Public Input Humptulips Steelhead Regulation
April 23, 2019

WDFW Staff: Kelly Cunningham, Larry Phillips, Annette Hoffmann, Curt Holt and Kim Figlar-Barnes
Public: 13

Kelly: Opening remarks and background of regulation issue
- Pre-2008 Humptulips closed in March
- 2008 forward opened in March 1-30th for SGR (Selective Gear Rules)
- 2015-17 Rule Simplification process rules adopted to align section of river above Hwy 101 with lower river - removed SGR
  - Public concerns voiced over change
- Petition received by commission Dec. 2018
  - Denied petition based on conservation concerns
  - Consider petition based on social values - if public wants rule changed to SGR
- Commission directed WDFW collect public input
  - Use NOF rule making process to possibly change rule

Annette: Presentation
- Humptulips background
- Overview of petition/process
- Comments received to date
- Rule process

Questions regarding issue:
Conservation concern more important than social concerns?
Kelly - Most situations conservation is a concern
- Conservation not a current concern
- If conservation concern for the month of March
  - Concern should be for the entire year and river

Larry - Conservation addressed
- No fishing past March
- Pressure mostly downstream
- If conservation issue
  - May be entire river system situation
  - Not a section of river closed to bait

Why SGR established in 2008?
Kelly - Based on data not a lot of spawning in March
- Allowed additional opportunity in March
- Searched available records
  - Could find no rationale for establishing SGR

Agency for or against SGR?
Kelly - state has no position
- Ensure not harming fish and providing opportunity
- If conservation concern need to address entire river, not a section or two
Bait issue comment
Bait and treble hooks can be hard on fish and lead to mortalities

Historic perspective of area
- Late 80's early 90's, conservation concern
  - Donkey Crk downstream people hooking fish on reds
  - Established no fishing above forks hole for few years
  - Population recovered - SGR established to open fishing

Public Comments

Keep Current Rule
Sports Constituent
- Bait and barbed hooks acceptable above Hwy 101

Return to SGR
Recreational/Conservation Constituent
- Favor having restrictive fishing rules in place, SGR

Grays Harbor Sport Fishing Coalition Constituent
- Represent guides, businesses and recreational anglers in Grays Harbor
- Favor reestablishing SGR for this section of river March 1-31
  - Social benefit for larger sport fishing community
    - Critical when many at odds over regulation and management of wild steelhead
  - Broad based support for rule change from conservation groups to guide associations
    (Olympic Peninsula Guide Assoc., Wild Steelhead Coalition, North Olympic Peninsula
    Sport fishing Coalition and Northwest Guides and Anglers Assoc.)

Sport Constituent
- Re-instated SGR for this section of river
  - Do not believe it should have been removed
  - Possibility will hook wild fish
    - Barbless and no bait important

Sport Constituent
- River closed from Feb 28th upstream
- If open to fishing need bait ban

Additional questions and comments:
Curt – First season with new rule, notice any increased effort in this area?
- Increased effort not obvious due to low water year
Curt - Mortality issue?
- Presentation of bait can increase mortality due to fish swallowing bait

Constituent Comment: When SGR were in effect
- Worked well
  - Consistent with the north Peninsula Rivers (Quinault River north)
Constituent Comment: When steelhead runs were low
- Department approached anglers for advice
- SGR established to protect and build runs

Constituent Comment: Grays Harbor historic perspective April steelhead fishing
- Years ago Wynoochee and Satsop were open in April

Constituent Comment: Conservation
- Opposed WF Humptulips open in March

Annette – reminder
- Meeting is to discuss if March should have SGR through this process

Constituent Question: What is source for steelhead numbers? (QIN tribal data is not accurate)
Curt - worked in this area for over 20 years and familiar with data
- QIN have 5 main stem indexes along with 5-6 tributary indexes
- Data suggests
  - 80% spawners in main stem
  - 20% spawners in tributaries
- QIN cover about 90% of spawning habitat in Humptulips for escapement surveys

Larry – redds base escapement
- Relative estimate of abundance
- Not absolute estimate of spawning fish

Constituent Question: Why do numbers fall?
Larry - steelhead marathon ocean migrants
- Ocean conditions can effect survival of steelhead
  - Salish Sea Project
    - Effort find out why steelhead dying in marine environment

Constituent Question: What is the redd counts this year?
Curt – Current counts
- Wynoochee trap lower by about 100 fish
- Counts at Skookumchuck down
- Everything has been down this year

Constituent Comment: Need to have NOF type meeting just for Grays Harbor steelhead
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Petition: Steelhead Hump tulips Regulation
Beginning in 2018, Rule Simplification eliminated the rules in different river sections, which eliminated the SGR restrictions in March. Beginning in 2018, Rule Simplification eliminated the rules in different river sections, which eliminated the SGR restrictions in March.

In 2008, the Department extended the season through March and prior to 2008 fishing with bait was allowed. In 2008, the Department extended the season through March and prior to 2008 fishing with bait was allowed.

The escapement goal (1600) is met in most years. The escapement goal (1600) is met in most years.

Humpbacks will increase the population if healthy and stable. Humpbacks will increase the population if healthy and stable.
Creek.

The West Fork to Donkey
East and West Forks and on
to the Confluence of the
Humpfish From Hwy 101
Rules in March in the
Reinstated Selective Gear
Commission Petition Process

RCW 34.05.330

Anyone may petition an agency to consider changes to a proposed rule

The agency must respond within 60 days

Initiate Rule Making procedures to consider changes

Deny petition

Reason for denial

Alternative means to address concerns

Appeals process

Process is prescribed by the Office of Financial Management

WDY_W April 23, 2019: Information subject to change
Current Petition Process

December 10, 2018: Petition was received to reinstate the SGR

January 25, 2019: The FWC

directed the petition based on conservation concerns
recognized there may be reasons to consider the petition based on
social values

directed the Department to address the petition's request, collect
public input, and utilize the NOF Rule Making process for potential
implementation in 2020.

April 9, 2019: News Release directing public input to
GraysHarbor@dhw.wa.gov

April 23, 2019: Collecting public input

WDFW April 23, 2019: Information Subject to Change
Public Comments

Additional protections desired

Reduces loss, but needs more enforcement

For rephrasing current rule (renumbering SGR restrictions)

Bait is helpful to land hatchery fish

Barbless hooks create more encounters and wears fish out more

Preference for barbless hooks and bait

Rescind rule for hatcheries lacks a clear plan

The reason for the rule change still exists

For midstreaming current rule (no SGR restrictions)
Reinstall selective gear rules in March in the Humptulips from Hwy 101 to the confluence of the East and West forks and on the West fork to Donkey Creek.

With amendments over time.
Next Steps

https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/regulations/development

- Director decision on or after public hearing date
- Conduct a formal public hearing prior to adoption
- File CR102
- Collect public input tonight

*WDFW April 23, 2019. Information subject to changes with amendments over time.*