

2020 Willapa Bay North of Falcon Advisory Meeting

March 26, 2020

Conference Call 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

WDFW Staff: Chad Herring, Barbara McClellan, Jody Pope, James Losee, Kyle Adicks, Lyle Jennings

Advisors: Francis Estalilla, Marlisa Dugan, Bob Lake, Greg McMillan, Norm Reinhardt, Andy Mitby, Ross Barkhurst, Lance Gray, Tim Hamilton, Mara Zimmerman

Public: 0 Individuals

Chad Herring:

- Opening statements – Agenda
- Given the situation, we aren't able to provide as much information as we usually do but each model run does provide all of the information you normally receive and was sent to all advisors last night (03/25/2020)
- Policy guidance and management objectives
 - 14% natural-origin Chinook, 10% for chum, and the natural escapement of 13, 600
 - Policy guidance from Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC):
 - Prioritization of Chinook harvest for recreational sector and coho and chum harvest for the commercial fishery
 - Chinook broodstock needs are substantial this year with the increase at our hatcheries: 400K at Forks Creek, 3.3 million at Nemah, and 2.5 million at Naselle
 - Need to keep in mind rule simplification = less complex rules, if possible
 - Naselle River freshwater regulations seems to be an issue that we've heard from the public. We need to keep our fisheries from becoming unruly as well as being good neighbors for the landowners.
 - Want to have a discussion regarding freshwater systems without hatchery production such as North, Bear, South Fork Willapa rivers, or Smith Creek. Should these be open if we don't have the impacts for a catch and release fishery? We could look at area and time since some systems have straying issues where other systems do not.
 - Advisor Comments:
 - SF Willapa River has some hatchery strays in lower section
 - Need to take in consideration that in order to have these other systems open for harvest or mark selective fisheries, opportunity would need to be given up somewhere else.
 - Middle Nemah River has people fishing even though there is no Chinook hatchery production
 - Middle Nemah River has mostly natural coho rather than hatchery coho so just keep it closed instead of accruing impacts on a mark selective fishery.
 - Makes sense to not have a mark selective fishery in systems where there is no hatchery production
 - Its important to pay attention to these smaller systems and looking for ways to reintroduce stocks.
 - Middle Nemah River some opportunity through Sept 20 then close for coho

- South Nemah River no real opportunity to catch hatchery coho
- We need to keep only the systems with hatchery production open for opportunity for simplicity in the regulations.
- Focus opportunity on systems with hatchery production. CRC data for these smaller systems are much lower than the other systems. Interested in what the local impact would be?
- Could you be mark selective and a simple regulation at the same time?
- Agency understanding from FWC is that it is an aggregate 14% natural-origin impact rate on Chinook

Barbara McClellan:

- Walked through the model runs, Models A – I

Chad Herring:

- This is not the only opportunity to provide comments if you haven't had a chance to review those model runs

Advisor Comments:

- Why isn't the commercial fishery schedule some time in August given the FWC allowed for deviation from the policy?
 - Given our constraints in making broodstock, it would be difficult to schedule a commercial fishery during the hatchery part of the run
- Could you provide hatchery escapement?
- What impacts would be saved if on the Naselle River from Hwy 4 Bridge upstream to the hatchery remained closed until Oct 1 or Oct 15?
- Why would you close the seniors section on the Nemah River?
- Only acceptable model runs are H and I. All others cut back on Naselle escapement
- Restrain the fisheries as much as possible especially preterminal fisheries in order to meet objectives so fish can get back to our rivers
- Supports Model H
- You won't be able to make Chinook broodstock
- It's wrong that you are aggregating the escapement goals and the natural Chinook impact rate
- Close all fisheries in Willapa Bay until we get better natural Chinook and natural coho runs
- The FWC never said that priority meant harvesting more fish than the other sector. Priority meant time and area. Concerned that with a conservation issue with both chinook and coho, why does the reductions always come from the commercial sector? Why doesn't the recreational fishery give up some for conservation?
- One fish adult bag, take the first fish and get off the water
- Ocean fishery has a big impact on these fish. They don't allow enough fish over the bar to meet our own goals. How do make this change?
- Model I had a mistake due to how it was suggested. Didn't take into account the total surplus. Can we use that as an in-season issue?
- Need to have a buffer on the natural origin Chinook impact rate

- How much does it cost to monitor the commercial seasons and can't use some of that money to give to the commercial fishers if they have little fishing time? Can money be redirected?
- Think there is a misinterpretation of the Commission guidance for 2020.
- This model produces poor impacts.
- What about the payback clause?
- Supports Model Run H or I other models cut back on escapement (3 advisor supports this)
- Models H and I go over on priority on coho, which is meant for the commercial sector. Recreational coho time need to be adjusted then based on those two models. One recreational advisor does support the recreational fishery bag limit reduction due to this issue.
- We need to stop arguing over these small numbers predicted to return. You are going to have an influx of people to freshwater if the ocean and other fisheries are almost non-existent. We won't make eggtake if we have these fisheries. There is just not enough fish for anyone not fishing. Let's just stop fishing for a while if you are really conservation minded.
- I think that we can be conservative while still supplying opportunity
- Reality is that our fisheries are collapsing. We need to do something about it now not later.
- There is a value to having fishers on the water over time.
- Try Model H with a 1 fish bag, no more than one coho
- Why is the spawner escapement for 2019 season not available?
- It's unrealistic to shut down all fisheries across the bay
- Catch and release recreational fishery, no retention of any fish
- If you take away coho retention for the recreational sector, the commercial fishery won't necessarily catch them. We would end up with surplus.
- We need observers on recreational fishing boats
- Even though we are under 14% for natural origin Chinook impact rate, which meets the Commission guidance, we shouldn't have an impact rate on Naselle River chinook that is significantly higher.

How is this going to work if we can't physically be together for the PFMC meeting the beginning of April? The agency is planning on teleconferencing but the details to that we are unsure of right now. There is still planning going on.

If the need arises, we may reserve the right to have another conference call with the advisors during the PFMC meeting in early April or just afterwards.

There doesn't seem to be any public constituents on the phone who want to add their comments to the record.