

Willapa Bay Salmon Advisory Group

August 22, 2018

Region 6 office Montesano, WA

Staff: Kirt Hughes, Larry Phillips, Chad Herring, Barbara McClellan, Lyle Jennings

Advisors: Marlisa Dugan, Ross Barkhurst, Jim Sayce, Steve Boerner, Bob Lake, Norm Reinhardt, Andy Mitby, Jack Hollingsworth, Jess Helsley, Greg McMillan, Lance Gray, Tim Hamilton, Francis Estalilla (via phone)

Public: 1 Individual

Chad:

- Overview of Agenda
- Introductions
- Advisory Group Handbook – page 6 specifically
- Emails on website on advisory group page
 - Update contact info – some info is incorrect
- Policies and guidance
- Data spreadsheets

Larry: Agency budget situation

- Started with a \$420 million statewide budget in previous years
- 50% cut after 9/11
- 2017-19 budget provided with \$10 million short term fix with provisos
 - Organizational Agency assessment to look for efficiencies
 - Asked to look at Zero based budget – shows services agency provides and discretionary funds. Cuts become difficult and complicated because of these discretionary funds.
 - No recreational fee increase in about eight years but services increase in cost for inflation
- Go to website for more information, Nate Pamplin webinar
- ❖ There is an August 31, 2018 conference call scheduled where the agency/Commission will be asking legislature for money for budget
- Encourage public to talk with Commission
- Agency has a Budget Policy Advisory Group
- Agency is trying to provide opportunity where we can but conservation (ie. ESA) comes first and the complications of fish runs (low runs) will continue in the future.
- Hatchery production changes - There are no conservation issues for trout here in WA. More anglers fish for trout in WA than salmon. Trout programs have taken significant cuts as well.

Kirt:

Policy Review

- Commission is looking to review or do a re-evaluation of different policies to find where we are making progress and where we are not. ie. HSRG C-3619 2018 Guidance
- Agency is providing updated science to the Commission as it comes up. It is about providing what we know now compared to what we knew at the time a policy was created.
- Elements of the HSRG policy have been suspended (not the entire policy) but the agency will continue to use sound science to stay within compliance of conservation objectives.
- ❖ Provide Letter from Commission

Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW)

- Complicated issue
- Issues: Prey availability, Pollution, & Noise/disturbance
- Agency doesn't have the authority to close an area solely to vessel traffic
- Prey availability is the one piece the agency can adjust.
 - Where can hatchery production be changed?
 - Which hatcheries have room for additional production?
 - Do these hatcheries have conservation issues?
- Give input to those members on the Orca Task Force or subgroups

Advisor comments:

- Need to get fish from Alaska back down to feeding grounds in WA for whales
- Water availability and water quantity are currently an issue so even if some facilities can hold a certain number of fish, they shouldn't hold that many fish because of water issues.
- is the department looking at alternative ways to harvest the fish that are a result of any increases in production due to SRKW to maintain a good level of PHOS?

Chad:

In-season Review:

- Recreational Monitoring to-date and comparison to preseason
 - No quota for the recreational marine fishery
 - Monitoring is a tool to evaluate fishery
 - Some recreational fishers have been abusive to creel staff. We need the most accurate data in order to provide the best estimate. Agency would appreciate the recreational advisors to get the word that there is no need to abuse staff.
 - The agency will initiate contact with this group when it comes to any in-season actions via conference call. Some of those actions will require quick responses because time may be the limiting factor.
 - This group will be involved in more than just North of Falcon.
 - Preseason projection was created using an average CRC where the in-season estimate is using the data collected from the creel sampling on the dock this year.

Willapa Bay Policy Review:

- This did not just come up. It was already set in the policy when it was created (see page 8-9 in the WB Salmon Mgmt Policy C-3622)
- Going to use a similar process that Columbia River used
- Are there questions that the Commissioner have requested answers to?
- This group is going to use a quorum, meaning 2/3 of the group need to agree to have an idea moved forward for conversation or included in the policy review. We need to come together as a group in order to still meet conservation objectives and be able to still prosecute fisheries. We need to think about sustainable means to get there. This is going to be a flexible depending on what comes up.
- Provide comments from the group on what is working and what is not working?
- This group and the agency needs to find a better way to collaborate to move forward with our shared objectives.
- In the interest of for full disclosure, the agency has been approached by the Wild Fish Conservancy to use a fish trap. The WFC has been told that the agency has no budget to contribute. They would like to put this trap in the Willapa River for 2020. WFC is looking for grant monies. No proposal has been provided to the agency at the point so no details are not available right now.
- It is important that we are constantly evaluating what we are doing and if that is the correct thing to do. Are we using the right tools? Are we implementing HSRG in the right way? The agency has not done away with the HSRG policy. Conservation is the priority. We need to make common sense decisions while balancing all of the issues.
- A full review of HSRG will likely be completed next summer. Public input will be taken.
- Fact sheet?

Advisor comments:

- We want to know more about what the department's position is on different topics. We never hear that.
 - Does the quorum only include those members present or the whole group each time regardless of whether they are present?
 - Alternative gears are segmented to only a few people not the entire group of commercial fishermen.
 - It is a feasibility study using a stake net in conjunction with the commercial gillnetters. They are not looking to kick anyone out of the fishery.
 - Priority in the policy needs to be removed because it causes too much of a problem.
 - How many fish will return as a result of any Orca increases in order to do a cost analysis? How much will it cost and how long will it feed the orcas?
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- Next meeting – doodle pool sent to members of the group with a range of dates to choose from

