

2016 Recreational Salmon Regulations

Concise Explanatory Statement for Eastern Washington Continuance



10/13/2016

Table of Contents

I. The Adopted Rules, Rule-making Process and WDFW’s Resource Management Objectives	1
• Brief Summary of the Adopted Rules:	1
• Rule Development Process:	2
Table 1 - Public Meetings.....	3
• Overview of WDFW’s Consideration of Management Objectives:.....	5
• Regional Specific Rationale:	6
Table 2 - 2016 Constraining Stocks.....	7
• Modifications proposed for 2016 through this rule-making process	8
Columbia River Tributaries:	8
II. Changes from the Proposed Rules.....	10
III. Summary of Public Comments and WDFW’s Response	11

Recreational Salmon Regulations in Eastern Washington for 2016

This Concise Explanatory Statement (CES) relates to rules being adopted by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW or Department) to amend Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 220-310-195, announced in Washington State Register (WSR) 16-11-099. A CR102 continuance was filed for eastern Washington (WSR 16-14-014) on June 24. This provided additional time for public comments regarding a petition filed by the Colville tribes. Within this rule adoption, changes are made to WDFW's eastern Washington freshwater fishing rules, including those proposed by stakeholder recommendations made during North of Falcon meetings and those related to this petition. The Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted these rules on October 7th.

The CES contains three principle sections. **Section I** describes the rule being adopted, the process used in adopting the rule, and the resource management objectives advanced by adoption of the rule. **Section II** describes the changes from the proposed rule to the adopted rule. **Section III** discusses comments received during rulemaking and the agency's analysis and resolution of those comments.

I. the Adopted Rules, Rule-making Process and WDFW's Resource Management Objectives

- **Brief Summary of the Adopted Rules:**

The rules being adopted amend existing permanent rules that opened the recreational salmon fisheries in eastern Washington as defined in WAC 220-310-195. These rules establish the time, place, and manner that salmon may be harvested while meeting conservation objectives, as well as establish a daily catch limit on trout at Lake Roosevelt, the Columbia River reservoir in northeast Washington. This achieved a conservation gain for Redband Rainbow trout while allowing harvest of hatchery rainbow trout at acceptable levels to the public.

- **Fishery mandates and Commission Policy:**

The rules are being adopted pursuant to the authorities found in RCW Title 77, including those provisions in RCW 77.04.012 that establish conservation as the paramount objective - "to conserve the wildlife and food fish, game fish, and shellfish resources in a manner that does not impair the resource." Where consistent with that conservation objective, the Department must also "seek to maintain the economic well-being and stability of the fishing industry in the state"; "promote orderly fisheries"; and "enhance and improve recreational and commercial fishing in this state."

These are broad state-wide objectives and do not necessarily focus on one region, one fish species or one segment of harvesters. The term “fishing industry of the state” includes both commercial and recreational interests. While these objectives are ultimately applied on a state-wide basis, the agency considers regional interests, individual fishing sectors, and the interests of varying gear-type groups when undertaking its efforts to promote state-wide management interests. Accordingly, while the agency considered sharing of fishing opportunity for various species and gear groups, those evaluations are made against a backdrop of historical Pacific Coast fishing opportunities throughout the year as discussed below.

The rules being adopted implement policies of the Fish and Wildlife Commission aimed at promoting the conservation and recovery of wild salmon and sustainable fisheries (Hatchery and Fishery Reform – C-3619; 2016-17 North of Falcon Policy – C-3608). Furthermore, the planning process considered guidance expressed in C-3621 (Grays Harbor Basin Salmon Management), and C-3622 (Willapa Bay Salmon Management Policy). The adopted rules also incorporate the recommendations from the North of Falcon (NOF)/Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) process that included significant public input. WDFW’s objectives for those processes are outlined in the 2016-2017 North of Falcon (NOF) Policy and the Policy Guidelines for PFMC Representation adopted by the Fish and Wildlife Commission (C-3603). The NOF/PFMC process is the forum in which Washington works with the State of Oregon, tribal co-managers, federal fishery managers and stakeholder groups to plan for, and execute, fisheries of interest to state, tribal and federal entities. Through that process, the management entities identify the predicted abundance of fish, desired escapement objectives, the harvestable surplus, shares available to state and tribal harvesters, and sets the stage for subsequent development of Washington State’s commercial and recreational fishing seasons, including time, manner and method regulations that will be used to implement those seasons.

- **Rule Development Process:**

The CR 101 notice of intended rule-making was filed on January 6, 2016 (WSR 16-02-119). Thereafter, the Department relied upon several forums to gather information and interact with regional fishery managers and constituent groups in order to develop a draft rule that would be presented in the CR 102 filing for formal public review and comment.

State, federal and tribal fishery managers gather each year to plan the Northwest's recreational and commercial salmon fisheries. This pre-season planning process is generally known as the "North of Falcon" (NOF) process, and includes a series of public meetings with federal, state, and tribal fishery managers, together with citizens that have an interest in these fisheries, both recreational and commercial. The NOF planning process

coincides with the March and April meetings of the PMFC, the federal authority responsible for setting ocean salmon seasons 3 to 200 miles off the Pacific coast. In addition to the two PFMC meetings, the states of Washington and Oregon, and Treaty Tribes, sponsor additional meetings to discuss alternative fishing seasons that meet conservation and sharing objectives. In addition to public meetings, WDFW also solicits input from advisory groups whose representatives represent a diverse range of user group interests. The development of salmon fishing seasons begins with completion of previous year's spawning grounds escapement surveys and estimates by state and tribal biologists. Escapement estimates from some stocks may not be available from the previous calendar year due to their late spawn timing; coho are particularly problematic. Biologists apportion catch in each area to specific management groups and calculate a total run-size for each group. This is known as a run-reconstruction and is completed each fall or early winter. Based on total run-size and the associated survival rates, biologists forecast the number of salmon returning for the coming year. Forecasts are scheduled to be completed each year by late-February. Thus a significant amount of work is completed by state and tribal biologists prior to start of developing fishing seasons. From the forecast, fisheries managers determine the amount available for directed or incidental harvest according to the management objectives. Once the forecasts and the number of fish available for harvest are determined, state and tribal fisheries managers can begin the process of developing specific fishing regulation proposals.

The 2016 annual public NOF process for developing salmon fishery regulation proposals, known as North of Falcon, began on March 1 in the General Administration Auditorium in Olympia. WDFW presented and discussed the 2016 preseason forecasts of salmon abundance with interested stakeholders. Implications of the forecasts and 2016 season planning were discussed in break-out sessions for the Columbia River, Ocean, and Puget Sound (all) during this meeting. Additional public meetings, including those regarding the Lake Roosevelt petitions, were as shown in the Public Meeting Table.

Table 1 - Public Meetings. All meetings occurred in Washington State unless noted otherwise.

Geographic Area	Date(s)	Location
Willapa/Grays	February 24	Montesano
Willapa Bay	March 8	Raymond
Grays Harbor	March 9	Montesano
Ocean	March 8-14	Sacramento, California
All	March 15	Olympia
Puget Sound	March 17	Sequim
Columbia/Ocean	March 17	Vancouver
Columbia/Ocean	March 21	Olympia
Willapa Bay	March 22	Raymond

Mid-Columbia/Snake	March 22	Clarkston
Columbia	March 23	Kennewick
Grays Harbor	March 24	Montesano
Mid-Columbia/Snake	March 24	Wenatchee
Puget Sound	March 26	Mill Creek
Ocean	March 28	Westport
All	March 30	Lynnwood
Columbia/Ocean	April 6	Olympia
All	April 8-14	Vancouver
Lake Roosevelt	June 30	Spokane
Lake Roosevelt	August 5	Olympia

During these public meetings WDFW gathered input on structuring fishing seasons, possible rule changes and provided the public with information on the status of the 2016 planning process. Fishing regulation proposals that were shared at the public meetings were available to receive additional comments online on the North of Falcon WDFW website for those who could not attend the public meetings from March 1 through April 14, with extended comment time through August 5 for eastern Washington.

There were several petitions submitted during this process that requested the Fish and Wildlife Commission to consider potential rule changes for Lake Roosevelt and its tributaries. The first petition submitted was by the Colville Tribe requesting that the Commission consider adjusting trout harvest in the Lake Roosevelt to reduce wild Redband trout harvest. In addition, there were three petitions received from the public asking the Fish and Wildlife commission to reinstate fisheries on several tributaries to Lake Roosevelt that were unintentionally omitted from WAC 220-310- 195 during rulemaking in 2014. Public input regarding adjusting angling rules on Lake Roosevelt and tributaries was sought in several ways. There was a 30 day online public commenting period beginning June 21, 2016 and ending July 25, 2016. There were 24 written comments taken in during this process. On June 30th, there was a public meeting held at the WDFW Region 1 Spokane headquarters, where two individuals from the public attended and provided comments on the proposed rule changes. A final briefing on the proposed rule change options was provided on August 5, 2016 at which time the Fish and Wildlife Commission opened the meeting to public testimony regarding fishery rule changes at Lake Roosevelt. There was no public testimony provided at this meeting.

During the 2016 North of Falcon season planning process, the tribal co-managers and WDFW conducted technical meetings and policy level discussions to agree on conservation objectives, run-size forecasts, and estimates of the allowable tribal and non-tribal catch shares for the various salmon runs considered in defining fishing levels. WDFW and the tribes also developed fishing schedules for both tribal- and state-managed salmon fisheries.

Written and oral comments received during this process were considered in the development of WDFW's own package of rules. The recreational salmon fishing seasons proposed for adoption by WDFW in 2016 are the product of both the government-to-government, tribal-state negotiation component, and the open public process component of the annual North of Falcon process. The formal public rule-making process undertaken by WDFW is in pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act.

Based upon all of the information and outreach generated through these forums, a draft rule was developed for consideration in the public rule-making process that follows the filing of a proposed rule. Accordingly, the CR-102 filed on May 18 and published in WSR 16-11-099 provided WDFW's initial rule-making proposals for 2016. The filing included changes to WAC 220-310-195. A CR102 continuance was published in WSR 16-14-014 on June 24.

A formal rule-making hearing with the Fish and Wildlife Commission for eastern Washington was held on October 7, 2016 to decide upon the final rule for Lake Roosevelt. WDFW staff gave a final briefing to the Commission on the public process that had occurred during the summer months and the rule options that were available for comment by the public. Much of this discussion was a revisit of what had been presented to the Commission on August 5, 2016. WDFW staff took all Commission and public comment on the three rule options that were available and developed a final rule recommendation that was adopted by the commission on October 7

• **Overview of WDFW's Consideration of Management Objectives:**

Regulations for the 2016-17 recreational salmon fisheries were further considered with respect to established objectives. These objectives include generally applied statewide objectives, together with detailed regional specific objectives described within regional sections below. These objectives were shared with recreational angler representatives during the 2016 North of Falcon process and are listed below in order of priority:

- 1) Conserve the wildlife and food fish, game fish, and shellfish resources in a manner that does not impair the resource (RCW 77.04.012) by achieving conservation objectives for all species and stocks
 - a) Ensure primary stocks meet escapement goals and/or management objectives (e.g., an exploitation rate).
 - b) Manage fisheries consistent with Fish and Wildlife Commission Policies POL-C3608 (2016-2017 North of Falcon), C3619 (Hatchery and Fishery Reform), and C3620 (Columbia River Basin Salmon Management).
 - c) Monitor fisheries to ensure a & b are met.

- 2) Provide opportunity to harvest the non-treaty share of harvestable salmon.
- 3) WDFW shall promote orderly fisheries and shall enhance and improve recreational and commercial fishing in this state.
- 4) WDFW shall seek to maintain the economic well-being and stability of the fishing industry in the state.

- **Regional Specific Rationale:**

State and Tribal salmon seasons in the Columbia River, Ocean and Puget Sound are driven primarily by certain key constraining stocks, which can vary from year to year (Objectives 1a, 1b, and 2). Key stocks that constrained State and Tribal fishery planning within eastern Washington in 2016 included Lower Columbia River natural tule fall Chinook, Lower Columbia natural coho, Snake River wild fall Chinook, and Columbia River wild Group B steelhead. This year was different than past years in that many of the perennial driver stocks (i.e., Lower Columbia River natural Chinook, Lower Columbia River natural coho, and Interior Fraser River (Thompson) natural coho) were not an issue due to critically low forecasts of a number of Washington coastal and Puget Sound coho stocks. The constraining Chinook stocks and Washington coastal coho stocks were managed to exploitation rate ceilings and escapement goals, respectively (see below). Eastern Washington regulation changes were proposed based on NOF discussions with stakeholders and tribal co-managers. These changes maximize recreational opportunity while meeting conservation objections. Some fisheries were modified to reduce conflict with tribal fisheries and/or to ensure orderly fisheries (Objective 3). By the recommendations of the Columbia River Compact adopted by the respective agencies, and for efficiency, enforcement, and consistency over the waters between Oregon and Washington, it is essential that rules are consistent between the two states.

In general for the Columbia River stocks in 2016, ESA limits (based on preseason forecasts) for 2016 non-Indian fall fisheries include a 15.0% impact rate for SRW Chinook (URB stock is the surrogate), a 41% ER for LCR tule Chinook (LRH stock is the surrogate) and an 18% ER for LCN Coho (unmarked Coho are the surrogate) and a 2% impact rate for wild Group B steelhead. The ERs for LCR tule Chinook and LCN Coho include impacts from both the ocean and Columbia River fisheries. The most constraining stocks for Columbia River fisheries in 2016 are SRW Chinook and wild Group B steelhead. All mainstem non-Indian fall fisheries (below the Highway 395 Bridge in Pasco, Washington) are managed not to exceed impact rates of 2% on wild Group A and wild Group B index steelhead. The preseason expectation for non-Indian Columbia River (in-river) fisheries is an impact rate 14.6% on SRW (15% on URBs), an ER of 11.24% on LCR tule Chinook and 5.7% on LCN Coho. Impacts to wild Group B steelhead are expected to be within the 2.0% limit. The

most constraining stocks for Columbia River fisheries in 2016 are SRW fall Chinook and wild Group B steelhead.

Table 2 - 2016 Constraining Stocks.

Stock	Objective Type	Objective Criteria	Modeled Result
Lower Columbia natural tulle fall Chinook	Exploitation Rate (ER)	≤ 41.0%	38.9%
Lower Columbia natural coho	ER	≤ 18.0%	13.0%
Snake River wild fall Chinook	In-River Impact Rate	≤ 15.0%	14.6%
Columbia River wild Group B steelhead	In-River Impact Rate	≤ 2.0%	< 2.0%
Mid-Hood Canal natural Chinook	Pre-terminal Southern US ER	≤ 12.0%	11.3%
Nisqually River natural Chinook	Total ER	≤ 50.0%	50.0%
Puyallup River natural Chinook	Total ER	≤ 50.0%	50.0%
Skokomish River natural Chinook	Total ER	≤ 50.0%	47.8%
Queets River natural coho	Escapement Goal	2900	2900
Skagit River natural coho	Southern US ER ¹	≤ 10.0% ¹	5.3%
Stillaguamish River natural coho	Southern US ER ¹	≤ 10.0% ¹	6.8%
Snohomish River natural coho	Southern US ER ¹	≤ 10.0% ¹	5.4%

¹ These are management objectives identified in the Comprehensive Coho Management Plan for stocks in critical status, which were never formally agreed to by the State and Tribes for the purposes of 2016 fishery planning.

Certain other stocks continued to not meet management objectives, similar to 2015. Fishing regulations and restrictions in 2016 are the same as previous year's regulations that were designed to reduce mortality on those stocks, i.e. no changes were proposed for 2016.

Columbia River recreational and commercial advisory group members were consulted on Columbia River and tributary regulations. The groups include constituents from the sport and commercial fishing sectors of Washington and Oregon. By the recommendations of the Columbia River Compact adopted by the respective agencies, and for efficiency, enforcement, and consistency over the waters between Oregon and Washington, it is essential that rules are consistent between the two states.

- **Modifications proposed for 2016 through this rule-making process:**

Columbia River Tributaries:

- ❖ All tributaries to Lake Roosevelt between Grand Coulee Dam and the Canadian border are open the Saturday before Memorial Day through October 31; fisheries are under statewide stream rules.
- ❖ On the Chelan River (Chelan County), from the railroad bridge to the Chelan P.U.D. safety barrier, barbless hooks are no longer required for salmon and steelhead from May 15 through August 31. Barbless hooks are required for salmon fishing from July 1 through October 15, the salmon limit has been reduced to 4 (from 8), and sockeye must be released.
- ❖ For the Entiat River (Chelan County), from the mouth to the upper Roaring Creek Road Bridge, hatchery Chinook retained must be adult, and all wild adult Chinook must be released.
- ❖ On the Grande Ronde River (Asotin County), from the mouth to County Road Bridge: open year-round for game fish other than trout; from September 1 through May 31, trout have a minimum length restriction of 10 inches (rather than 8 inches); from January 1 through April 15, mandatory hatchery steelhead retention rule applies, with a daily catch limit of 2 steelhead, except angler may retain up to 3 hatchery steelhead; from April 16 through December 31, there is a maximum length of 20 inches, and steelhead are catch and release only.
- ❖ Reduce the hatchery adult coho daily limit to 2 fish in Washington Columbia River tributaries below Bonneville Dam and in the Klickitat River.
- ❖ On the Okanogan River (Okanogan County), from the mouth to Highway 97 Bridge immediately upstream of the mouth, from July 1 through August 31 it is permissible to fish two poles, with the two-pole endorsement, while fishing for salmon. The salmon daily limit is 4 (as opposed to 8), and all sockeye must now be released.
- ❖ On the Okanogan River (Okanogan County), from the mouth upstream, salmon catch limit is reduced from 8 to 4, and all sockeye must now be released.
- ❖ The Icicle River spring Chinook season that has been opened by emergency regulation in past years was made permanent due to the consistent run timing and surplus of hatchery fish.
- ❖ On Lake Roosevelt (Grant/Ferry/Lincoln/Stevens counties), from Grand Coulee Dam to the Little Dalles power line crossing, there is no longer a daily limit of 5 trout with no more than 2 trout over 20 inches in length; the daily limit will remain at 5 trout with no size restrictions and it is unlawful to retain any trout with an intact adipose fin.
- ❖ On Lake Roosevelt, from the Little Dalles power line crossing to the Canadian Border, trout (except kokanee) have a daily limit of 2, minimum size 18 inches.

- ❖ For the Sanpoil River (Ferry County), from the western shoreline at the mouth of the Sanpoil Arm (as marked by a regulatory buoy) directly eastward across the Sanpoil Arm to the eastern shoreline of the Sanpoil Arm (as marked by a regulatory buoy) upstream to the north shore of the outlet of French Johns Lake (Manila Creek) northeast across the Sanpoil Arm to the north shore of the outlet of Dick Creek, the fishery will now open June 1 (formerly April 1) for trout, kokanee, walleye and smallmouth bass. There is no longer a daily limit of 5 trout with no more than 2 trout over 20 inches in length; the daily limit will remain at 5 trout with no size restrictions and it is unlawful to retain any trout with an intact adipose fin.
- ❖ For the Sanpoil River (Ferry County), from the north shore of the outlet of French Johns Lake (Manila Creek) northeast across the Sanpoil Arm to the north shore of the outlet of Dick Creek to approximately 5 miles upstream from the outlet of French Johns Lake, as marked by regulatory buoys: the fishery now opens for walleye and smallmouth bass on June 1, as opposed to April 1.
- ❖ For the Similkameen River (Okanogan County), from the mouth to Enloe Dam, the salmon limit has been reduced from 8 to 4, and sockeye must now be released.
- ❖ For the Spokane Arm of Lake Roosevelt (including Spokane River, from SR 25 Bridge upstream to 400 feet below Little Falls Dam): there is no longer a daily limit of 5 trout with no more than 2 trout over 20 inches in length; the daily limit will remain at 5 trout with no size restrictions and it is unlawful to retain any trout with an intact adipose fin.
- ❖ Wenatchee Lake (Chelan County) is open year-round with selective gear rules applying. Sockeye must now be released. The night closure is withdrawn, and there is no two-pole rule in effect.
- ❖ For the Wenatchee River (Chelan County), the river rules from the mouth to 400 feet below Dryden Dam now also apply from the mouth of Peshastin Creek to the Icicle River Road Bridge.
- ❖ On the White Salmon River (Klickitat/Skamania counties): (1) from the mouth (Burlington Northern Railroad Bridge) to the county road bridge below the former location of the powerhouse, when the anti-snagging rule is in effect, fish must be hooked inside the mouth to be retained. The only salmon that may be retained are hatchery Chinook and hatchery coho. (2) From the county road bridge below the former location of the powerhouse upstream to the Northwestern Road Bridge, the mandatory hatchery steelhead retention has been rescinded. There is a second opening for salmon from August 1 through October 31, with a limit of 6; up to 3 may be adults, of which no more than 2 may be hatchery salmon. (3) From the

Northwestern Road Bridge upstream to Big Brothers Falls, anglers need only release all fish through July 31, as opposed to October 31. Salmon and steelhead are open from August 1 through October 31 with a limit of 6, and up to 3 may be adults of which no more than 2 may be hatchery salmon.

II. Changes from the Proposed Rules

The adopted rules have changes from the rule noticed in the CR 102, as a result of the continuance (WSR 16-14-014 filed on June 24). The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission took action to further protect redband rainbow trout at Lake Roosevelt, a Columbia River reservoir in northeast Washington. The commission voted to change the daily catch limit on trout at Lake Roosevelt and extend a closure in a section of the Sanpoil River during a trout spawning period. Previously, anglers fishing Lake Roosevelt could keep five trout (hatchery or wild) per day, including two fish 20 inches or larger in size. The commission voted to keep the five-trout daily limit at Lake Roosevelt in the area from Grand Coulee Dam to the Little Dalles power line crossing, but anglers fishing there will be allowed to retain only hatchery trout (adipose-fin-clipped trout). Anglers fishing that area will be required to release all wild trout. In addition, anglers fishing from the Little Dalles power line crossing to the Canadian Border will have a daily limit of two trout (hatchery or wild fish) that are 18 inches or larger.

Commissioners also voted to extend the closure of the Sanpoil River arm of the reservoir, where redband rainbow trout stage to make their upriver spawning run. The arm will open to fishing June 1, two months later than the area has typically opened.

The commission voted to re-open fishing in tributaries in upper Lake Roosevelt, including Big Sheep and Deep creeks. Beginning next year, those streams will be open the Saturday before Memorial Day through Oct. 31. They were unintentionally closed during the Columbia Basin stream strategy rule making process in 2014.

For the reasons stated above, the adopted rules have changes from the rule noticed in the CR 102, as a result of the continuance (WSR 16-14-014 filed on June 24), in the following ways:

1. All tributaries to Lake Roosevelt between Grand Coulee Dam and the Canadian border are open the Saturday before Memorial Day through October 31; fisheries are under statewide stream rules.
2. On Lake Roosevelt (Grant/Ferry/Lincoln/Stevens counties), from Grand Coulee Dam to the Little Dalles power line crossing, there is no longer a daily limit of 5 trout

with no more than 2 trout over 20 inches in length; the daily limit will remain at 5 trout with no size restrictions and it is unlawful to retain any trout with an intact adipose fin.

3. On Lake Roosevelt, from the Little Dalles power line crossing to the Canadian Border, trout (except kokanee) have a daily limit of 2, minimum size 18 inches.
4. For the Sanpoil River (Ferry County), from the western shoreline at the mouth of the Sanpoil Arm (as marked by a regulatory buoy) directly eastward across the Sanpoil Arm to the eastern shoreline of the Sanpoil Arm (as marked by a regulatory buoy) upstream to the north shore of the outlet of French Johns Lake (Manila Creek) northeast across the Sanpoil Arm to the north shore of the outlet of Dick Creek, the fishery will now open June 1 (formerly April 1) for trout, kokanee, walleye and smallmouth bass. There is no longer a daily limit of 5 trout with no more than 2 trout over 20 inches in length; the daily limit will remain at 5 trout with no size restrictions and it is unlawful to retain any trout with an intact adipose fin.
5. For the Sanpoil River (Ferry County), from the north shore of the outlet of French Johns Lake (Manila Creek) northeast across the Sanpoil Arm to the north shore of the outlet of Dick Creek to approximately 5 miles upstream from the outlet of French Johns Lake, as marked by regulatory buoys: the fishery now opens for walleye and smallmouth bass on June 1, as opposed to April 1.
6. For the Spokane Arm of Lake Roosevelt (including Spokane River, from SR 25 Bridge upstream to 400 feet below Little Falls Dam): there is no longer a daily limit of 5 trout with no more than 2 trout over 20 inches in length; the daily limit will remain at 5 trout with no size restrictions and it is unlawful to retain any trout with an intact adipose fin.

III. Summary of Public Comments and WDFW's Response

No written or verbal testimony was received regarding WSR 16-11-099, regarding Eastern Washington salmon fisheries, and therefore the proposed regulations were adopted without modification. Comments were received concerning the Lake Roosevelt trout limit. The public were presented with three options, and these comments are presented and addressed below.

Comment 1: [Option 2] Supports. Commenter would like to see fishing limits increased on Lake Roosevelt.

Comment 2: Commenter agrees with increasing the trout limit on Lake Roosevelt, and suggests a limit of 10 rainbow with no more than one red band trout over 18 inches in length.

Comment 3: See appendix A, “Colville Comments on WDFW Rulemaking Proposal 7-21-16”. Commenting group supports combining elements from Option 2 and Option 3: Anglers fishing Lake Roosevelt from Grand Coulee Dam upstream to Northport Bridge have a daily limit of 5 hatchery trout (adipose-fin-clipped) and must release all wild trout. Anglers fishing from the Northport Bridge to the Canadian border have a daily limit of two trout, with a minimum size of 18 inches. The portion of the Sanpoil River inundated by Lake Roosevelt (called the “Sanpoil Arm”), is closed to trout and other game fish from February 1 to May 31.

Comment 4: Regarding closures, any water between Grand Coulee Dam and the U.S./Canada border closed to allow for spawning redband trout, should remain closed until, at earliest, June 1st, as May is peak spawning month.

Comment 5: Regarding the limit on native redband, commenter proposes a daily limit of 2 native trout, any size, throughout the entire system, Grand Coulee to the border. (It doesn't serve to have bait & gear anglers culling through 14” to 16” trout in order to kill a valuable spawning class fish of 18” or better.) As second choice to ‘any size’, I would opt for the retention of 2, with only one trout over 18” allowed in the 2-fish limit.

Comment 6: The proposal for a 2-trout limit upstream of Northport bridge begins to come close to recognizing a particularly valuable habitat yet falls very short of taking in the entire segment of riverine habitat wherein native redband is the dominant trout. It should be recognized that the Columbia, from China Bend, just below the Little Dalles, upriver to the border, is markedly different in character than the more lacustrine and infertile L.R. proper, and closely resembling the original river. If you fish under the log booms at China Bend, your catch will be redbands possessing adipose fins. From there, upstream, the river is much richer in insect life, and that supporting a major portion of our famous redband fishery. In my view, if a segment be given particular consideration, it should be that segment flowing between the buoy line at China Bend, upriver to the U.S./Canada border. And the 2-trout limit, only from the Northport bridge to the border offers difficulty to enforcement, as most launching from Northport ramp are fishing both above and below the bridge. While those launching at China Bend ramp, well below the buoy line, are heading downstream to fish L.R. And quality regulations for the segment upstream of the Northport bridge doesn't take into consideration the important mainstem staging and spawning habitat that stretches from the Northport bridge, downstream for about five miles, on the Flat Creek Road side of the river – utilized by both native redband and cutthroat trout. Again, the habitat of native redband as a dominant species is: China Bend upstream to the

border. And I think it salient to note that that unique segment represents a job-creating economic asset to the Northport area, as we see a local fly fishing and lodging industry growing around a quality fishery one writer described as, "The greatest native trout fishery you've never heard of." The American Reach segment between China Bend and the border is real and unique. Different from L.R. And it would be both timely and farsighted to recognize and distinguish what a truly valuable resource it is. Please consider.

Comment 7: [Option 2] Commenter fishes the Grand coulee dam area 2 times per week, and the mouth of the San Poil River many times, never having caught a red band rainbow. I favor increasing the limit to 10 fish with only 2 over 20".

Comment 8: [Option 2]. Supports.

Comment 9: [Option 1]. Supports.

Comment 10: Is there any research that the state has done or funded that shows the relationship between the released triploids and the native redband?

Comment 11: [Option 1] Supports. An increase to a ten trout limit is crazy; Bonneville fluctuates the water in such a way that most of the fish get flushed down the lake on a yearly basis. Wild trout will not benefit from increased non-native trout limits but will make it harder to catch a limit of any kind of trout down the road. More than 5 fish is not needed, and increased catch and release of wild trout will increase their mortality.

Comment 12: [Option 2] Supports.

Comment 13: [Option 1] Supports. Commenter does not support changing the limit on trout. With so many changes of limits most people don't even know what the limits are; commenter meets fishers still keeping 5 silvers, all with fins intact. Does not support removing walleye from the San Poil, as participates in that fishery; most people can't catch 8 walleye let alone 16. Also, states that the average person doesn't know how to release fish without killing them, so this practice of catch and release is wasteful.

Comment 14: On the heels of proposing to raise the rate to fish in this state, you want to limit fishing [Redband] even farther. Catch is rare. None of the options adds more hatchery fish to a 152 mile long lake; proposals are removing opportunities, not providing more. Note: lack of WDFW action in Rufus Woods, which used to be an amazing fishery, caused the state to lose yet one more place to bring the kids to fish.

Comment 15: [Option 3] Commenter supports the effort to limit wild trout retention. However, harvest opportunity of hatchery trout above the Little Dalles is nonexistent; it is unrealistic and not attainable. It would be more realistic to have the limit of 2 at 18" or larger limit start at Little Dalles, rather than Northport bridge north to the Canadian

border. Also, the language for cutthroat trout and brown trout and brook trout needs to be reviewed. Commenter notes there are a very limited amount of anglers harvesting any trout in this region as most are catch and release fly fisherman as well as walleye fisherman. Adding unrealistic rules will impact the perception of our opportunities for anglers, which has an economic effect on local lodges, restaurants, gas station, tavern and store.

Comment 16: [Option 3] Supports.

Comment 17: [Option 1] Supports. The trout fishery does not have enough pressure to affect the fish population. Most trout caught from shore run 16 to 18 inches; a 20 inch trout is caught about once in every 6 trips. Proposed changes will only greatly reduce the quality of the sport fishing in Roosevelt Lake. Aside from Option 1, commenter would support a simple 5 trout limit per day, regardless of size wild or hatchery. Releasing a lake trout greatly reduces chances of survival, and the language allowing releases within the limit confuses anglers.

Comment 18: [Option 2] Supports.

Comment 19: [Option 3] Supports.

Comment 20: [Option 3] Supports.

Comment 21: [Option 3] Supports as best option for now, but if the use of bait is allowed, the majority of the “released” fish will die anyway. A future proposal might establish selective gear in the most important Redband areas, if those areas can be established effectively.

Comment 22: [Option 1] Supports.

Comment 23: [Option 1] Supports. Catching a clipped rainbow trout or kokanee has been rare for the past 15 years at Kellers ferry area. There need to be assurances that clipping is occurring, in order for sport anglers to have opportunity and get behind the idea. Commenter feels that there is not currently honesty and integrity in the clipped fin program.

Comment 24: [Option 1] Supports. The system in place is working very well. Commenter concerned that the tribes will take over a successful fishery if changes are made.

Comment 25: [Option 1] Supports. Kokanee daily catch limit needs to be explained.

Comment 26: [Option 2] Supports. Suggests that minimum size should be 20 inches, as it would further aid in recovering a spawning red band population.

Comment 27: Increasing the limit to 4 or 5 on Rufus Woods should be considered. The triploids in the lake mostly end up below Wells Dam during runoff periods. The lake is so large; it is unlikely to be overfished. Allow Kokanee as part of the limit; they come from Roosevelt, not likely to spawn in Rufus. The current 2 fish limit is restrictive and hardly worth \$30.-50.00 for fuel.

Comment 28: [Option 3] Supports. As second choice, supports Option 1. Option 2 does little to protect redband, but rather opens up Lake Roosevelt without regard for conservation; it's wasteful.

Comment 29: [Option 1] Supports. AGAINST proposal to limit 5 hatchery trout (and no wild trout) from Grand Coulee Dam to Northport Bridge, and allow 2 (hatchery or wild) trout 18" or more from Northport Bridge to Canadian border. This proposal would support fishing guides Northport to the border, and devastate the wild population. Occasional anglers enjoy catching an elusive wild Redband; it would be a great disappointment if all we could fish for were hatchery trout on Lake Roosevelt. Commenter would like the opportunity to fish for wild trout BELOW the Northport Bridge.

Comment 30: [Options 1 and 3] Supports either. Allowing 5 fish is more than adequate; 10 fish is an invitation to waste fish, as evidenced elsewhere where WDFW has instituted excessively liberal bag limits. Anglers don't want to be perceived as such. Also, consider equity and catch distribution. The Lake Roosevelt fishery is very popular and becoming more popular. It's good public policy to keep these anglers coming back. It's bad public policy to allow less people to take more fish.

Response to Comments 1 through 30:

Comments 1 through 30 were public comments received during the web based 30 day commenting period on the three rule options that were provided to the public for the Lake Roosevelt Redband trout fishery rule changes. The rule options put forth to solicit comment were:

Option 1: No Action. This option maintains the current regulation, which includes a daily limit of five trout, with no more than two over 20 inches in length. The Sanpoil River arm of the reservoir is closed Feb. 1 through March 31.

Option 2: This option increases the daily limit in Lake Roosevelt to 10 trout with no more than one wild trout, which must be 18 inches or greater in length. The Sanpoil River arm would be closed to fishing for trout and other game fish Feb. 1 to May 31.

Option 3: Anglers fishing Lake Roosevelt from Grand Coulee Dam upstream to Northport Bridge have a daily limit of five hatchery trout (adipose-fin-clipped) and must release all wild trout. Anglers fishing from the Northport Bridge to Canadian border have a daily limit of two trout, with a minimum size of 18 inches.

Public comments varied around preference for the three rule options. Because there was no clear path forward from a public preference perspective, WDFW coalesced the many opinions of the public into a melded version of the three rule options that achieved a conservation gain for Redband Rainbow trout while allowing harvest of hatchery rainbow trout at acceptable levels to the public.