

Guide Logbook Advisory Committee

Meeting #7: August 4, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Zoom

Introduction: Raquel Crosier welcomed the group and reviewed agenda.

Participants:

The following participants attended the Zoom call:

Leah Snyder, Raquel Crosier, Caleb Hitzfield, Ryan Lothrop, Bob Kratzer, Becky Bennett, Blake Merwin, Cameron Black, Craig Burley, Chris Donley, Doug Saint-Denis, Eric Kraig, Marc Bush, Morgan Stinson, Ron Warren, Steve VanderPloeg, Toby Wyatt, Patrick Gaffney, Randy Lato

Budget Update

- Kelly Cunningham, Fish Program director provided an update on the agency's budget, COVID-19 economic impacts and Gov's Office Response.
 - He explained the state revenue outlook – \$9B less than expected. The hiring and purchasing freeze – under which OFM directed agencies to freeze all hiring and purchases greater than \$5K.
 - He explained the budget savings exercise from OFM for FY21 –agencies required to identify 15% in general fund reductions.
 - He explained the impacts of furloughs and COLA elimination for certain state employees and what that means for WDFW staff -- 20% staffing and pay reduction in July, 1 day/month in fall, and elimination of 3% COLA for certain employees.
- Proposed Reductions
 - He explained that these cuts do not indicate low priority work, they are required by OFM and happen to meet the fund source criteria. We hope we don't need to make these cuts.
 - He explained that the agency has 10 months before the budget is likely to be passed for the 2021-23 BN so a lot can happen. OFM will be reviewing these reductions and other opportunities for savings across all state services, so just because something isn't on the potential reduction list, doesn't that mean it can't be cut. Then the legislature and OFM will use this list as a starting place but will also generate their own areas of possible cuts.
 - 2021-23 OFM budget instructions require reductions totaling 15% of agency's GF-S which results in a WDFW target of \$23.5M.
 - He explained that we also have shortfalls in other non-state fund sources that we have flagged for OFM totaling \$7.3M.

- He went through the list of fish related reductions noting that business services/ indirect are embedded in each proposal.
- Salmon and Steelhead Hatchery Production - \$5.2M
 - Close six salmon and steelhead hatcheries, including: Forks Creek, Nemah, Reiter, Tokul Creek, Mayr Bros, and Whitehorse hatcheries.
 - Reductions in SRKW hatchery production.
 - Reductions in hatchery production include: Chinook, coho, and chum, representing 7.2% of statewide salmon production, and winter steelhead (representing 1% of statewide production).
 - Eliminate vacant WMS positions supporting hatchery management.
 - Reduce urgent hatchery maintenance and repairs of critical infrastructure by 32%, increasing the chances of catastrophic failures leading to loss of fish.
- Trout Hatchery Production - \$2.0M
 - Close four trout hatcheries, including: Arlington, Chelan, Naches, and Mossyrock hatcheries.
 - Reductions in hatchery production include: Westslope cutthroat, eastern brook, rainbow, brown, golden, tiger trout, and kokanee representing 12.3% percent of trout production statewide.
 - Reduce or eliminate production that contributes to recreational fishing opportunities which have an annual economic value of \$61.2M.
 - Reduce urgent hatchery maintenance and repairs of critical infrastructure by 32%, increasing the chances of catastrophic failures leading to loss of fish.
- Fisheries Opportunity and Management - \$5.7M
 - Reduce fishing opportunities on the coast, Puget Sound, and Columbia River.
 - Reduce Dungeness crab fishery outreach and derelict gear removal.
 - Reduce bottom trawl surveys.
 - Reduce rotenone lake rehabilitation.
 - Reduce monitoring of Puget Sound early winter steelhead.
 - Reduce ability to monitor recreational fisheries in the Columbia and Snake Rivers.
 - Eliminate several vacant positions.
 - Reduce fisheries enforcement patrols by at least 5 officers (Total 11 Enf Officers proposed for reduction).
- Warmwater Gamefish Management - \$2.4M
 - Reduce warmwater gamefish management statewide, seek legislative authority to use funds for other activities.

- Closure of Meseberg hatchery.
- Reduce ability to apply for water access grants.
- Dingell-Johnson Shortfall - \$0.8M
 - Closure of Omak hatchery and Cowlitz/Mayfield net pens.
 - Reduce hatchery emergency repairs and maintenance.
- Hatchery Grants Shortfall - \$2.6M
 - Closure of Elwha, Toutle, and Skamania hatcheries.
 - Reduce Columbia River and tributary fisheries.

Columbia River Updates

- Ryan Lothrop walked the group through an update on the CR Summer Chinook season, esp questions received from guides on the daily limit.
- He walked through feedback received this year and in previous season setting processes on bag limits for this fishery.
 - Historically 2 fish limit has been the baseline.
 - Analysis shows limited savings from switching from a 2 fish to a 1 fish daily bag due to similar release mortality rates and the low number of anglers catching their limit.
 - Anglers are split on bag limits.
 - WDFW seeks public input in a variety of ways. The following are opportunities to provide input, both pre-season and in-season.
 - NOF (pre-season)
 - CR Compact process (in-season)
- He provided some additional explanation on the Sockeye fishery and it's influence on the Chinook season. The Sockeye fishery exceeded expected catches and allowable Snake River Sockeye ESA impact leading to the closure of the sockeye and steelhead fishery in June. Steelhead and Chinook fisheries catch sockeye, so managers adopted a cautious approach to opening summer Chinook fishery to not accrue an additional ESA impact. WDFW waited until July 4 after a large portion of the sockeye run had passed to open for a shorter than usual season to allow staff to re-assess sockeye impacts. WDFW closed steelhead and shad due to increased likelihood to catch sockeye.
- Because sockeye impacts were the limitation, a reduction in the daily Chinook limit would still have resulted in the same initial 5-day opener and resulted in less Chinook catch.
- After reassessing catches of sockeye, WDFW and ODFW were able to extend the fishery through July 31.

Ron Warren, Fish Policy Director provided an update on the CARES Act Assistance to Fisheries Participants.

- He walked through the NOAA Guidance, which includes:

- Eligible sectors – shellfish, commercial fishers, processors, charters.
- Eligible businesses must be able to prove an incurred annual loss of 35% compared to the 5-year average.
- Businesses should apply in state where they operate, except fishers and at-sea processors who must apply in homeport state.
- Seafood sector would apply to the state where buying/processing occurs.
- While NOAA made assumptions around revenue losses to come up with state allocations, they've provided flexibility to the states to determine eligibility.
- WA has flexibility to design the spend plan based on unique revenue impacts here in WA.
- He also walked through Washington specific info managers are considering when developing a state spend plan, including:
 - Guidance allows states the flexibility to tailor spend plans to their unique situations.
 - With the number of sectors included, we will likely not have funding to meet the full need here in WA.
 - Eligibility based on the 35% threshold Congress provided.
 - CARES + 2020 revenues must be equal to or lower than 5-yr average or reimbursement potential.
 - NOAA and PSMFC will have admin, WA will not.
 - Individual applicants will be required to sign affidavit and will be subject to audit by The Office of the Inspector General.
- He walked through Nation-wide Fisheries Trends.
 - Washington is sixth highest in terms of fisheries revenues.
 - Washington received the second highest allocation due to AK fishers homeporting in WA and our large Shellfish industry.
- He walked through some initial thoughts on how to approach a spend plan for Washington.
 - Determine losses and scale to available funds.
 - Avoid allocations or eligibility by sector. There may be healthy sectors with impacted individuals and forecasting impacts sector by sector is challenging.
 - Time frame: use January – July as range for incurred losses.
 - Include sectors listed in the legislation – focus on fishers, growers and first purchase of fish, charters, likely not guides (guidance from Congressional Delegation – no freshwater).
 - No WA admin or set aside for disputes.
 - Coordination to provide consistency on application process with west coast states.
 - State of operations for shore-based business units
- Then, he walked through some next steps in the process.
 - March 27th- CARES Act Assistance to Fisheries Participants signed into law

- June 1st- NOAA Guidance received
- Mid-June- Sector discussions to gather feedback
- June 30th- Webinar for broader public
- August 2020- Spend plans due to PSMFC and NOAA
- September 2020- Possible beginning of CARES Act funds distribution
- September 30, 2021- Deadline included in legislation for funds to be distributed

The group then reviewed the idea of an annual retention limit in Washington state, looking at data from fish tickets by different fisheries.

- WDFW staffers Raquel Crosier, Chris Donley, Eric Kraig and Ryan Lothrop walked through the data analysis, including;
 - Trends in Chinook harvest
 - Trends in duplicate CRCs
 - How many people are getting more than one catch record card?
 - 1 extra CRC – 2,759
 - 2 extra CRC – 126
 - 3 extra CRC – 12
 - 4 extra CRC – 1
 - Trends in specific fisheries
- The key take-aways from the data analysis were;
 - Benefits of annual limit depend on specific fishery and whether it's season based or quota based.
 - An annual retention limit would need to be low to have an effect on season length (2-3 for B-10) and that only buys one day.
 - Season based fisheries
 - Annual retention limit in non-quota fishery could result in conservation savings or increase in opportunity by additional anglers, but no extension to season.
 - May make more sense at fishery or basin scale, harder to do at a statewide scale.
 - Would likely result in changes to angler behavior, shifts in areas fished, etc. but hard to predict exactly what those changes would look like.
- The guide committee asked agency staff to look specifically into the question of conservation vs. season length and come back with more analysis of any conservation benefits from an annual retention limit.

Logbook Update

- Then the WDFW team including Raquel Crosier, Chris Donley and Jake Shapley provided an update on the guide logbook project including the following elements:
 - Enforcement – they provided an update that the app is now accessible to officers and enforcement has developed a video tutorial for officers to make training easier.

- Enforcement is seeing an uptick in F&W violations with increase in outdoor recreation due to COVID-19 which is spreading capacity thin. That said, they are looking at some emphasis patrols around popular fisheries to do some outreach on the logbook rule and reporting.
- The group then discussed what guides are seeing on the water – not a lot of compliance.
- The group then did some planning around logbook data analysis to outline key questions and a process for analyzing the data. Key questions included:
 - Industry role: How many angler trips were logged using a fishing guide? Compared to total?
 - Where are guides fishing: How many guide trips were logged by catch code? By county? Which areas had the highest use?
 - When are guides fishing: What was the seasonality of use by catch code? Which areas had the highest use by month?
 - Encounters: Which species are the most frequently encountered by guides? What were the retention rates for guided trips?
- The group then discussed some SAW Login questions like, can we waive login?
 - Agency staff looked into this and answered that WaTech said we can't waive.
 - The group then discussed the idea of developing a video tutorial showing anglers how to save their credentials to make the login process easier.

Wrap-Up