

2020 Willapa Bay North of Falcon Advisory Meeting

April 6, 2020

Zoom webinar 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

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

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

Public: 11 Individuals

Chad Herring:

- Opening statements
 - Agenda
 - PFMC update
 - Non-treaty options have been put into one option and put in front of the PFMC council
 - Treaty troll proposals have not been put together into one option at this point
 - We are using the middle option for Willapa Bay
 - PFMC website – pcouncil.org for public comment for ocean fisheries
 - Model error correction
 - Harvest rates for recreational freshwater was miscalculated. Cell reference error
 - Calculated by year first then averaged over years
 - Management objectives change
 - Chum - 10% impact rate
 - Coho – managing to natural-origin escapement 13,600. PFMC council uses 17,200 naturally spawning coho
 - Chinook – 14% natural-original impact rate for both Willapa and Naselle rivers separately. This was the change in management objective.

Barbara – Walked through the model runs B, K, and M that was posted to the website today. All model runs posted on the advisory group webpage.

Chad - These models are comments we have heard from the advisors or the public. These are not agency proposals.

- Model K uses time and area closures based on our previous meeting and what we heard from the advisors
 - This model run leaves some areas open for Chinook until we start to impact to coho through previous year's catch record card data
- Model B – 2 fish adult bag recreational, releasing unmarked Chinook and unmarked coho. All areas open as previous years
- Model M – 1 fish adult bag recreational, releasing unmarked Chinook and unmarked coho. All areas open as previous years
- The policy was put into place to limit natural origin chinook harvest to 14% and we would expect to begin to make escapement after 16 – 21 years.
- November commercial fishery -

James – the fact that the commercial fishery impacts are not linked to the recreational fishery and adjust as one fishery changes is consistent with other models around the state.

Advisor Comments:

- How do they tally unmarked coho without tags?
 - Answer – CWT programs are used as surrogates for preterminal areas for natural stocks
- Why are we having vibrant fisheries in the ocean if natural coho is in jeopardy?
- Why doesn't the recreational fisheries change if you add 7 day/wk in the commercial fishery?
 - Answer – model is not interactive and don't adjust based on the other sectors fishery
- Not supportive of reducing the bag limit from 2 to 1 in the recreational fishery because it's just to increase the harvest for the commercial fishery
- Don't push the natural chinook impact rate right up to the 14% limit
- Concern for natural coho being managed right down to the escapement goal
- Are you managing escapement by river?
- Conservation is important. Not comfortable with managing right to 14% natural origin Chinook.
- Recreational should be a 2 fish adult bag limit
- Commercial November fishery should just be removed
- No commercial days prior to Sept 13, no more than 2 days/wk from weeks 38 – 41, Sept 13 – Oct 10, not consecutive days, Leave recreational fishery as 2 fish bag
- What is the plan if COVID is still around later this year based on the Governor's directive which states the recreational fishery is not essential, but the commercial fishery is essential?
- Concern that the only place to be conservative is in the commercial fishery. That conservation burden should be shared.
- Cut down on the commercial November fishery to save some coho for the earlier part of the season
- Not supportive of Model K. Concern is that the closed rivers are not equitable.
- Support a conservation buffer even though it is not built into the policy so that we are not right to the impact rate for Chinook or Chum or the natural escapement for Coho.
- These models meet the intent of the policy. Any buffer added needs to be divided equitably between sectors.
- If COVID is still an issue in a few months, would like to see the harvest that the recreational fleet would have taken if not deemed essential and allow it to go to conservation (more fish into the river for spawning).
- If COVID is still an issue in a few months, would like to see some of the harvest the recreational sector does not take switched over to the commercial fishery.
- Recommend not fishing the first week of November in the commercial fishery
- Recommend removing the November commercial fishery but reserve the right to add days in November if the coho run comes in later in the season through in-season adjustments.
- There are less natural Chinook in late August and early September. Why aren't we trying to get to some of those hatchery Chinook surpluses that we will have if the Commission guidance said we could deviate from the policy dates.
- Recommend maximizing days to get closer to 14% especially if tangle nets could be used

- Quite a lot of recreational fishermen would give up fishing for conservation but not to just transfer those impacts to the commercial fishery.
- If COVID still is an issue later, do not move a single fish to the commercial fishery. Let those fish not harvested go to the gravel and spawn
- Would like to see an adjustment in the wording in the pamphlet for the unruly/snagging fishery in Naselle River. Eliminate some of those special rules in order to limit the unruly fishery that happens. It would help the landowners and enforcement. Legalize snagging.
- Disagree with legalizing snagging (x2)
- Need to do something about unruly netting or illegal netting
- Enhance enforcement
- Dip net fishery in freshwater as an option in-season if surplus materializes
- Why surplus fish? Allow some locations to increase bag limit or commercially dip net if surplus fish become available
- Dip netting is forbidden by RCW
- Harvest rate guidance says not to exceed, that doesn't mean to maximize that. Just means not to exceed the rate.
- If we are going to have all this surplus returning, having a legalized snag fishery or a dip net fishery sounds reasonable. Let's figure out a way to get the surplus out of the river.
- Wouldn't have a problem supporting commercial dip net opportunity
- In favor of any fishery that reduces pHOS that doesn't impact natural fish. However, a snag fishery is damaging to natural fish during release. Eggs would be useless for spawning.
- Can adapt snagging with a circle hook similar to what has been done in Alaska.
- Is there any way to expedite a dip net fishery through RCW even though the policy says to pursue alternative gears?
 - That policy does not supersede state law. Would require a rule making process. It would be highly unlikely to move forward with that for 2020.

Public Comment:

- Allan Hollingsworth
 - Policy says to prioritize coho for the commercial fishery