational intent.*
- 3) *Fishery Management*
- a. *Recreational and commercial general priorities. (Recreational priority in terms of "first and last crack" at fall chinook runs, with significant commercial fisheries if possible).*
  - b. *Area/time restrictions.*
  - c. *Incidental rates if when a forecast for wild or hatchery fish is under the spawning escapement goal.*
  - d. *Test fisheries for run size updates (checks for large magnitude changes from forecast).*

~~1) The Department shall initiate a two-phase rebuilding program to conserve and restore wild Chinook salmon in Willapa Bay. The progressive series of actions is intended to result in achieving broodstock management standards by 2020 and spawner goals by years 16-21. Within the conservation constraints of the rebuilding program, Chinook salmon will be managed to provide for a full recreational fishing season with increased participation and/or catch anticipated in future years.~~

~~2) Rebuilding Program - Phase 1 (Years 1-4). The objectives of Phase 1 shall be to increase the number of natural-origin spawners and implement hatchery program modifications designed to meet broodstock management standards in the subsequent cycle.~~

~~a. Implement hatchery broodstock management actions to promote re-adaptation to the natural environment and enhance productivity of natural-origin Chinook salmon in the North/Smith, Willapa, and Naselle rivers:~~

- ~~• North/Smith — Manage as Wild Salmon Management Zone with no hatchery releases of Chinook salmon.~~
- ~~• Willapa — Implement an integrated program with hatchery broodstock management strategies designed to achieve broodstock management standards consistent with a Primary designation in the subsequent cycle.~~
- ~~• Naselle — Implement hatchery broodstock strategies designed to achieve broodstock management standards consistent with a Contributing designation in the subsequent cycle.~~

- ~~b. Pursue implementation of additional mark-selective commercial fishing gear to enhance conservation and provide harvest opportunities. The Department shall provide to the Commission by January 2017 a status report and by January 2018 an assessment of options to implement additional mark-selective commercial fishing gear in Willapa Bay. The assessment shall identify the likely release mortality rates for each gear type, the benefits to rebuilding naturally spawning populations, and the benefits and impacts to the commercial fishery.~~
- ~~3) Rebuilding Program - Phase 2 (Years 5 – 21). The combination of fishery and harvest management actions is projected to result on average in the achievement of spawner goals for the North, Naselle, and Willapa populations in the years 16-21. Additional fishery and hatchery management actions will be considered during this time period if the progress toward the spawner objectives is inconsistent with expectations.~~
- ~~4) Fishery Management Objectives. The fishery management objectives for fall Chinook salmon, in priority order, are to:
  - ~~a. Achieve spawner goals for the North, Naselle, and Willapa stocks of natural-origin Chinook and hatchery reform broodstock objectives through the two phase rebuilding program described above.~~
  - ~~b. Provide for an enhanced recreational fishing season. The impact rate of the recreational fishery is anticipated to be ~3.2% during the initial years of the policy, but may increase in subsequent years to provide for an enhanced recreational season as described below:
    - ~~• Manage Chinook salmon for an enhanced recreational fishing season to increase participation and/or catch including consideration of increased daily limits, earlier openings, multiple rods, and other measures.~~
    - ~~• Conservation actions, as necessary, shall be shared equally between marine and freshwater fisheries.~~~~
  - ~~c. Provide opportunities for commercial fisheries within the remaining available fishery impacts.~~~~
- ~~5) Fishery Management in 2015-2018. To facilitate a transition to the Willapa River as the primary Chinook salmon population, fisheries during the transition period will be managed with the following goal:
  - ~~a. The impact rate on Willapa and Naselle river natural origin fall Chinook in Willapa Bay fisheries shall not exceed 20%. Within this impact rate cap, the priority shall be to maintain a full season of recreational fisheries for Chinook salmon in the Willapa Bay Basin.~~~~

- b. ~~To promote the catch of hatchery origin Chinook salmon and increase the number of natural origin spawners, within the 20% impact rate cap the following impact rates shall be set aside for mark-selective commercial fishing gear types with an anticipated release mortality rate of less than 35%:~~

Fishing Year	Mark-Selective Commercial Fishing Gear Set Aside
2015	1%
2016	2%
2017	6%
2018	6%

~~The Commission may consider adjustments to the set-asides for 2017 and 2018 based upon the Department's reports to the Commission on commercial mark-selective fishing gear (paragraph 2(b)) or other adaptive management considerations.~~

- c. ~~No commercial Chinook fisheries shall occur in areas 2T and 2U prior to September 16.~~
- d. ~~No commercial Chinook fisheries shall occur in areas 2M, 2N, 2P and 2R until after Labor Day.~~
- 6) ~~Fishery Management After 2018. Fisheries in the Willapa Bay Basin will be managed with the goal of:~~
- a. ~~Limiting the fishery impact rate on Willapa and Naselle river natural-origin fall Chinook salmon to no more than 14%.~~
- b. ~~No commercial fisheries shall occur within areas 2T and 2U prior to September 16.~~
- c. ~~No commercial Chinook fisheries shall occur in areas 2M, 2N, 2P and 2R until after September 7.~~
- 7) ~~Maintaining Rebuilding Trajectory. If the postseason estimate (as presented at the annual Commission review) of aggregated natural-origin Chinook salmon mortality (impacts) exceeds the preseason projection, the Department staff shall make a recommendation to the Commission regarding an adjustment to the allowable impacts for the subsequent year. The recommendation shall be based upon the percentage by which the postseason estimate of impacts exceeded the preseason projection, but may consider other factors such as the predicted abundance or other relevant factors.~~
- 8) ~~Hatchery Production. Within budgetary constraints, and at the earliest feasible date, the~~

Department shall seek to implement the following hatchery production of fall Chinook salmon:

- ~~0.80 million at Naselle Hatchery~~
- ~~3.30 million at Nemah Hatchery~~
- ~~0.35 million at Forks Creek Hatchery~~

**Coho Salmon**

Subject to the adaptive management provisions of this policy, the Department will manage Coho **wild populations**, and hatchery programs, and **salmon fisheries** consistent with the Guiding Principles and the following **policy guidance**. ~~objectives:~~

*Replace the sections below with 3 sections.*

- 1) Natural Production*
- 2) Hatchery Programs*
- 3) Fishery Management*

*Develop draft language on the following goal concepts.*

- 1) Natural Production*
  - a. The ESU connection.*
  - b. A numerical goal or goals.*
  - c. Rivers with no hatchery releases.*
- 2) Hatchery Programs*
  - a. Goal statement regarding support of sport and commercial fisheries and mitigation.*
  - b. Hatchery by hatchery numerical goals.*
    - 1. Forks Creek: TBD M smolts, but at least at 2021 levels*
    - 2. Naselle Hatchery: TBD M smolts, but at least at 2021 levels*
    - 3. Nemah Hatchery: TBD*
- 3) Fishery Management*
  - a. Recreational and commercial general priorities. (Commercial priority in terms of catch volume, with open recreational fisheries in the bay and rivers.)*
  - b. Area/time restrictions.*
  - c. Incidental rates if when a forecast for wild or hatchery fish is under the spawning escapement goal.*
  - d. Test fisheries for run size updates (checks for large magnitude changes from forecast).*

~~1) Broodstock Management Strategies. Manage Coho salmon with the following designations and broodstock management strategies:~~

	North/Smith	Willapa	Naselle
Designation	Primary	Primary	Stabilizing
Broodstock Strategy	No Hatchery	Integrated	Integrated

	Program		
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~~Coho salmon returning to all other watersheds will be managed consistent with a Contributing designation.~~

- ~~2) Fishery Management Objectives. The fishery management objectives for Coho salmon, in priority order, are to:~~
- ~~a. Manage fisheries with the goal of achieving the aggregate spawner goal for Willapa Bay natural origin Coho salmon. When the pre-season forecast of natural origin adult Coho is less than the aggregate goal, or less than 10% higher than the aggregate goal, fisheries in the Willapa Bay Basin will be scheduled to result in an impact of no more than 10% of the adult return;~~
  - ~~b. Prioritize commercial fishing opportunities during the Coho fishery management period (September 16 through October 14); and~~
  - ~~c. Provide recreational fishing opportunities.~~

### **Chum Salmon**

Subject to the adaptive management provisions of this policy, the Department will manage Chum salmon fisheries and hatchery programs consistent with the Guiding Principles and the following objectives.

*Replace sections 1 – 4 below with 3 sections.*

- 1) Natural Production*
- 2) Hatchery Program*
- 3) Fishery Management*

*Develop draft language on the following goal concepts.*

- 1) Natural Production Goals.*
  - a. The ESU connection.*
  - b. A numerical goal or goals.*
  - c. Rivers with no hatchery releases.*
  - d. Goal for contributions to fisheries.*
- 2) Hatchery Programs Goals*
  - a. Goal statement regarding support of commercial and sport fisheries.*
  - b. Hatchery by hatchery numerical goals.*
    - 1. Forks Creek: 0 smolts*
    - 2. Naselle Hatchery: 2 M smolts*
    - 3. Nemah Hatchery: 0 smolts*
- 3) Fishery Management*
  - a. Area/time restrictions.*
  - b. Incidental rates if when a forecast for wild or hatchery fish is under the spawning*

*escapement goal.*  
*d. Test fisheries for run size updates (checks for large magnitude changes from forecast).*

- 1) ~~Broodstock Management Strategies.~~ Manage Chum salmon with the following designations and broodstock management strategies:

	North/Smith	Palix	Bear
Designation	Primary	Contributing	Primary
Broodstock Strategy	No Hatchery Program	No Hatchery Program	No Hatchery Program

~~Chum salmon returning to all other watersheds will be managed consistent with a Contributing designation.~~

- 2) ~~Fishery Management Objectives.~~ The fishery management objectives for Chum salmon, in priority order, are to:

- ~~a. Achieve the aggregate goal for naturally spawning Chum salmon and meet hatchery reform broodstock objectives (see bullet 3);~~
- ~~b. Provide commercial fishing opportunities during the Chum salmon fishery management period (October 15 through October 31); and~~
- ~~c. Provide recreational fishing opportunities. Recreational fisheries will be allowed to retain Chum salmon.~~

- 3) ~~Fisheries will be managed with the goal of achieving the aggregate goal for Willapa Bay naturally spawning Chum salmon. Until the spawner goal is achieved 2 consecutive years, the maximum fishery impact shall not exceed a 10% impact rate and no commercial fisheries will occur in the period from October 15-31. If the number of natural-origin spawners was less than the goal in 3 out of the last 5 years, the Department shall implement the following measures:~~

- ~~a. The predicted fishery impact for Chum in Willapa Bay Basin will be scheduled to result in an impact of no more than 10% of the adult return.~~
- ~~b. When the Chum pre-season forecast is 85% or less of the escapement goal, the predicted fishery impact for Chum in Willapa Bay Basin will be scheduled to result in an impact of no more than 5% of the adult return.~~

- 4) ~~The Department shall evaluate opportunities to increase hatchery production of Chum salmon. If Chum salmon hatchery production is enhanced, beginning as early as 2018, fisheries in the Willapa Bay Basin may be implemented with a fishery impact limit of no~~

~~more than 33% of the natural origin Chum salmon return.~~

## Adaptive Management

Rewrite this section to be shorter, removing obsolete items and including 1) tracking implementation results with policy direction and providing accountability through progress reports to the Commission, and 2) authorizing and expecting appropriate adaptive management as needed to achieve, but not change, the policy direction and provisions of this Policy.

The Commission recognizes that adaptive management will be essential to achieve the purpose of this policy. Department staff may implement actions to manage adaptively to achieve the objectives of this policy and will coordinate with the Commission, as needed, in order to implement corrective actions.

The Commission will also track implementation and results of the fishery management actions and artificial production programs in the transition period, with annual reviews beginning in 2016 and a comprehensive review at the end of the transition period (e.g., 2019). Fisheries pursuant to this Policy will be adaptive and adjustments may be made. Department staff may implement actions necessary to manage adaptively to achieve the objectives of this policy and shall coordinate with the Commission, as needed, in order to implement corrective actions.

Components of the adaptive management will be shared with the public through the agency web site and will include the following elements:

- 1) Conduct Annual Fishery Management Review. The Department shall annually evaluate fishery management tools and parameters, and identify improvements as necessary to accurately predict fishery performance and escapement.
- 2) Improve In-season Management. The Department shall develop, evaluate, and implement fishery management models, procedures, and management measures that are projected to enhance the effectiveness of fishery management relative to management based on preseason predictions.
- 3) Review Spawner Goals. The Department shall review spawner goals to ensure that they reflect the current productivity of salmon within the following timelines:
  - a. Chum: September 1, 2016
  - b. Coho: January 1, 2016
  - c. Chinook: January 1, 2020
- 4) Comprehensive Hatchery Assessment. The Department shall complete a comprehensive review of the hatchery programs in the Willapa Bay region by June 2016. The review shall identify the capital funding necessary to maintain or enhance current hatchery programs, identify changes in release locations or species that would

enhance recreational and commercial fishing opportunities, identify improvements or new weirs to increase compliance with broodstock management, and the use of re-use water systems, water temperature manipulation to increase production hatchery capacity.

- 5) Ocean Ranching Opportunities. The Department shall complete by January 2016 a comprehensive review of opportunities and constraints to implement ocean ranching of salmon in Willapa Bay.

### **Delegation of Authority**

The Commission delegates the authority to the Director, through the North of Falcon stakeholder consultation process, to set seasons for recreational and commercial fisheries in the Willapa Bay Basin, and to adopt permanent and emergency regulations to implement these fisheries **in accordance with the provisions of this Policy**.

*Condense the language below and include it appropriately in the adaptive management section.*

This guidance establishes a number of important conservation and allocation principles for the Director and agency staff to apply when managing the fishery resources of Willapa Bay. While this policy establishes a clear presumptive path forward with regard to many of the identified objectives, those principles and concrete objectives are intended to guide decision-making and are not intended to foreclose adaptive management based upon new information. Nor does this guidance preclude the need to gather and consider additional information during the annual process of developing fishery plans and the associated rule-making processes that open fisheries in Willapa Bay. The Commission fully expects that the Director and agency staff will continue to communicate with the **Commission and the public**, and the Commission, to consider new information, evaluate alternate means for carrying out policy objectives, and consider instances in which it may make sense to deviate from the presumptive path forward. ~~That is the nature of both adaptive management, and policy implementation, when faced with a dynamic natural environment.~~