

Guide Logbook Advisory Committee

Meeting #9: January, 2:00-4:30 p.m.
Microsoft Teams

Introduction: Raquel Crosier welcomed the group and reviewed agenda.

Participants:

The following participants attended the Zoom call:

Steve Joyce, Mark Baltzell, Caleb Hitzfield, Blake Merwin, Cameron Black, Doug Saint-Denis, Toby Wyatt, Patrick Gaffney, Randy Lato, Greg Kain, Kelly Cunningham, James Losee, Nelson Falkenburg, Leah Snyder, Raquel Crosier, Craig Burley, Chris Donley

Governor's Budget Update

Nelson Falkenburg provided an update on the upcoming legislative session and outcomes of the Governor's budget.

- He shared with the group that the Governor's budget included no GF-S reductions, but instead the budget shortfall will be filled with continued state employee furloughs and hiring freezes.
- There was no funding included for NOF habitat commitments or the Evergreen Jobs packages.
- Coastal and Freshwater Fisheries Monitoring were funded, but was paid for with a one-time WL-S and ongoing ALEA funding, not by GF-S.
- Elwha Hatchery (NP Foundation Shortfall) was funded with ongoing GF-S.
- Mitchell Act hatcheries (Toutle & Skamania) were funded with one-time WL-S.
- The agency's DJ shortfall was funded with one-time WL-S.
- Nelson also shared that the Governor's budget included the largest capital appropriation the agency has ever received, with most of the funding going to maintenance, design or construction of hatcheries.
- He reminded the group that budget outcomes are likely to change through the legislative process.
- Nelson reminded the group that the legislative session will begin Monday Jan 11th and that it will be a closed campus with limited staff and legislators on site. He discussed what this likely means for volume of bills and public engagement.
- He explained that some of the legislative priorities are anticipated to be economic recovery, public health, police/criminal justice reform, and climate change and adopting a biennial budget that has to balance over the next four years.

Steelhead Management

Kelly Cunningham and James Losee ran through a discussion of coastal steelhead management.

- James gave an update on the 2020/21 winter season and discussed the communication plan for the year including:
 - Town Hall #1: late June – post season update
 - Town Hall #2: as soon as available (late Nov)- preseason forecast update
 - Presentation to Senate Ag, Water, Natural Resources & Parks next Tuesday
 - Presentation to House Rural Economic Development, Ag & Natural Resources next Friday

Forecast and Season Setting Process

Mark Baltzell ran through an overview of the states forecasting and season setting processes.

- For the North Coast and Puget Sound Forecast agency biologists are compiling information from 2020 returns and forecasts are scheduled to be finalized in early-mid February. Ocean indicators show continued mixed results for local fisheries.
- He explained that it will be a mixed bag of fishery returns in 2020 for Chinook and Coho- some systems above expected returns and some below with South Sound and Hood Canal experiencing lower returns for Chinook. Chum returns are also below expectations for the second year in a row in Puget Sound.
- NOF will be kicking off soon. Mark shared some early thinking on the timeline:
 - January 19th – February 25th - Co-manager policy meetings
 - February 26th – Forecast kickoff meeting
 - March 3-10 – PFMC meeting
 - March 16 – 23rd - WDFW public meetings
 - March 19 – April 1st – NOF Co-manager meetings
 - April 6-13 – PFMC meeting
 - As the schedule gets nailed down it will be posted on the NOF website: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/management/north-falcon/public-meetings>

Logbook Update

Raquel provided a quick update on the implementation of the logbook rule. She provided the group with updated logbook data through the end of 2020 and an update on reporting compliance. She explained that paper logbooks were sent out to guides with their renewal packets to ensure everyone has one on-hand and that WDFW is working on enforcement training and quarterly reports to help with compliance. The team is contemplating some additional communications for the website on implementation of the logbook rule and is working to prep materials for a FWC presentation which is scheduled for September 16-18, 2021.

Committee Business

Raquel revisited mission, ground rules and expectations of Committee Members since the group has been meeting for a year and has lost some members due to the time commitment.

- She reminded the group of the stated mission they developed in the fall of 2019 focused on “providing recommendations to the department with the objective of: increasing communication and quality of information shared between WDFW and the guide

industry, and supporting sound management decisions and sustainable fishing opportunities.”

- Raquel reminded the group of the groups ground rules they developed together and expectations of advisory committee members. She mentioned that the agency will be updating it’s advisory committee handbook and that additional guidance/ expectations will be shared with the group when it is complete.

Skagit Steelhead

Edward Eleazer, Region 4 RPM, led the group on a discussion about Skagit steelhead.

- He shared information on the budget history for Skagit Steelhead, esp the recent failed attempts to secure funding, some limited funds the agency has made available should there be enough fish to support a fishery this year, and funding in the Governor’s budget for this work moving forward. Skagit Steelhead Update:
- He reminded the group of last year’s (2020) forecast – which fell just below the escapement goal and didn’t allow for a fishery. The forecast was for 3,963 Skagit winter steelhead and the actual run size was 3,092 Skagit winter steelhead. He explained with limited in season tools, the agency and the tribal co-managers manage conservatively.
- He explained the midpoint of preliminary estimate of the 2021 Skagit steelhead forecast is greater than 4,000. Further explaining that the forecast has not yet been reviewed and agreed to by comanagers. He predicted that the improved forecast may be the result of improved ocean conditions and the fact that broodyear 2016 did not experience the 2015 drought.
- He shared that after meeting with co-managers, the agency would be getting a press release out to the public announcing whether there would be a fishery and providing details on season length and harvest restrictions.

Wrap-Up

- **Meeting note approval**
 - Raquel requested any edits by Friday January 8th.
- **Scheduling**
 - Rescheduling April meeting to avoid probable days on the water for guides.