

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Fish Program
Columbia River Recreational Advisory Group
September 5, 2018
WDFW Ridgefield Office- 5525 S 11th St, Ridgefield WA 98642

Attendance:

CRRAG Members: Harry Barber, Lance Beckman, Kyle Hawes, Mark Heririgs

CRRAG Members on the phone: Steve Watrous, Butch Smith, Nathan Grimm

WDFW Staff: Cindy LeFleur, Ryan Lothrop, Bill Tweit, Myrtice Dobler, Kessina Lee (for introductions)

Public: Terry Axt, Mike Mudgett, Marv Chesley, Chris Connolly, Dan Walsh, Geoff Aschoff, Richard Speek, Richard Wagner, Bob Gusteinis, Kirk Harrkon, Brian Davern, David Moskowitz

Meeting Agenda:

Time	Topic
4:00 – 4:15	Introductions / Agenda / Review update and timeline
4:15 – 5:45	Policy summary review
5:45 – 6:00	Wrap-up / What’s next

Meeting Notes:

Intro

Kessina Lee, the new Region 5 director, introduced herself. Quick introductions around the room and those on the phone.

Today we are looking for AG input on the document. If there is time we will open up for public to participate.

A consultant will be developing a summary that will be provided in the next week. What we have today, staff developed a summary for each theme. These summaries and a few tables have been pulled out for review. Today’s and previous meeting notes have been used in the policy review, all the notes are in the appendix, and comments incorporated into the final document.

Public was interested in when the department would fully implement the policy, staff encouraged public to listen to today’s discussion and use that information to help answer that question.

In regards to the whole report it was asked if the table of contents could have a summary next to each of the questions.

Policy Review

There were mixed perspectives at the meeting, one member expressed that he was not sure we are better off today than we were before this policy.

Management

- Explanation/definition of mark selective fisheries
 - Commercial/Recreational fisheries targeting adipose clipped fish
- By-catch is also a major conservation concern- puzzled why it's not included in conservation concern.
 - None of the 40 questions were focused on by-catch, but we do have the comments in the large document, AG would like to have it in the summary
- Discussion on pHOS and how that is conservation.
 - Primary objective of managing hatchery fish on native spawning grounds
 - Take hatchery fish selectively to reduce hatchery fish from going into the spawning grounds
- Why don't we want interbreeding on the spawning grounds?
 - NMFS
 - Hatchery fish management policy- provides guidance relative to levels of hatchery strain
 - Minimize risks that hatchery fish pose to wild fish production.
 - Divergence
 - Fish that live in hatcheries evolve to be successful in the hatchery environment, that doesn't make them successful in wild environment
 - Improperly run hatcheries and improperly run hatchery returns impact nearby native fish.
 - Many sport fishermen don't believe that there is a wild fish anymore
 - Basically hatchery fish have been in the hatchery for generations
 - Wild have parents who spawned in the wild for generations
 - There are hatcheries intended to replace wild fish operate differently than those intended to raise fish for harvest
- Until we can improve catching surplus hatchery fish we need to have clean up fisheries
 - Rec is very ineffective,
 - Need to have someone behind us to catch those fish
- We need to make the pie bigger, it's not going to get better until we kick up production.
 - We are producing less smolts in WA and OR
 - 190 mil fewer smolts than we did in 1992
- In concurrency doc check to make sure that there are Spring Chinook examples as stated in the last sentence of excerpt on pg. 1
- Discussion on the term Oregon rules- Change Oregon 'rules' to OARs
- Discussion of selectivity
 - Some members questioned stating avoidance as the primary means of selectivity
 - They suggested Sport uses live releases/mark selectivity as the primary means of selectivity
 - Some fisheries are not mark selective

- Perhaps modify avoidance term to explain planning area and time
- Is there a table to describe which fisheries are avoidance or mark selective?
 - No tables, there are examples

Recreational

- There were questions and a discussion on log books for guides and if it would continue to be something pursued.

Commercial

- There were questions on focusing on 2017 for the observer program- suggests expanding the data set, there was a study in 2012
 - The policy was focused on 2017 and 2018
 - Staff would need to look at why the commission focused on those years
 - Agency directive helped direct resources and funding
 - The most recent years the fishery has been monitored are 2009, 2012 and 2017
- Disappointed that the monitoring is volunteer only- roughly gives a 2% sample rate
 - WDFW is looking at other ways to meet this objective
- Weren't mortality rates for wild fish found through monitoring?
 - The gold standard is to have a specific mortality rate study run for several years
 - Monitoring can help calibrate those studies.
- Concern over monitoring being eliminated
 - Will not be eliminated, but there is a point about how long between monitoring

Tribal

No comments

Allocation

- It's surprising that sport fisheries is where they weren't able to catch the allocation
 - It's that it's variable- if it comes in strong late that we can't catch up.
 - Upriver it's effective
 - Not lack of fishing power- but there are challenges for management
- Discussion on hatchery production- lots of things affect, most goes back to funding
 - Decline in Mitchell Act funding
 - NMFS and ESA
 - And WDFW policy

Alternative Gear

- The first sentence of the alternative gear summary doesn't apply to the policy nor the 2013-2017 timeframe that the review covers. Recommend striking it.
- Question on the quality of the study- immediate mortality and long term mortality, thinks that this is begging for more study.
 - Immediate mortality is pretty low across the board
 - Clarify that 19D is long term mortality rates

- It can be a couple year process for gears to go from initial study to acceptance of gear.
 - We can't guarantee that a new study would change the numbers
 - It won't be accepted until after the review process
- This brings us back to concurrency
 - We are hoping that this will be on the agenda for the joint commission meeting in early November
- Alternative gear study is on page 88 of the final draft of the document.
 - Advisory Group members thought that page 88 gives a pretty good summary of what happened.
- Question on pound nets
 - They are being tested right now and will be through mid Oct.
 - Got federal funding for evaluation next spring.
- There are studies that show time, area mesh size has less impact on steelhead than some of the gear we've developed.
- Mark-selective fishery is successful when mark rate is greater than mortality rates- is there a way to quantify that in fisheries
 - That is something that staff can and have done.
 - The Advisory Group would like to see that with Summer Chinook fishery during North of Falcon.

Economics

- There were more fish available for sports, but angler days didn't increase
 - Hard to figure out why
 - Maybe didn't free up as many fish as we thought
- Total value of commercial and recreation fisheries should be in the summaries
- Concern over comparison of ex-vessel values and angler days which would be effort
 - Thinks that it should be compared value to value and effort to effort
 - This is in the document
 - The policy expectations were based on angler trips and ex-vessel values
 - A request was made that any future policies refrain from these kinds of disparities
- \$58 a day is not representative of what the Chinook salmon is worth
 - Boat trailer pickup truck camp site/hotel
 - The \$58 comes from WDFW contracted study using USFWS data of average direct cost by an angler- things that build an economy.
- We need to focus on quality fishing days as opposed to who generates the most money
 - Opportunity doesn't mean there's an expectation that we would catch anything
 - Needs to find a mix of opportunity and quality fishing days.

Wrap up

- When the final summary is complete, as soon as we can, it will be posted on the AG and on commission site
 - Went over where to find information online

Action Items:

WDFW Staff:

- Update Policy Review documents with input from CRRAG
- Share Ryan's PowerPoint from World Sport Fishing conference in Vancouver BC

CRRAG Members:

- Review meeting notes for finalization

Next Meeting/ Important Dates:

Thursday, September 13 @ 4pm- Fish Committee Meeting in Olympia WA

Saturday, September 15 @ 8 am- Presentation to the Commission, Olympia WA